

The Book of Job

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**(2001–2003 Study and Series of
Discourses in 1984 and 1985)**

The following notes on the Book of Job were compiled from a Bible study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu from 2001 to 2003 and a series of discourses in 1984 and 1985. They should be utilized with the following understanding:

1. Each paragraph preceded by **“Comment”** or **“Q”** (an abbreviation for **“Question”**) was introduced by someone other than Bro. Frank.
2. The original study did not follow a prepared text but was extemporaneous in nature.
3. Although the transcriber tried to faithfully, with the Lord’s help, set forth the thoughts that were presented in the study, the notes are not a verbatim rendering and, therefore, should be considered in that context.
4. Finally, Bro. Frank did not review the notes for possible errors that may have inadvertently entered the text.

With this disclaimer in mind, may the notes be a blessing as a useful study guide.

THE BOOK OF JOB

(Study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu from 2001 to 2003)

Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.

The way the Book of Job opens, “There was a man in the land of Uz,” sounds like the beginning of a story. The Arabic style was to tell stories that conveyed a lesson, and rabbis often relate little stories in order to illustrate points of righteousness. However, the Book of Job is not fiction. Job was a *real personality*, a living being in the land of Uz.

Notice that Job’s lineage is not given. The account simply states that this man lived in the land of Uz. Therefore, we cannot say conclusively whether he was just a resident there at the time or whether he had come from some other place.

The next question is, Who was Uz? Indirectly he was the son of Shem, but he was actually the son of Nahor and Milcah, as clues in the subsequent narrative will show (1 Chron. 1:17; Gen. 22:20,21). Incidentally, Rebekah was the granddaughter of Nahor and Milcah.

Chronologically speaking, Job was a contemporary of both Joseph and Moses; that is, he overlapped part of each of their lives. Hence the sequence was Joseph, Job, Moses. We think the Book of Job was written before Moses compiled the first five books of the Bible. In fact, Moses did not begin his public ministry until he was 80 years old, at the time of the Exodus. God had a continuous testimony in the earth both before and after the Flood, and Job’s ministry was a witness for God between Joseph and Moses. Thus the time setting for Job’s life began in the Patriarchal Age, which followed the Flood. The Book of Job contains many indirect evidences that point out this time period.

Q: If we assign a date, did Job live at approximately 1700 BC?

A: Yes, roughly speaking, for the Exodus was 1615 BC, and 80 years earlier, when Moses was born, would be 1695 BC.

Job “was perfect and upright.” The word “perfect” is better translated “blameless,” as in the New International Version. Of course in this earlier period, there was no justification to life, just justification to friendship with God. In addition, Job “feared [reverenced] God, and eschewed [shunned] evil.”

Job 1:2 And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.

Job 1:3 His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

Job was affluent and very prominent, and the specifics are given. Because the numerics seem to be symbolic, many writers do not consider the Book of Job to have been written under specific divine influence—but it was. The following Scriptures prove its authenticity: (1) “Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it [the land of Israel], they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD” (Ezek. 14:14,20). “Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy” (James 5:11). Job was a real character, approved of God.

Job had seven sons and three daughters, that is, ten children. “Seven” is a religious or holy number, and the fact that Job had seven sons shows that God’s providence overrules the life experience of some individuals without interfering with their free moral agency. “Ten” and “seven” are both symbols of completeness, ten being natural and contemporary completeness (ten horns, ten toes, etc.), and seven being sacred and sequential completeness, usually in the sense of chronology or time (seven days in a week or seven stages of the Church, for example).

Q: Was Uz located in the land now called Saudi Arabia?

A: Yes. Uz has both a geographical and a lineage connotation. Lamentations 4:21 speaks of the land of Edom as being in the larger area of Uz: “Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of Uz.” Saudi Arabia is a large nation, especially when compared with tiny Israel. Today we think of Saudi Arabia as being mostly desert land, but there is evidence of fertility in ancient times.

Job had 7,000 sheep and 3,000 camels (10,000 animals). Right away we think of the seven sons and the three daughters (10 children). The relationship of the numbers has led some to conclude that the book is fictional. However, it is a true story with more substance than a parable, the technique, or method, frequently used by Jesus that was peculiar to the Middle East and to Asia in early times. The fact that the count of the animals is given in round numbers simply emphasizes the tremendous wealth Job possessed. Also, it is apparent that the Lord was blessing Job with a full experience.

In addition, Job had 500 yoke of oxen (that is, 1,000 oxen) and 500 she asses. In all, he had 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 she asses. By coupling the 7,000 sheep and the 3,000 camels with the seven sons and the three daughters, we can see that the sheep, mentioned first, were the more important animal. With the 500 yoke of oxen and the 500 she asses, the first-mentioned oxen were more important. Moreover, the number of oxen and she asses together was less important than either the 3,000 camels or the 7,000 sheep. In verse 3, therefore, the animals were listed in descending order.

In what way was Job “the greatest of all the men of the east”? Of course he excelled in temporal possessions, in wealth, probably having more riches than any other man in that area, but the wording also suggests he was the most notable man “of the east” at that time. Incidentally, the wording places Uz east of Israel. The children of Keturah branched out in that direction across Jordan at the southern end of the Dead Sea.

When we read that Job “was the greatest of all the men of the east,” we are reminded of Moses, who was the meekest man living at that time. He was “very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth” (Num. 12:3). Job was a most unusual person not only because of his wealth and influence but also because of his moral uprightness.

Q: If Job lived contemporaneously with Joseph and Moses, how could he have been called the greatest man in all the earth?

A: There is no problem at all, for Moses was at least 80 years old when he was called the meekest man in all the earth, and Job was dead at that time. Job’s life lapped part of Joseph’s life, covered a gap of 65 years, and then lapped an earlier portion of Moses’ life.

Comment: The fact that Job was called the greatest of all the men of the East proves he did not write this book, for he would not make such a statement about himself.

Reply: That is correct. Even though Job is the main character and the book should be named

after him, he did not write it.

Comment: Verse 1 points out Job's relationship with God. Then verses 2 and 3 tell of his tremendous material substance, which with many would be the root of all kinds of evil, but Job is called the "greatest." In other words, he had a balanced character that kept him humble and reverent before God even with his great wealth.

Reply: Yes, that was God's judgment of Job at the end of the book in spite of some startling things he may have said. Some of his statements are very helpful to us as Christians and in realizing how God deals with us.

Comment: Verse 8 is a tie-in here. God asked Satan, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?"

Q: Does the account state that Job was the greatest of all the men *of the East* because there were other great men at the same time?

A: The "east" was inserted because Job was the "greatest" from the standpoint of not only wealth and character but also *wisdom*. The expression "men of the east" usually carried the connotation of great wisdom. The men of the tribes in the East, even though they were in the hinterland, as it were, had the reputation of being unusual in that there were so many deep, contemplative philosophical thinkers. Much later there were the wise men of the East and the wise men of Teman and of Edom (in the land of Uz). However, one could be very, very wise from the natural standpoint but not be in tune with God, so Job was unique for being reverent and in God's favor, as well as for possessing great wisdom.

Job 1:4 And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them.

Job's sons "went and feasted in their houses, every one his day." The term "his day" refers to a birthday; that is, the date of the birth of each son was celebrated. This fact was brought out for several reasons; it will have an effect on the narrative of Job subsequently. Only the seven sons were mentioned, but even excluding the daughters, a birthday was celebrated seven times a year. The custom was for the celebration to be held in the house of the son whose birthday it was, and all of the others were invited. Verse 4 sets the stage for us to know Job's thinking on these occasions.

Comment: Job 3:1-3 proves that "his day" is a birthday. "After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed *his day*. And Job spake, and said, *Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived.*"

Reply: Yes, we were alluding to those verses. Job's words in that circumstance were a poignant point with regard to the whole drama and reality, which were very unusual.

Comment: Because of a birthday celebration, all of Job's children were together when Satan caused the calamity that took their lives.

Job 1:5 And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.

"When the days of their feasting were gone about" during the circuit of the year—that is, when

each of the birthdays occurred throughout the year—“Job sent and sanctified them [his sons and perhaps his daughters too]” and “offered burnt offerings.” The inference is that burnt offerings were offered up almost as if they were sin offerings. In our recent booklet entitled “Tabernacle Shadows (Church’s Share in Sin Offering),” we historically enumerated the names of the sacrifices and showed that they were not defined specifically until Moses came on the scene right after Job.

Job “offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all.” Whether he offered seven or ten animals is a moot point, but he offered at least seven animals in sacrifice, thinking that his sons may have “sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.” Job’s fear was that in the feasting and drinking, things might get out of hand. Therefore, he tried to compensate for any lack of moral restraint that might occur. Job took this action routinely, continually, on each birthday.

Job “sent and sanctified them” but in what way? Job was not present during the revelry of his sons and daughters. He was on the sidelines, as it were, making the offerings at his homestead. Job sent a messenger, a servant, to his sons and daughters, but how did he sanctify them? A sprinkling is implied. Later when Moses read the Law, he sprinkled blood on the people. Therefore, Job killed the animal and sprinkled his sons and daughters with the blood. There was no codified law at this time, as happened later in the giving of the Law under Moses, but the offering of animals and the sprinkling of blood occurred in a natural way. Job “rose up early in the morning” to do the sanctifying before the revelry began. We are reminded of the time when Abraham got up early in the morning, probably before dawn, to offer Isaac on the mount, and Abraham was a predecessor of Job (Gen. 22:3).

We can see the unusual character of Job in spite of his wealth, influence, judging, and wisdom. The account will also show that he had administrative responsibilities outside of his family, but they did not mitigate against his feeling of personal responsibility for the family. Almost all people who have outside responsibilities—and in proportion to the importance of their office—give less attention to their wives and families. The consumption of time necessitates the sacrifice. However, Job did not let outside responsibilities infringe on the time for his family. He was a very unusual person.

Job 1:6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.

Verses 6-12 are an allegory, for Satan has been confined in *tartaroo* ever since the Flood in Noah’s day. He does not have liberty to go up to the heaven of heavens, the Father’s abode. While chapters 1 and 2 talk about real personalities, they are presented in a story fashion to create the proper mood and thrust to the lesson that is to be garnered from the Book of Job. This technique is not unusual. For instance, our Lord used parables to teach potent lessons, many of which were prophetic. In the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Jesus used highly figurative language and included the name “Lazarus” to tie in with the fact that Lazarus would be raised from death. Therefore, the allegory was purposely woven into the account of Job to give us the proper perspective of what we might expect as we go into the details. Although called “The Book of Job,” we can see from this introduction and other parts of the book that Job would not have written about himself. Obviously, then, the book was written by another party. The book contains clues as to who the amanuensis, or scribe, was. Elihu put together the introduction, but he could not have done so without the cooperation of Job in supplying certain details about his background. We have a similar example with the Apostle Paul, who, before he started his ministry, went to Jerusalem to meet the Lord’s brothers to get firsthand information about Jesus and the other apostles. His personal, private study about the earlier years of Jesus helped Paul and Luke to introduce the Gospel of Luke.

Verses 6-12 are a mixture of fiction and nonfiction. In the allegory, Satan and the sons of God

went to the place of God's residence in heaven.

Job 1:7 And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

From the vantage point of *tartaroo*, Satan certainly knows what is happening in the whole earth. As the "god of this world" and the "prince of the power of the air," he has a lot of information about earth and its affairs (2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2). No doubt he was aware that Job was outstanding and that Job revered God. To a large extent, Satan even knows what we are doing in our personal lives. He is aware of geography, places, people, and events, so a great deal of truth is woven into this semifictional allegory to give us an introduction to the Book of Job. The book actually starts with Job's experience with his three friends, for that is where Elihu originally came into direct contact with Job and listened to the arguments of the three. However, we would presume that Elihu did not know too much about Job personally until subsequently, when he got information from Job himself and also from other sources.

Satan was aware that Job was the greatest personality in the East from various standpoints: wealth, reverence, religion, etc. Thus Satan had more information about Job than Elihu did at first. As an introduction, we are getting necessary background information of who was primarily responsible for trying Job—it was Satan. We are being transported back thousands of years to learn what happened to Job.

In the allegory, when God asked Satan, "Whence comest thou?" Satan answered, "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." We are reminded of several things.

1. "When the *unclean* spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none" (Matt. 12:43). Satan, as well as the other fallen angels, know about mankind and have plans as regards the future.
2. "And the bay [horses] went forth, and sought to go that they might walk to and fro through the earth: and he said, Get you hence, walk to and fro through the earth. So they walked to and fro through the earth" (Zech. 6:7). The activity of the bay horses is related in principle to the account here in Job.
3. Satan "walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire" (Ezek. 28:14).

Satan came from walking to and fro throughout the earth. The functions of Lucifer and the Logos were quite different. As God's spokesman, the Logos did not have the liberty that Lucifer had. The Logos was like a sentinel standing at attention, awaiting his Father's wishes. The *Diaglott* footnote for John 1:1 illustrates the role of the Logos. A man was the mouthpiece for the king, who was unseen behind a curtain. The spokesman had to be in the king's presence. Before Satan fell, he had liberty as Lucifer and, therefore, was used to indiscriminate behavior in roaming the various planes of being.

To a certain extent, even though Satan is bound in chains in *tartaroo*, he has the means of communication and contact. Spirit beings have capabilities of which we are only beginning to tap into now, thousands of years later, with developing technology. Therefore, even though bound in chains of darkness, Satan has a roaming spirit that enables him to experience, observe, and see things that are unbelievable to our present human comprehension.

Job 1:8 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

Verse 8 gives the reason for God's question to Satan in verse 7. Now Jehovah asked, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" Even though this situation was hypothetical, Job's character was as described here. There was no one like Job in the earth at that time. Moses was not yet on the scene. Job was "a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil," and Satan knew about Job's character. If Satan knows about us and we are, relatively speaking, little nobodies, he certainly knew about Job. While this account is fictional, there is much reality in it. The account is an amalgamation of fiction and nonfiction.

Comment: Satan previously had great liberty to roam the heavens and the universe uninhibited, but now he is confined to the atmosphere of a tiny planet called Earth and has been given what he wanted: the subjugation of a dying human race.

Reply: Through the Bible, the Lord has furnished us with an unusual amount of information. As an archangel, Satan had considerable liberty.

Job 1:9 Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?

Satan asked a reasonable question: "Does Job fear God for naught?" From Satan's standpoint, Job was doing well with his great prosperity and material wealth. But in examining character, two people can look at another person and have two opposite views. God looked at Job and saw a blameless man who loved righteousness and shunned evil with abhorrence. Satan also looked at Job but attributed his behavior to a selfish motive. When Jesus was here at his First Advent, some viewed him as a young man with no education, and when he spoke with authority, they thought that he was presumptuous and high-minded. Others looked at Jesus and thought, "Never [a] man spake like this man" (John 7:46). They did not care about his lack of education, for they recognized him as unusual. Thus two individuals can see the same thing but get different feelings depending on the heart condition. Satan's wrong heart condition was manifested when he attributed Job's reverence for God to selfishness for being rewarded.

Even prior to the Mosaic Law, the thinking was that those who obeyed God would have better health, a longer life, and prosperity. And of course the Law promised temporal rewards for right doing and obedience. Therefore, Satan, with his wrong heart condition, misconstrued Job entirely, but God, who reads the heart, knew Job.

Job 1:10 Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

Job 1:11 But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.

Job 1:12 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.

God permitted Satan to try Job to the uttermost through his possessions. Of course God did not literally say to Satan, "You can do what you want." This narrative was merely inserted to show what happened when Satan beheld Job. Satan wants everyone on planet Earth to be his subjects, and he could see that Job would be a valuable asset to have in his own kingdom. Therefore, he wanted to wean Job's affection and reverence for God to himself, and he reasoned that taking away Job's possessions and temporal prosperity would make Job vulnerable and that then he could win Job to himself. We can see Satan's motives.

The information we have been reading was supplied artificially to bring us to a moment of time in a situation where we can see that God permitted Satan to try Job to the uttermost—but without actually having a conversation with him. Those from the Middle East and the Far East would have understood what portion of the narrative was storytelling and what portion was assorted facts buried in the narrative. As an illustration, Shakespeare’s plays began with an introduction before the curtain ever opened. In the introduction, he gave a brief account of the fictional characters so that when the curtain opened, the audience would know what was going on. The main part of the drama was the play itself, not the introduction, but the introduction eliminated the need for any needless discussion of each character while the play was being enacted. The point is that the introduction in the Book of Job was not unusual, but it is unusual in Western civilization today.

Did Job know that God was permitting Satan to test him to the uttermost? No. Job was completely unaware of why the calamities were happening to him.

Comment: No doubt Satan had already tried unsuccessfully to get at Job, but he realized God had put a “hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side” (verse 10). Until the hedge was lifted, Satan did not have power over Job.

Reply: Yes, and we know that is true because the account tells us that Job eschewed (shunned) evil. Because Job had already had experiences where he said no to Satan’s temptations, he was called righteous and upright.

Consider Jesus before the start of his ministry. God knew that Satan would tempt Jesus. Jesus did not go into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan but to meditate upon the flood of information about his preexistence that came when he was baptized. He entered the wilderness to fast and pray and to contemplate how to begin his ministry, but God knew that in that situation, Satan would tempt Jesus—and God permitted the temptations. Just as God permitted Satan to tempt Job, so He allowed Satan to tempt Jesus.

We are given wonderful information. How deep a mine God’s Word is! We are given confidential information just by reading this account in Job. How much people lose by being diverted from the Word itself!

Job 1:13 And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother’s house:

Earlier, in introductory verses, we were told that on the birthdays of his children, Job prayed and made burnt offerings to morally protect his family from the vices of loose talk and from promiscuity in eating and drinking. Now comes the account of an actual occasion on the eldest son’s birthday, when Job’s “sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother’s house.” We are getting into the reality, the specifics.

Job 1:14 And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them:

A messenger arrived and said the oxen were plowing and the asses were feeding beside them. Notice what animals were involved here. Verse 3 said that Job had 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 she asses. There is no direct parallelism between the earlier account of the enumeration of Job’s goods and this out-of-sequence account, which tells about the 500 yoke of oxen and the 500 she asses. The lack of sequence shows that this incident is the first step of something that is being taught.

Originally, many years ago, we were inclined to think that the 7,000 sheep and the 3,000 camels were to be grouped together and that the 500 yoke of oxen and the 500 she asses were together. But we start with the second grouping.

Consider the setting. The servants were busy on the farmland, actually plowing with the oxen, and the 500 she asses were feeding beside them. The account does not state what time of year it was or what crop the plowing was for. We feel that the she asses correspondingly took advantage of the furrows the oxen were plowing by feeding on the debris. In other words, for each yoke of oxen, there was one she ass feeding behind the plowing.

Job 1:15 And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

All of a sudden, the Sabeans arrived on the scene, killing the servants and kidnapping the animals. Therefore, in this incident, the animals were stolen, and all of the servants were slain except one. Job's sons and daughters were in the elder brother's house while this evil was taking place out on the farmland in the distance. And who was primarily affected by the calamity? Job—for it was his property and experience.

Earlier we speculated that Job was not present at the house of his oldest son but was in his own residence. Suddenly a servant burst in the door to inform Job and his wife that a great calamity had occurred. It is interesting that the only surviving servant informed Job about the misfortune, not the sons and daughters, who were feasting and drinking.

The Sabeans were the inhabitants of Sheba, but there were two Shebas and two Dedans. One Sheba and Dedan were in present-day Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Yemen. The other Sheba and Dedan were in Africa, where the queen of Sheba resided.

With regard to the one servant alone escaping and all of the others being slaughtered, Satan made sure that one would escape to tell Job that the Sabeans had captured his oxen and his asses. In the allegory that introduces the Book of Job, Satan was given all authority except that which would affect Job's body. Satan employed the technique that would be most effective upon Job; that is, Satan knew the sole surviving servant would take the news to Job, who then was evidently in his own house. As we continue to read the account, we will see that in each incident, all servants were slain except one.

Job 1:16 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

The first calamity pertained to the Sabeans, a foreign element, who kidnapped the oxen and the asses. As we read the subsequent reports that came to Job each time a calamity occurred (verses 16, 17, and 19), when the escapee arrived and related what had happened, we are told, "While he [the previous sole surviving servant] was *yet speaking*..." In other words, *exquisite timing* was involved on Satan's part to make the trials as severe as possible to Job. While one incident was being reported, another servant arrived to tell of the next incident. What an excruciating experience for Job!

The Sabeans were instrumental in the first affliction upon Job. The second affliction was "the fire of God." How ingenious and devilish on Satan's part! When Job heard this report, it sounded as if the God of nature was causing the calamity. The implication intended by Satan was that God could have stopped the affliction. Therefore, it would seem that God was somehow involved in the affliction, but of course that was not the case, for He had given Satan *carte blanche* authority to test Job.

In reading that the fire of God fell from heaven and consumed the sheep and the servants, we see that Satan, unless prohibited by God, has power over even the wind. One of Satan's titles is "prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2). While that title can be given a spiritual connotation, it also describes a physical, or material, power that Satan possesses. Insight into this power casts light on the storm on the Sea of Galilee when the apostles were in the boat with Jesus. The Master had to rebuke the wind, and who was the originator of the wind that threatened to capsize the boat? It was Satan. God permitted the storm, but it was curtailed because Jesus had the authority to calm the waves. Another title of Satan, Beelzebub, meaning "lord of the flies," shows that he also has power over the insect world. We get a lot of information from the Book of Job with its many invaluable nuances.

Q: Was the "fire of God" lightning?

A: Yes.

Notice the emphasis in the statement repeated each time: "I *only* am escaped *alone* to tell thee." Satan was pressing home the needle point (verses 15, 16, 17, and 19).

Job 1:17 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

Next the camels were affected. No sooner had the second servant finished his report when a third servant arrived to say that three bands of enemy forces, called the Chaldeans, had fallen upon Job's camels, carried them away, and slain all of the servants except himself with the edge of a sword. Interspersed between the thefts of the Sabeans and the Chaldeans was a supernatural power, "fire" (lightning), and subsequently would come another supernatural power, "a great wind from the wilderness" (verse 19).

The Bible provides important geographical knowledge. We get background information not only on the land of Uz, Job, and his prior position and condition but also on the locus Uz bordered. Edom was a part of the land of Uz (Lam. 4:21), and Chaldea was a portion of Babylon (present-day Iraq). With Kuwait, Qatar, and Iraq bordering the northern part of Saudi Arabia, the territory of the Sabeans and the Chaldeans was rather large.

Q: Is there any significance to the fact that there were "three" bands of Chaldeans?

A: To our understanding, the Book of Job was an ode. Just as John the Baptist in the New Testament had disciples who were interested in his message, so God utilized the Book of Job as a witness to the people in that area. Also, we recall that Balaam, the prophet of God, was called down by Balak to curse the Israelites at the time of Moses. Balaam existed in a territory that Moses did not occupy. Although the Israelites alone, of all the peoples of the earth, were being dealt with by God at that time, it was sort of a transitional stage. First, God dealt just with individuals—Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Then He began to deal with people—Moses and the children of Israel—rather than individuals, and Job was sandwiched into this transitional period. That God dealt with the children of Nahor as well as the children of Shem is proven by the expression "the God of Nahor" (Gen. 31:53). Initially, God dealt with individuals, but in time, He dealt almost exclusively with the Israelites, His "peculiar people" (Deut. 14:2).

In the beginning of the Book of Job, there is a cadence: 7 sons, 3 daughters, 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 she asses (Job 1:2,3). We believe Elihu phrased the book in an ode fashion to be like a folktale. In those days, people went from country to country bearing news, and the Book of Job was recounted in an interesting manner with a crude three-stringed

instrument that produced sufficient sound to indicate gaiety, sorrow, trouble, etc. The Book of Job started by telling that Satan had a conversation with God. Satan said, “No wonder Job believes in you. Look how you are rewarding him. Let me take away his material possessions, and then see what happens.” When we come to the part of the account that we are currently studying, everything is broken up. Therefore, the number of animals should not be interpreted too literally. Earlier there was a mathematical cadence, but now the narrative is random—oxen and asses, sheep, and camels—and is not to be spiritualized. It was as if anarchy was occurring. The narrator would have presented the broken account in an excited voice. As he was talking about the Sabeans, the fire of God, the Chaldeans, etc., he strummed the instrument with emotion.

Notice that before the beginning of most Psalms in the King James Bible, information is given: who the singer is, what the mood is, what instrument is used, etc. The information helps us to employ our attention and minds on better things. The point is that the Lord rewards His people. No matter what their depth of understanding, He gives an abundance of information. The Bible is a mine so deep it can never be plumbed.

Anyway, we believe that these verses in the Book of Job were purposely recorded in a haphazard manner. When each sole surviving servant delivered his tale of woe to Job, he did it excitedly. “*I only am escaped alone to tell thee,*” said the first. Then, “*I only am escaped alone to tell thee,*” said the second, and so on.

Job 1:18 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother’s house:

Job 1:19 And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

Yet another servant came with even more devastating news, and this tragedy was the most damaging. During the festivity in the eldest son’s house, a great windstorm had arisen that collapsed the house and killed the occupants. We should try to put ourselves in Job’s place. After having considerable goods and tremendous wealth and being called the greatest man in all the East, he heard successive bad news, until even his sons and daughters died (Job 1:3). And what was the cause? “There came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house.” Job thought this affliction was supernatural, but he did not realize that Satan was behind the trouble. Job was greatly handicapped because he did not know the philosophy of the permission of evil, which God’s people now are privileged to know. Understanding the philosophy of the Ransom and the permission of evil is a great blessing. But with such knowledge comes great responsibility. To be a member of the Little Flock, we must be responsible to the degree of our capability in appreciating the knowledge and in complying with and obeying the Heavenly Father’s wishes.

Q: The account says that the “great wind” caused the house to fall upon the “young men.” Did the wind also kill the daughters?

A: Yes. The words were put in the mouth of each surviving servant, or messenger, by the unholy spirit of Satan, not the Holy Spirit of God. By mentioning just the young men, the emphasis was that Job had no heirs. Therefore, having no sons was more crucial than having no daughters. Satan is an evil mastermind. Being fallen, we have only limited powers of understanding and memory compared with those Adam had in his perfection. The fallen angels, however, have suffered no impairment of their powers. They do not get sick; they do not die; they do not experience pain. Satan has rebelled against God because he thinks he is immortal; that is, he thinks he can disobey God and not die. Because no angel has died to date,

and because the angels were not placed under a death penalty as Adam was, Satan has become emboldened despite seeing what Jesus did during his ministry. Satan is evil and incorrigible, and he believes God cannot destroy him innately. When he arranged Jesus' crucifixion, he really fell from heaven. Even though he has been in chains of darkness ever since Noah's day, he inveigled Jesus' death with his evil power. This vile deed condemned him to Second Death, for henceforth there was and is no possibility of his repenting. The inference is that up to the time of Jesus' crucifixion, if Satan had really repented, there might have been the possibility of his retrieval. However, God foreknew that Satan would become incorrigible, and his doom was sealed at the First Advent.

What did Job have left at this point? His wife and his house. The next three verses tell how Job responded to his trials.

Job 1:20 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped,

Job 1:21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.

Job 1:22 In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

Now we see the greatness of Job. He lost *everything material plus the fruit of his own body in one stroke*, as it were, and what did he do? He responded with the statement "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." All of the calamities had occurred one after the other. And yet another trial was to come on Job, as we shall see.

Job's reaction here shows not only his true worth but also why God was merciful to him when the three comforters subsequently needled him. Although Job exploded at times and occasionally spoke some inadvertent words, God knew his frame. "For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust" (Psa. 103:14). As a son of Adam, Job was imperfect. Therefore, perfection could not be expected, but up to this point, he was almost perfect in that he "sinned not" and did not charge God foolishly. Job's reaction is also an example of the advice to be slow to speak and swift to hearken (James 1:19). Not only did Job not burst out under this tremendous experience, but he rent his garment, shaved his head, fell down on the ground, worshipped, and uttered these words. Resigned to the experience, Job said, "Blessed be the name of the LORD." With his lack of understanding of the philosophy of the permission of evil, it is almost unbelievable that he could utter such words. Job was not thinking of Satan, so who else could he have attributed the afflictions to but God? Perhaps he thought God was just quiet and not interested in his afflictions, but he still expressed praise. Throughout the whole Book of Job, in all of the long conversations back and forth, Satan was not mentioned. (Of course God spoke at the end of the book.)

Q: The word "mantle" is a different Hebrew word from that used for the mantle Elijah folded up to smite the Jordan. Was Job's mantle like an outer robe?

A: Yes. Job had just lost everything in one day. Before the afflictions occurred, he had no foreknowledge of the experience. Therefore, he would have been dressed in his usual attire. The arrival of the several messengers bearing bad news took perhaps five minutes of that one day. In the meantime, before their arrival, he was in his house with his wife, dressed in normal garb—possibly the garb of a judge because being a judge was one of his responsibilities besides being the possessor of property and doing a lot of other things, as we will find out later.

Q: Was shaving his head a sign of mourning?

A: Yes.

Comment: Job “sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.” Satan’s ploy with both the lightning and the wind was to get Job to think God was responsible, yet Job did not jump to that conclusion.

Reply: Yes, and not to attribute those afflictions to God was an extremely difficult thing to do, considering Job’s lack of knowledge. The goodness of God was sealed in his heart.

Q: Since hair is a symbol of consecration, does that meaning apply when Job shaved his head?

A: Hair is a symbol of consecration with a woman, but with a man, hair represents strength. Hair, which grows daily, is an indication of one’s present condition, whether that individual is a woman or a man. Job’s present status had reached such a traumatic conclusion that he got rid of the hair. This practice was customary; it dated back prior to the Law, applied during the Law, and is even done during the age of grace. If tragedies come upon us as Christians, we should want to figuratively demean our bodies, to disgrace our humanity.

Job was probably restraining thoughts that were racing through his mind. “Why? Why, God? Why?” And then he said, “Blessed be the name of the LORD.”

Job had some information of the pre-Flood era. For one thing, documents were handed down. In addition, Noah spread his gospel after the Flood, and Shem was active. Therefore, Job would have heard information about God supplied by predecessors, and this relatively limited knowledge was sufficient for him to have built up a crystallized faith. In spite of all the temptations, he withstood the storm. His previously built faith structure withstood this assault by Satan. Although no details are given, he had to have some knowledge because faith comes *only by knowledge*. The account of Job is very informative, and it makes us ask, “With the character and faith structure I have built already, could I have done as well if I were in Job’s position?” Of course we would not tear a mantle because we do not wear that type of clothing, but we should certainly fall down on the floor. We have seen a brother who was crushed with a trial fall down on the floor and weep and weep, sobbing hard and trying to pray. We would do the same if we had Job’s experience, but would we say what he did in verse 21?

Comment: Although Job probably did not know the processes behind the resurrection, he did know that God had a future plan for a resurrection, as proven by Job 19:25, “For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.”

Reply: Yes, later information reveals Job’s knowledge. Abraham, who lived earlier, was looking for a better resurrection (Heb. 11:10,13,16). Jesus said, “Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad” (John 8:56).

Q: What is the spiritual application of Job?

A: Up to this point, Job represents Jesus and the Church, but subsequently he represents only the Church because Jesus never said some of the things that Job did. Jesus was the Logos, but he became flesh, leaving his former riches in glory behind and coming down here and humbling himself according to his Father’s plan. Jesus came into the world naked, and he went out naked on the Cross. Many times we have stated that Job does not represent the world of mankind and restitution or the nation of Israel, but the Church. From chapter 2 until Job finished his conversation at the end of the book, he represents the experiences of the Little Flock. The nitty-gritty detail provides interesting information about some of his knowledge. Although we do not know his degree of information, and although we feel sure he did not

understand the philosophy of the permission of evil, he did know many other things and had diversified wisdom, as we will see in going verse by verse through the book. Seeing what his experiences and his thinking were will be very revealing.

Job 2:1 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD.

Another allegory was necessary to give meaning and relevancy to the later counsel of the three comforters, as well as that of Elihu. People frequently use allegories, or storytelling, to create a picture. The literal part of the Book of Job resumes after verse 6.

Certainly Satan did not actually present himself before Jehovah, but this allegory is very helpful to show that Satan was the character behind all of the calamities described in the first chapter, plus those to subsequently occur.

Job 2:2 And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

Again in allegory, God asked Satan, "From whence comest thou?" And again Satan replied, "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." Since Satan is in *tartaroo*, he could not literally be walking in the earth and traveling back and forth.

Q: Even though this is an allegory, is this verse a proof text that Satan left his first estate? If he had not disobeyed, he would still be walking up and down among the "stones of fire" in the heavens (Ezek. 28:14).

A: Yes, this was a previous characteristic of Satan.

Comment: Satan has the ability to get into people's minds without actually being there.

Reply: He has a network for observing what is happening throughout the earth. We are told to "be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). Satan's motivation is to prosper his own empire and also to curb Jesus' influence in the earth.

Q: In regard to Satan's ability to influence people, is he personally confined in precisely the same manner as the fallen angels, or is he afforded more liberty? Or is he able to exert more influence than the other fallen angels simply because he is the strongest?

A: In *tartaroo*, Satan and the fallen angels are under house arrest, as it were. They are bound in chains not in the sense of restriction of movement but in the sense of being confined to a territory in earth's atmosphere. Later, during the Kingdom Age, Satan will be put into solitary confinement, which is quite a different circumstance from his condition at present. He has more liberty now in *tartaroo* than he will have in the Kingdom Age, when he is bound.

Q: Does the fact that individuals can be possessed also imply the fallen angels have quite a lot of license to be mobile?

A: An Egyptian Pharaoh had pictures of himself with the sun and strings coming down from the sun. At the end of each string were hands that could make connections with people. From another standpoint, Enoch "walked with God" (Gen. 5:22), but in what way was this done? God communicated with Enoch as if they had a telephone connection. No man can see God and live, but Enoch had a rapport and close communication. The situation is somewhat the same when fallen angels possess a person. A fallen angel's reply, "My name is Legion," indicated that

a *legion* of fallen angels possessed *one* individual (Mark 5:9). The fallen angels can electronically insert chips into a person's brain. Preceding this possession, however, the subject has to manifest an interest and a willingness to create a vacuum state in his own mind—he must have a receptive attitude—for the fallen beings. Once the individual complies in that manner, he finds he cannot extricate himself from the possession.

An incident is recorded in the *Reprints* of a brother who had regular Bible studies with fallen angels. He thought he could be of benefit to them because they had indicated they were very much interested in the truth. After a while, there was a little laughter, and untoward comments were made. In time, the situation became anarchy. The brother then communicated with the Pastor, asking advice on how to get extricated from what he had at first thought to be a desirable situation.

In the current age of computer technology and expertise, the federal government would like to put chips in television sets to keep tabs on all citizenry. Today fantastic things are being done that people could not even dream about previously. With the communication in the atmosphere, pictures can even be taken from the air. The spirit realm is very advanced, for they had such capabilities long, long before mankind down here. Only in the last century, and especially in the last decade, did man have such capabilities.

Q: Is the thought, then, that the evil spirits do not have to literally enter a body to possess it?

A: Yes, because they are up in *tartaroo*. For example, thoughts can be injected into the mind of a person who is under hypnosis. Those thoughts come in through the atmosphere, as it were. The technique, which is very real, is like remote control.

Comment: In a crude sense, man has remote-control vehicles with no wires attached.

Q: Does a person have to be willingly receptive to come under such control?

A: Yes. The freewill moral agency in a person's brain is naturally shielded from demon control. Therefore, the Adversary has to be clever in getting individuals into a receptive mood. Usually the control is obtained in gradual steps. For instance, an initial step could be something seemingly harmless like playing games.

Comment: The fact that the fallen angels had to request permission from Jesus to enter into the herd of swine indicates they are not able, except perhaps in rare circumstances, to openly control animals (Mark 5:12). Otherwise, they could really turn the animal kingdom against us.

Reply: That is correct.

Comment: The Apostle Paul wrote that on one occasion, he would have gone to a particular church, but Satan prevented him. Somehow Satan must have influenced those around Paul so that he could not freely leave the area where he was.

Reply: Of course the Lord can intervene anytime He chooses, but He allows certain things to happen at times for reasons unknown to us. God does not disclose all the details of His plan. Therefore, for reasons known only to the Heavenly Father, Satan was allowed to thwart Paul's ministry on that occasion. Another time Satan's control was temporarily permitted was the occurrence of the angry waves on the Sea of Galilee when Jesus was in the boat with the apostles. Jesus rebuked the wind, and a great calm followed. Satan, the prince of the power of the *air*, had wanted to capsize the boat.

Job 2:3 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is

none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.

Satan did not get his desired response out of Job with the earlier calamities. Now he would try again. This second allegory, which is similar to the first, revealed Satan's motivation. Without actual communication with God, he was permitted to go ahead with his own desires. However, this time the temptation would pertain to Job personally, whereas earlier temptations had more to do with his possessions.

Job 2:4 And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.

Job 2:5 But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.

Job 2:6 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.

What is the thought of "skin for skin"? In *The Merchant of Venice*, William Shakespeare put in the mouth of Shylock the words "a pound of flesh," which are more understandable to our frame of thinking today. Shylock was speaking of a worldly axiom that shows what a person will do with regard to his own being.

Satan wanted to put forth his hand and touch the bone and flesh of Job, thinking that Job would curse God as a result. God permitted the test to occur. Stated another way, Job experienced the divine permission of evil.

Job 2:7 So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

Job 2:8 And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.

Now we come to the main part of the Book of Job. Satan caused Job to be smitten with "sore boils" from the top of his head to the soles of his feet. A little time elapsed—a few days at least—between this test and the subsequent arrival of the three visitors.

An amendment is needed for the expression "sore boils," for when someone has boils, the last thing he wants to do is to scratch or scrape them. Therefore, the "sore boils" were probably an eruption comparable to an extreme case of poison oak, which is a combined feeling of pain, itching, and burning. Accordingly, Job used a small part of a fractured clay pot to scrape himself and relieve the itching and torment.

Incidentally, a potsherd was also mentioned in a text that helps us to understand the smiting of the image (Dan. 2:33,34). "Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon: Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant. And he shall break it as the breaking of the potters' vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit" (Isa. 30:12-14). Just as with natural Israel, so figuratively speaking, when the image is smitten, there will not be enough left of the smashed pot (the nations) to pick up a live coal.

Comment: The scraping with the potsherd helped to cause disfigurement, thus adding to Job's

pathetic appearance when the three comforters arrived.

Reply: Yes, temporarily there was a disfigurement with scabs, blood, and other types of excretion. Of course in time, nature usually repairs the damage done to ruptured skin.

Q: Would this calamity have been regarded as a natural affliction?

A: Yes, it was subtle. Certainly Job did not know that God had given Satan permission to take away his goods and his sons and daughters. The temptation to Job was to think that God Himself was authoring the calamities. We should appreciate his confusion of mind without an understanding of the philosophy of the permission of evil. When evil was permitted in the past, before the philosophy of discipline and character development was understood, anything that came of an evil nature, or calamity, was viewed as punishment or retribution for something that had occurred in the individual's life or for some sin that was passed down from a prior generation. It was not understood that God *permits* these things to happen in order to develop and perfect the individual's faith. That was true of both Old and New Testament times, although the levels of treatment are different.

Q: The thought of Satan's smiting Job with lesions of some sort reminds us of when Adam sinned. The sentence on Adam was death but not specifically disease. Would the fact that Satan could cause boils show that his power to inflict disease was an addition to the sentence on man?

A: God created the human organism with all kinds of antibodies to offset any intrusion of disease. The body of a perfect man had such a healing capacity that death was not an enemy in any sense. However, Adam had that experience for only a very short time before the death sentence was pronounced. When the genetic disorder occurred with the sentence of death, "dying thou shalt die," it left open the doors for all sorts of other things to happen—not only bacterial and chemical, but also spiritual or Satanic. Thus there could be this intrusion by Satan. Certainly in this case, Satan produced the "boils" because he had requested permission (in allegory) to smite Job to try to get him to curse God.

Comment: Verse 7 reads as follows in the *Expanded Biblical Comments*: "If disease and death are to a considerable extent under Satan's control, why might he not reverse the method and do some healing of disease?" In other words, if Satan could cause Job to have boils, he could also reverse the method and heal diseases. The door is thus opened for at least some faith healing to be an act of Satan.

Reply: Yes, that is true. Of course the Lord also does miracles of healing when it so pleases Him, and certainly His healing is superior to and can override anything Satan might try to do.

Job 2:9 Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.

In this case, Job's own wife was the instrument used to make the suggestion to end his pitiful condition. "Why don't you curse God and die?" she suggested. If Job cursed God, the natural expectation was that he would die and thus be relieved of his suffering.

Notice that Job's wife was spared the afflictions that he suffered. Similarly, each time a plague came on Job in chapter 1, Satan spared one messenger, one servant, to tell about the calamity. Now Job was personally afflicted by Satan but not his wife. Satan was allowed to take away all of Job's possessions, but he purposely did not touch Job's wife, who was also a possession. He used Job's wife something like he used Eve in the Garden of Eden. Both times Satan used the weaker vessel, and the Pastor wrote considerably on why that technique was used.

Job 2:10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

Job's character was phenomenal. No wonder he was singled out with Daniel and Noah in the Book of Ezekiel as being a very unusual person! When we think of our character development compared to that of Job, we wonder how we would have reacted in his place. We do not know to what extent our character development has progressed or what we are capable of. Thank God for the promise that He will not allow us to be tested above what we are able (1 Cor. 10:13)—and that He knows the point of no return, where it would be to our utter disadvantage as new creatures to be tested further.

Although Job was tempted—although he realized that death would end his agony and his troubled spirit—he restrained himself and did not sin with his lips. The goodness that remained in his character was sufficient to suppress the wrong thoughts which must have coursed through his mind so that he did not allow them utterance.

Comment: This Scripture shows how important our words are, and it is similar to Matthew 12:37, “For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

Reply: Yes, putting sinful thoughts into words is sort of like sinning the sin. Once the words come out of the mouth, they are in the public domain, and the individual is much more culpable.

Comment: Job asked, “Shall we not receive evil?” Since God does not cause moral evil, the word should be “calamity” or “distress.” The Lord permitted this calamity to come upon Job.

Reply: For God to permit a calamity or an experience of outward judgment is one thing, such as an accident or the collapse of a building that is allowed to happen for disciplinary purposes, but moral evil is another matter altogether. God does not tempt anyone with moral evil.

Job 2:11 Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.

The initial response of the three comforters was favorable. When they heard in their respective localities of all the evil that had come upon Job, they made an appointment to meet and then travel together to comfort him. As friends of Job, the three individuals probably knew quite a bit about him, and having a regard and a concern for him, they wanted to visit him and look into the truth of the matter.

Eliphaz came from Teman, which was noted for wisdom. “Concerning Edom, thus saith the LORD of hosts; Is wisdom no more in Teman? is counsel perished from the prudent? is their wisdom vanished?” (Jer. 49:7).

Bildad descended from Shuah, the last of Abraham's six sons by Keturah. A “Shuhite” is a Shiite in today's vocabulary (Gen. 25:2). This background information is helpful in showing the generation or age factor of the three comforters. Certainly not youngsters, they were relatively aged. The Scriptures do not give specific information about the ages of the three comforters or Job, but later portions of the Book of Job enable us to draw certain conclusions. For now, we will just say that the three were contemporaries of Job. Their being called a “Temanite” and a “Shuhite” gives some idea of their ages. The word “Naamathite,” however, is abstruse in the sense that little is known about the lineage of Zophar. At any rate, the three

intended to mourn with and comfort Job, so they had good intentions to start with.

Job 2:12 And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven.

Job 2:13 So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.

When the three saw Job afar off, they “knew [or recognized] him not.” Being covered from head to foot with disease, Job would have appeared a wreck. What the three saw was enough to make them feel utterly distraught.

Whatever we may say with regard to the three comforters later, certainly at this juncture, they were commiserate with Job’s situation. In fact, they empathized so much that they rent their garments, covered their heads with ashes, sat down, and were quiet for seven days and seven nights. How remarkable! No mention is made of meals, so they probably fasted too, showing how deep their concern was for Job. Also, their reaction inferentially indicates how noble and great Job was previously, when he was in his prime, had all of his goods and properties, and held the office of judge. They had respected him so much that seeing him now in this deplorable situation, they humbled themselves and sat down in quietness for an entire week.

If the seven days and seven nights represent the seven stages of the Gospel Age, then they are a *separate* all-inclusive picture with the concentration on Job as a representation of the true Church. Otherwise, the symbolism would not fit because the three comforters spoke after the expiration of the seven days and nights.

The seven-day waiting period came about in a natural fashion before the Mosaic Law was ever given. To some degree, and without details, it was known before Moses that there were seven Creative Days. When Moses came along and compiled the Book of Genesis, the Lord gave him the information with clarity. “Seven” is taught in nature as well as in the Law. Thus, to some extent, “seven” was followed before the Law because the seven days were evidently premeditated; that is, when the three rent their mantles, put ashes on their heads, and sat down with Job, the four had apparently agreed, or had an understanding, to remain silent for seven days. The silence could be broken only after the seven days.

Q: When did Elihu appear on the scene?

A: He probably did not show up until after the seven days of silence, although the account does not provide this detail. We have to extrapolate such information from things that happened later. For instance, Elihu said that he heard the arguments of all three, so he certainly was on hand when Eliphaz gave his dissertation starting in chapter 4 (Job 32:3-5).

Elihu represents the Great Company class, who, as individuals, have existed during all seven antitypical days of mourning and fasting. Whom do the three comforters represent? Subsequently they turned very negative with regard to Job. In just a tiny amount of time, they changed from a condition of close friendship to one of criticism, from compassionately reasoning with Job to being critical. The three comforters represent those in the nominal Church who have some religiosity. We will make discriminations, or distinctions, after listening to their arguments. At present, we will just say that they ostensibly represent peoples of God, that is, nominal Christians. One of the comforters pictures Judaizing Christians, another represents Roman Catholics, and the third pictures Protestants.

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

After the seven days, Job finally opened his mouth and broke the long silence. He “cursed his day,” that is, the day of his birth, because of the calamities that had occurred. All of the calamities had happened on the same day, the day of his eldest son’s birthday, when all his sons and daughters were gathered in the house that collapsed and killed them. Therefore, not only did Job now curse his own birthday, which occurred not long after the birthday of his oldest son, but we would surmise that the first day Job began to suffer the physical affliction—the eruption that affected him from the top of his head to the soles of his feet—was his birthday. Thus, in two ways, he was cursing his birthday—not only as the day of his birth but also from a calendrical standpoint.

The Book of Job is a gripping, dramatic story, but the *lessons* derived from it are more valuable than the story itself. Many who have read the Book of Job know little about it because of the complexity of detail, the type of language, and the thinking that was employed by the wise men of the East. These “comforters” were all wise in this world’s thinking; they were known for their apparent innate, natural wisdom in matters of everyday life, as is evident from the way they talked. Job, too, was a wise person along these lines, but far superior in his thinking.

Job 3:2 And Job spake, and said,

Job 3:3 Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived.

The three comforters waited for Job to break the silence on the concluding day of the seven days. Out of deference, they wanted to hear his explanation of what had happened. Verse 3 starts the pertinent part of the chapter where Job bared his soul.

Job’s first words were, “Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived.” The three men were close friends of Job, and having heard of the evil that had befallen him, they had come out of respect and to comfort him. However, they may not have known that the disease had its onset on Job’s birthday.

Comment: Although Job cursed his birthday, he did not curse God, which is what Satan said he would do and what his wife advised him to do. Therefore, he was not influenced by Satan or even by the counsel of his wife.

We should try to enter into Job’s experience in order to understand the words he uttered. To criticize Job under such trying circumstances would be unreasonable. In the final analysis, when God spoke at the end of the book, even He did not find fault with Job along this line.

Lest there be a misunderstanding, verse 1, which reads, “After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day,” gives the sum and substance of the entire chapter. In other words, the rest of the chapter gives the details of that cursing by telling what Job said.

Consider Job’s situation. He was suffering a great affliction when along came three men to comfort him. He believed that comfort was their motive, and they had been with him for seven days. What did Job do now? He bared his whole heart to them. One would not normally confide in other people while suffering and having such troublous thoughts—unless those people were very close friends or a husband or a wife. Job opened his heart by disclosing what was really troubling him, and of course he expected, or anticipated, that when he had finished speaking, the three would comfort him. The three spoke gently at first, but their manner of speaking changed.

The Lord graciously affords us an insight into Job’s trial. As has been mentioned, Job did not

curse God but cursed the experience that had befallen him and the loss of all his wealth, goods, and children, as well as the esteem of others. The theme “Let the day perish wherein I was born” is repeated throughout the chapter.

Job 3:4 Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it.

Job 3:5 Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it.

Job 3:6 As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months.

When we read the whole chapter, Job seems to have been cursing the particular date upon which he happened to be born.

Comment: Job 29:7-10 gives a sense of how revered Job was. “When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street! The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up. The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth.”

Reply: There is no question that Job was highly revered and respected for his wisdom. In addition, others recognized that God’s spirit was in him, and they regarded his being placed in the seat of wisdom in their midst as the providence of God.

Job was particularly concerned about the date of his birth. In saying, “Let that day [of my birth] be darkness; let not God regard it from above,” Job was thinking introspectively and revealing his innermost thoughts. He continued, “Let the blackness of the day terrify it. As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months.” Job was saying that he would not wish his calamity, or condition, to ever come on anyone else who, in succeeding generations, might happen to be born on the particular date of his birth in the calendrical year. In other words, “If possible, let this day be skipped in the calendar. Let it not come into cognition.”

Job 3:7 Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein.

Job 3:8 Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning.

Job 3:9 Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day:

Job 3:10 Because it shut not up the doors of my mother’s womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes.

The experience was crushing to Job. At the end of chapter 2, the Lord, in effect, gave His stamp of approval to Job, saying that Job did not let his lips bring forth what Satan was trying to get him to do, that is, to curse God. The fact that God commended Job and called him “perfect” is a proof that He looked upon Job as being perfect in obedience and as having a right spirit (Job 1:1). Job did the best a man could do under the same fallen genetic inheritance from Adam. But now Job’s lips were cursing the day of his birth. Later on, Job went even further in calling attention to the date of his birth, but at this point, he was emptying out the feelings of his heart to his friends, expecting that they would somehow console him. He was hoping for some explanation, which he could not ferret out.

People did not particularly look at the stars, signs, or omens with regard to birth until more or less the AD era. In ancient times, people regarded dates as events that had happened which were either joyful or calamitous, whereas the dates of medieval and modern history pertain more to saints, individuals, kings, etc. Israel was the exception, for the nation looked for the Messiah on a particular date.

Comment: A marginal reference gives an alternate translation for “their mourning” in verse 8 as “leviathan,” which is the same Hebrew word actually translated “leviathan” in Job 41:1. Which thought is correct?

Comment: The Companion Bible has “their mourning, a dragon” and says the reference is probably to the constellation.

Reply: Yes, “leviathan” would fit when viewed as being under the Dragon constellation, but the emphasis is on the baneful influence of that constellation upon human society. The Dragon constellation is used elsewhere in Scripture with another inflection. As for astrology, there is a great deal of truth with regard to the effect of the signs in the heavens upon people born under a certain constellation—not a particular 24-hour day but the season, which might be two days, three days, or even a week long. However, while there is some recognition of astrology in the Bible, it is a dangerous science because it takes time away from the study of the Scriptures, and although there is some truth in current astrology, that truth is mixed with a lot of error. For example, crops have been proven to be more favorable under certain signs in the heavens, and the moon also has an effect on crops.

Comment: Rotherham translates verse 8, “Let day-cursers denounce it, those skilled in rousing the dragon of the sky.”

Reply: Job wanted this day on the calendar to be skipped over. He even wished that the sun would not rise on that day. His words show that under extreme pressure, and sometimes not even under pressure, individuals who are trying to serve God faithfully say things emotionally that are not their true heart intent. However, we can see the need to reflect upon our statements each day and to ask for forgiveness where necessary, even though the Lord makes allowances for such expressions. As far as we know, when Job’s trial ended, God did not criticize him in a special or pertinent way for the words of this chapter, but God did say that Job was imprudent in some remarks. However, He looked on Job as being a faithful servant and rewarded him accordingly.

Job 3:11 Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?

Q: Does this verse indicate that only those who are born alive will receive a resurrection?

A: Yes, for the emphasis is not “Why died I not *in* the womb?” but “Why died I not *from* the womb?” From other Scriptures, we know that Job believed in a resurrection. In some expressions in later chapters, Job contradicted his calmer deliberations on the subject, but it is not unusual to overextend oneself when speaking emotionally. There is sin in a “multitude of words” (Prov. 10:19). In verse 10, Job said, “Because it shut not up the doors of my mother’s womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes.” Then verse 11 seems to be a disclaimer of what was stated in verse 10: “Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?” Verse 10 emotionally exposed Job’s thinking, and then he qualified, or modified, his statement in verse 11. We often have to adjust our thinking as well, sometimes even as we are having a study.

Comment: The Lord has provided a foundation of truth on certain issues throughout the various dispensations.

Reply: One example would be the statement in Genesis that after God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, Adam became a living soul.

Job 3:12 Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck?

This comment pertained to Job's birth and nourishment. The Revised Standard Version reads, "Why did the knees receive me?" Without a midwife or his mother's milk, he would have died at birth. The midwife sat on a stool or chair between the legs of the woman in labor so that she could cradle the baby when it came out of the womb. If the midwife's knees were together, they would inhibit the process and cause complications. The word "prevent" had a completely different meaning in the old King's English. For instance, it can mean "precede," as in the New Testament (1 Thess. 4:15).

Job 3:13 For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest,

Job 3:14 With kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves;

Job 3:15 Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver:

Job 3:16 Or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never saw light.

Q: Is verse 16 talking about stillborns?

A: Yes. Job's words applied not only to stillborns but also to miscarriages. Job did express some contradictions.

The three friends who were listening could not fully commiserate with Job because they did not have the same experience. They had not lost all of their wealth, family, and livestock. Of course Job did not lose his property, his personal house, or his wife, but he lost just about everything else. Neither did the three have boils from head to foot, so how could they properly judge Job's situation? Their judgment of Job was based more on his words than on his actual experience.

The Bible is very, very truthful. In fact, it is so truthful that it even declares Satan's lies. And while the statements of different individuals were truthfully recorded throughout the Bible, that does not necessarily mean they are God's truth or God's thinking on the matter. Whether the person was Job in the Old Testament or Peter in the New Testament or others, their statements were not necessarily spoken under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Statements that were uttered from personal feelings or experiences are not a "thus saith the LORD God" and thus cannot be compared with what God did and said.

Q: What was Job's approximate age at this time?

A: Based on certain clues still to come, he was probably between 75 and 100 years old.

Job 3:17 There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.

Not being conscious, those who are dead are not troubled or weary. People in the Middle East tend to be flowery in their utterances, and that quality is beautiful under normal circumstances,

whereas speech in our Western culture is generally colder. Thus Job was typical of those from Edom and Teman (a section of Edom).

Job 3:18 There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.

Job 3:19 The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master.

Q: In verse 11, Job expressed the wish that he had died right after birth. In verse 16, he seems to have been asking for a stillbirth, so is this a contradiction? It would seem, therefore, that we cannot really prove from these verses at what point a resurrection is guaranteed.

A: Job was unburdening his tumultuous experience, so his emotional outburst was a mixed bag of statements, but we can see the turmoil that he was undergoing. As far as we know in regard to the individuals mentioned in the Bible, only our Lord, a *perfect* being, had a similar experience.

Comment: Job's emotionalism seems similar to that of Jeremiah.

Reply: We know that Jeremiah read the Book of Job because at one time, he spoke along the same line. "Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed. Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man child is born unto thee; making him very glad. And let that man be as the cities which the LORD overthrew, and repented not: and let him hear the cry in the morning, and the shouting at noontide; Because he slew me not from the womb; or that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb to be always great with me. Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?" (Jer. 20:14-18). Unlike Job, Jeremiah was an emotional person throughout his whole life. However, Job was like Jeremiah when he was going through his suffering experience. What previously would have been a more serene reserve, by which Job could instill confidence in others, he lost in his traumatic experience through sheer physical lack of endurance. However, God knew his frame and thus allowed experiences to be recorded that would, in the estimation of some people, denigrate Job's character. What was God's judgment of Job on the whole? God rewarded Job for faithfulness because he manifested extraordinary character when he had lost so much and then said, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21). Job did not curse God or sin with his lips, and we can see from chapter 1 that he passed the supreme test.

This commendation helps us to realize how, in spite of all our imperfections and the contradictions that beset us in trying to be examples and followers of Jesus Christ, we make mistakes that other people recognize, but judgment of the true character of an individual is in God's hands. He knows how to judge—to properly weigh and balance—the degree of our faithfulness and zeal in His service. He knows where to make and not to make allowances when mistakes are made. Job and Jeremiah both made some mistakes, but both were exemplary characters. We are thus given an insight into how God used those underneath His charge in both the Old and the New Testaments, although the latter is, of course, viewed from a little different perspective.

Job 3:20 Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul;

Job 3:21 Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures;

Job 3:22 Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave?

Job 3:23 Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?

Job 3:24 For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters.

If we were in Job's place and did not know about the philosophy of the permission of evil, our thinking would be the same as his, that is, if we had had his previous experience with all the light of favor, knowledge, understanding, happiness, and everything that accompanied his righteousness and goodness, and then severe calamities occurred—an *opposite* experience. Job was exposing the utter tumult in his soul. And we can thank God for giving us insight into Job's contradictions, for they help us to see that God is truly like a Father and that He can understand some of the contradictions if they occur under unusual duress. Satan brought these calamities on Job, and Job had no knowledge of what had happened before the calamities. He was given much light, and then he had a very dark experience. Job could not understand the mixture of light and darkness in his own life.

Q: Was suicide ever broached?

A: As regards the high calling, it is our understanding that any of the consecrated who commit suicide will not be members of the Little Flock. Whether or not any who commit suicide will get life in the Great Company is another matter. We are frightened to make such a judgment. We are more inclined to think that they will not, but we know of no Scripture that states the matter either way. For the Little Flock, however, to commit suicide would be taking the sacrifice off the altar.

“And my roarings are poured out like the waters.” Job was vomiting forth his troubling thoughts, as it were, in utterance to his friends. He was laying everything on the table for them to see. Job was unusual in his honesty and openness, for people normally would not so expose their inner thoughts before others, but he thought the three were his *real* friends. After all, they had sat quietly with him for seven days, mourning and not eating.

Job 3:25 For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.

Job 3:26 I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.

Verses 25 and 26 are an interesting end to the chapter. Do not we, as Christians, who have been trying to live faithfully according to the requirements of the gospel, have from time to time in our life—irrespective of what deeds, good or otherwise, we might have done—moments of wondering whether we will make our calling and election sure? Haven't we had a foreboding, or premonition, that something dire awaits us? Even during the period of his serenity, peace, and favor with God, Job wondered with regard to the future. Calamities were the very thing he had greatly feared would come upon him. Any individuals in a position of authority or influence who see that the Lord has blessed them in connection with their deeds and works would at times realize that responsibility goes with the influence and thus might have disquieting thoughts of uncertainty as to what the future portends for them as individuals—as to what their ultimate fate will be. Job had such thoughts, even though God said in the beginning, in a qualified way, that he was “perfect” and none was like him in all the earth. This revelation about Job can be comforting to those who have similar thoughts. It is not strange that such experiences come even upon the very elect before they ultimately make their calling and election sure. Having this understanding is comforting, but it does not give us liberty to sin. As the Apostle Paul said, “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid” (Rom. 6:1,2). This exposure of Job's innermost thoughts is educational to us as Christians. Even while he was in safety and had rest prior to the calamities, he had a little doubt underneath. Job was hoping everything would end up in secure eternal favor with God.

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

Job 4:2 If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? but who can withhold himself from speaking?

Job had been speaking, and he did not really finish his comments when Eliphaz the Temanite interrupted because he could not remain silent any longer. He said in effect, "Pardon us, but we cannot help interrupting you." Apparently, Eliphaz was the most important of the three individuals, possibly based upon his age but especially based upon the nature of his background, that is, his relationship with the patriarchs of the past. Therefore, he felt he was speaking on behalf of his two friends as well.

The problem was that Job had just spoken the words of his heart, and he expected a different response than that which would be forthcoming. Eliphaz was in a *teaching* mode, not in a commiserate mode. He did not say, "Oh, Job, we can empathize with your suffering." The three were not giving proper consideration to the trauma Job had experienced. Of course they came with the motive of comforting Job, but the first thing Eliphaz did, as spokesman for the three, was to interrupt. After hearing Job's outbursts, they decided that he was in the wrong frame of mind. Now they would supposedly "help" him by taking an aloof, detached mode of reasoning instead of, as the Apostle Paul said, weeping with those who weep and being weak with those who are weak. It was apparent that the three did not have empathy when Eliphaz first opened his mouth.

Comment: The three must have entertained improper thoughts during the seven days so that they now felt a kind of repulsion for Job's condition.

Reply: That was not the case at first. At this point, they were trying to sound out Job, for in the past, he had received tremendous respect. Not only did God consider Job the greatest man in the East, but as subsequent chapters will show, he had made quite an impression on the locale where he lived. Therefore, the three had to give some deference to Job's reputation, but we can see that they were beginning to have doubts. Not understanding the philosophy of the permission of evil, they considered grief and sorrow as a sign of disobedience in some manner. They did not see the disciplinary method that God has in teaching His respected servants.

Q: Since Eliphaz came from Teman, an area known for wisdom, would he have felt he was expected to speak up? Is that a tendency we must guard against? We may think we should give counsel when we really need to use caution and be sure our words are scriptural.

A: It is very important not to give wrong counsel. In fact, it is better to remain quiet than to give improper counsel. Eliphaz apparently felt superior to the other two because they showed deference in allowing him to speak first, but he probably did not feel superior to Job at this point. As we proceed, we will learn many details about Job's broad accomplishments.

Job 4:3 Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands.

Job 4:4 Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees.

Job 4:5 But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.

Job 4:6 Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?

Eliphaz was saying, “Job, you have helped, instructed, and given strength to others in their need, and now, physician, heal yourself. Accept your own counsel.”

Eliphaz was telling Job in effect, “In giving counsel to others, you have, to a certain extent, felt a superiority. You have felt higher than those you were counseling in their traumatic experiences, and this feeling has built up in you.” Eliphaz was possibly implying, or insinuating, a false confidence, a confidence that was not really merited because of Job’s weakness. “As a teacher, you have become too confident in your own character structure.”

Comment: Verses 5 and 6 in the Revised Standard Version read as follows: “But now it has come to you, and you are impatient; it touches you, and you are dismayed. Is not your fear of God your confidence, and the integrity of your ways your hope?” After very few comments, Eliphaz was already rubbing it in.

Reply: Yes, and the comment of Eliphaz was based on Job’s previous unburdening of his heart. Eliphaz did not stop to think what it would have been like to be in Job’s shoes. He should have asked, “What would I do if I had had the experiences of Job? What if I had lost most of my family, all of my goods, and my health and I was nearing death?” The three comforters should have commiserated with Job and not have been aloof as if they were teachers—at least not when they first started to speak.

Comment: Christian Scientists think that ill health is a sign or proof of one’s not being right with God. Thus they have a similar attitude of aloofness.

At this point, Eliphaz was speaking a little tentatively and carefully, but as time went on, he (and the others) spoke more boldly. Certainly they were anything but comforters. At this point, the three were very perplexed about Job’s situation. They were trying to sort out his circumstance in their minds and to reconcile what was happening to him. It was as if their culture was winning out in spite of their wisdom. Those who are really wise weigh matters carefully and detach themselves as far as possible from their training, for they want to give the right counsel. The three were speaking tentatively now, rather than dogmatically.

Job 4:7 Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?

Job 4:8 Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.

Job 4:9 By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.

Job 4:10 The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions, are broken.

Job 4:11 The old lion perisheth for lack of prey, and the stout lion’s whelps are scattered abroad.

Initially, the remarks of Eliphaz were somewhat conciliatory in tone, but now his background training came to the fore. He felt that the innocent and the righteous would not be cut off. He was saying in effect, “Can you, Job, call to mind any single instance where this axiom has not taken place?” Of course Eliphaz was making a rhetorical comment and was not expecting an answer. Notice that he now detached himself from the “we” approach and said, “Even as I have seen”; that is, “It is my personal experience that those who plow iniquity sow wickedness, and they reap the same.” What he was saying is true, and the thought is given in many other Scriptures. Even God said, “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7). However, there are exceptions, so if we judge a person by the effects of his experience, we

might give an erroneous interpretation. In other words, there are two types of chastening: (1) for disobedience and (2) for development of character for office. The ancients were not familiar with the second type of chastening, which is the gospel teaching. The Apostle Peter said, “The trial of your faith is precious indeed,” but he also said, “If you are punished for wrongdoing, you are to suffer it. It is for your good but not in the same sense as being schooled or disciplined for office and for doing well” (1 Pet. 1:7; 2:20 paraphrase).

Eliphaz began to extrapolate further with dramatic but uncalled-for words: “By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.” He was improperly becoming an orator. He went into the animal creation about the old, the middle-aged, and the young lion, but these were just words—unnecessary words—at a time when Job was suffering. Here was a case of overspeak, overkill.

Job 4:12 Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof.

Job 4:13 In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men,

Job 4:14 Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.

Job 4:15 Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up:

Job 4:16 It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying,

Job 4:17 Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker?

Job 4:18 Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly:

Job 4:19 How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth?

Job 4:20 They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever without any regarding it.

Job 4:21 Doth not their excellency which is in them go away? they die, even without wisdom.

The “thing ... secretly brought” to Eliphaz is the advice that was given to him by a fallen spirit. This demon had spoken and reasoned with him sometime in the past, and Eliphaz accredited the advice as being true wisdom, superior to that of man. He was saying, “I had an experience in my life in which a thing was brought to my attention.” He felt he was given a little insight by the experience of a vision. While he was in a deep sleep at night, the sensation of fear came upon him so strongly that his body trembled and his bones shook. It was as though he had a premonition that something would happen, and lo and behold, something did happen. A spirit passed before his face in a somewhat nebulous fashion, and the hair of his flesh raised up. Then the spirit stood stationary in front of him, although Eliphaz could not discern the form with distinctness. All of a sudden, he heard this being speak (verses 17-21). Eliphaz felt the advice of this spirit being was superior to the wisdom of mortal man down here. Therefore, he said, “Listen, Job, to my experience, which is related to what you just told us. Your comments were extraordinary in that you were trying to justify yourself before God. Shall a mortal man like you be more important than his Maker, the Creator?”

Eliphaz spoke in an earnest mode. Although he did not condemn Job, he said Job’s words did not make sense. “You should realize, Job, that you are putting yourself in a superior attitude.”

Eliphaz continued to relate what the spirit being had told him, saying the advice was what Job needed. “Behold, God does not trust His servants, and He charges His angels with folly.” In other words, the spirit being called to remembrance the relegating of angels to *tartaroo* in chains of darkness. Part of the fuzziness of the vision was because the demons had less power and ability at that time to develop the means of communication, which they have subsequently been honing to perfection up to the present day. The advice was that God Himself does not implicitly trust the angels, but we know that God has a lot of trust in the holy angels, for they passed a severe test and will not die anymore (Luke 20:36). Therefore, the holy angels are in a different situation from those who are bound in chains of darkness. The advice of the demon was superior in that it was uncanny, but it contained flaws.

The dream, or vision, was so vivid that even now, when talking to Job, Eliphaz was getting an aftershock. Just in calling the experience to memory, he got a chill. The chill he felt has been mentioned by many people who have had the experience of a spirit materialization or a spirit talking to them.

Now Eliphaz told the effect of the advice, or logic, of the spirit being. “If God does not trust His angelic servants—if He does not trust the angels—how much less He would trust mortal beings down here on earth who are made of clay, whose foundation is in the dust.” The word “Adam” pertains to earth; man was made from the dirt of the earth. Eliphaz was really saying, “Job, you are in the house of clay. Do you really think your line of reasoning is correct? Your words are out of place and unbecoming. You are of the earth, earthy.”

The spirit being had continued, “They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever without any regarding it”; that is, “Many people die every day, and death is regarded as a natural thing.” The spirit being said further, “Doth not their excellency which is in them go away? they die, even without wisdom.” In other words, “Does not the excellency of a human being cease? One is born a beautiful and healthy baby, he grows up in stature and age, and finally, in time, he gets wrinkles, dies, and goes into the tomb. Human beings die not knowing anything.” This reasoning is true today of the vast majority of people. They follow the pursuit of happiness with the philosophy of eat, drink, and be merry, and they die without any real substantive knowledge. Thus the demon spoke a degree of common sense.

Job 5:1 Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?

While Eliphaz was inferring that Job tried to justify himself before God, he said, “Is there any other holy person here on earth who could justify himself?” The implied answer was no. By using the angelic counsel, Eliphaz was questioning the wisdom of Job and his reputation of the past. Eliphaz hoped that Job would listen to him, confess the real problem, and repent.

Job 5:2 For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one.

“Job, do you think you are any different from any other holy person? Wrath kills the foolish, and envy slays the silly.” Eliphaz digressed from the counsel of the demon to his own personal counsel.

Job 5:3 I have seen the foolish taking root: but suddenly I cursed his habitation.

Eliphaz was calling into question, in a tentative fashion, whether the reputation of Job in the past was really merited. He changed from a comforter to a counselor to having suspicions, all the while hoping Job would interrupt him and say, “Eliphaz, you are right. I made a mistake,” etc. But Job was honest and wanted to defend his integrity, which was real and proper.

Job 5:4 His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them.

Job 5:5 Whose harvest the hungry eateth up, and taketh it even out of the thorns, and the robber swalloweth up their substance.

While Eliphaz may have had a reputation as being a wise man, his observation was not accurate, for these things happened back there and they happen now. Both those who are living reasonably proper lives and those who are living improper lives experience robberies and calamities. In fact, as time goes on and man becomes more fallen, the majority may fit into the characterization that Eliphaz gave the wicked. But certainly in his own day, there were other righteous individuals besides Job who got sick and had troubles and problems. To suit his purpose, Eliphaz focused on just one side of the equation. He lacked a proper understanding.

Job 5:6 Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground;

Job 5:7 Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.

Eliphaz now started to take a different tangent. He was saying that we cannot blame inanimate nature (the ground, stones, etc.) because the trouble, the iniquity, arises in man himself. Eliphaz was using a detached mode, but he was insinuating to Job, “You cannot put this blame on anyone else or on nature. What is causing your trouble must be in you yourself. You are the problem, for the wicked have calamitous experiences. Sin is not a genetic disorder.” The curse on Adam was not fully realized. Eliphaz was saying that man, instead of being born and shapen in iniquity, is introduced into the world at birth, and what develops is based on his disobedience to his very nature. Therefore, one should curb himself from making wild statements such as those Job had just uttered. Eliphaz was rubbing in these digs to Job but doing it as if he were talking about general conditions. He was insinuating, “Job, don’t you realize that you are falling into the category of the wicked? There is something you need to confess. Instead of revealing your fault, you are trying to maintain your integrity. The facts utterly contradict your statements.”

Job 5:8 I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause:

Job 5:9 Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number:

Job 5:10 Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields:

Eliphaz continued to give advice to Job concerning the latter’s trauma. Eliphaz had previously mentioned that seeking counsel of men, or flesh, would be of no avail, and he related his dream of an angel who had appeared to him. In the dream, the angel said, “Even God does not trust angels,” so the question was, “To whom should Job go for advice?” The suggestion was that Job should seek counsel from God Himself in order to get the necessary advice to bring him to his senses.

Throughout the chapter, Eliphaz spoke worldly wisdom. This wisdom contained a lot of truth, and the world regarded him as a wise man to whom one should go for advice and counsel. However, the problem was that his words did not fit Job’s experience. Eliphaz had said, “Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward” (verse 7); that is, trouble is continuous. Just as gravity causes water to fall downward to the earth, so sparks go in the reverse direction, upward.

Eliphaz was saying, “I would seek unto God, and unto God I would commit my cause.” Then he began to talk about the wonderful things of God that are evident in the heavens and the tenderness and mercy that are manifest in nature. God “doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number.” A hymn contains similar words. God’s mercies in our own personal experience are numberless. In fact, they are so multitudinous that we are not even aware of many of them. God “giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields.” Wherever the fields are—whether they are cultivated or in uninhabited portions of the earth—the Lord supplies moisture. (Of course deserts are the exception.) Many uninhabited places are very beautiful.

Comment: As proof that Eliphaz had the wrong slant on Job’s sufferings, he said, “Therefore despise not thou the *chastening* of the Almighty” (verse 17).

Reply: The bottom line was the failure to understand the permission of evil and the misapplication to Job’s experience. The three comforters were thinking that for Job, who formerly was so honored, to be in this tragic state, he must have done something wrong, and they were searching for the cause and continuously trying to get him to confess. Of course Job would not confess, for he properly believed in his own integrity.

Job 5:11 To set up on high those that be low; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety.

Comment: Here is an example of Eliphaz’s understanding of the permission of evil. Now the wicked are set up, but in the Kingdom, the situation will be reversed and the righteous set up.

Reply: He was saying to Job, “God is merciful to those who repent.” He was looking for Job to bring forth such words, but they were not forthcoming. Eliphaz was praising God, but his words did not fit Job’s situation at all. It is interesting that Eliphaz did recognize to a certain extent the instructional value of hard experiences—but more in the way that Peter said, “What glory is there in suffering for the things you do wrong?” (1 Pet. 2:20 paraphrase). Eliphaz did not see the perspective that to be kings and priests in the next age, we must have disciplinary experiences now. And if faithful, we will have more discipline, for all who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12). Thus the aspect of sorrow and trauma in one’s life can have a great value and can be the reward of *faithfulness* rather than unfaithfulness.

Comment: *Strong’s Concordance* defines “safety” as “deliverance” (from mourning).

Job 5:12 He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise.

Job 5:13 He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.

Job 5:14 They meet with darkness in the daytime, and grope in the noonday as in the night.

Job 5:15 But he saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty.

Job 5:16 So the poor hath hope, and iniquity stoppeth her mouth.

Eliphaz had just said that God’s mercy was over all of His works and that He exalts the humble. Now he was saying that God darkens the wise and the crafty and saves the poor in spirit from harm and poverty. Although these words made sense, they did not apply to what Job was experiencing.

Q: Most of the Book of Job is bad counsel from the three comforters and from Elihu, but brethren often quote some of their statements to support a premise as if they are Jehovah's thinking. Is the thought that what they were saying was not necessarily incorrect, but it just did not apply to Job?

A: Yes, the Apostle Paul gave similar counsel but to those who deserved the darkening of their counsel and made foolish the wisdom of this world.

Imagine how Job felt listening to this advice that did not apply to him! His response in chapters 6 and 7 to the words of Eliphaz was very much to the point.

One problem is that the three, who came from a distance to comfort Job, had learned about Job's situation through hearsay. When they saw him, they were surprised and startled. Then Eliphaz began to interpret and suspicion in his mind that Job's previous reputation was unmerited, that he was not worthy of his reputation. The three comforters felt that Job had been crafty and that the Lord was now humbling him to expose his unworthiness to have such a reputation. This thinking seems to underlie the advice that the three gave Job. Therefore, their counsel was not only worthless but also frustrating to Job; it added to his misery.

Instead of counseling and helping Job, Eliphaz was giving a *talk or lecture*: "They meet with darkness in the daytime, and grope in the noonday as in the night. But he saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty. So the poor hath hope, and iniquity stoppeth her mouth." Eliphaz was carried away in his own eloquence. Moreover, his statements were not necessarily true in all cases. Does God always save the poor from the sword? Do the poor always have hope? No, for there are many exceptions. The words of Eliphaz were empty. A famous poet said, "Hope springs eternal from the human breast." Generally speaking, that statement is true but not always. The poor are often in a rather hopeless situation, not knowing where their next meal is coming from.

Job 5:17 Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:

Eliphaz was thinking that the Almighty was chastening Job for something done wrong and that if Job confessed, God would deliver him. Proverbs 24:16 is often quoted: "A just man falleth seven times" and is lifted up. Thus there is a certain wisdom in the words of Eliphaz, but they did not fit Job's situation. God permitted Satan to have the upper hand in Job's experiences to show his obedience and strength of character. The permitted testing also showed that no one else on earth was like Job at that time.

Comment: The words of the supposed comforters were like a backdoor persecution by Satan. The counsel heaped even more misery on Job, trying to convince him that he had done something wrong.

Reply: Yes, he lost all of his goods and family except his wife, who told him to curse God and die to end his misery. Then the comforters added to his grief with their inappropriate counsel. What an unusual person Job was to survive the repeated traumas!

Job 5:18 For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.

Job 5:19 He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.

Eliphaz was giving a speech and trying to be eloquent. He could have just said, "God shall deliver you in seven troubles."

Job was being judged by hearsay. The good that he had done will come out in later chapters, and some of his accomplishments were startling and unusual. If just, the contemporaries *who saw Job* would have said he had innate goodness, and they would not have attributed an evil motive. But when the three comforters heard about Job from a distance, that was another matter. Moreover, a lot of judgment is based on either genetics or environment. Part of the counsel of the three comforters was the result of the type of life that they lived. Dwelling as nomads, they could soliloquize and philosophize, and they had plenty of time to think. But Job was in corrupt civilization, where he marvelously maintained his integrity. To a certain extent, the three counselors failed to appreciate the real Job.

When we finish this verse-by-verse study, we should have more insight into Job's marvelous character. Seeing his exemplary qualities will make us wonder that Abraham, Job, and other Ancient Worthies were not promised the high calling. We will ask, "Am I worthy?"

Comment: In our judicial system, we say a person is innocent until he is proven guilty. It seems that throughout this whole experience, Job was presumed to be guilty without any proof.

Reply: Yes. In France, the presumption is reversed. When a person goes for trial, he is considered guilty until he is proven innocent. That approach is a carryover from the days of the Inquisition. The United States and England with its Magna Charta have been very blessed. The Bible has provided wondrous benefit in enlightening mankind, even from a natural standpoint in the judicial system.

Comment: When, for instance, a dispute occurs between two brethren, we may not know the nature of the dispute, either because it is not necessary to know all of the facts or because the information is not passed on correctly. How often the one who is in the wrong is given the sympathy, and the one who is in the right is treated with reserve! The mistreatment could be a chastening in one sense perhaps because the party was guilty of unwittingly doing something along this line to another brother or sister. Now, when the party gets the ill treatment himself, he can see the impropriety of his former actions. And, if taken rightly, the experience can be a wonderful way to develop a finer character with more noble principles. The Lord is looking for a class who will know how to judge righteously.

Comment: The Lord vindicates us; we do not vindicate ourselves.

Comment: We must be extremely careful to understand the facts of a situation before being predisposed one way or another. Job's comforters presumed guilt without knowing the facts, and the same thing could happen among ourselves. We might presume that a brother's or a sister's experience is one of chastisement rather than one that the Lord permits for disciplinary purposes.

Reply: Yes, that is the sum of the matter.

Comment: When brethren are going through a trial, it is better for us to err on the side of encouraging them to lean on the Lord than to assume that the trial is a chastisement.

Reply: Yes. However, we certainly get experiences both for doing good and for doing wrong. The hymn "How Firm a Foundation" has the words "Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine." The Lord's people, no matter how faithful, get chastening experiences for doing wrong, but they also get experiences in suffering for righteousness' sake. Of course we want the great majority of our experiences to be for the latter reason, rather than for wrongdoing, but both are necessary in the present life because of our imperfections.

Job 5:20 In famine he shall redeem thee from death: and in war from the power of the sword.

Job 5:21 Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue: neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh.

Job 5:22 At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh: neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth.

Job 5:23 For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.

Job 5:24 And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin.

Job 5:25 Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth.

Job 5:26 Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season.

In verses 18 and 19, Eliphaz said, “He [God] maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.” Eliphaz was saying that the Lord would do these things for those who are rightly exercised and confess their faults, which Job was not doing. Moreover, God would “deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.” In verses 20-26, Eliphaz continued to enumerate things God would do for those who are rightly exercised and confess their wrong. “In famine he shall redeem thee from death: and in war from the power of the sword. Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue: neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh. At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh: neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth. For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee. And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin. Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth. Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season.” In other words, Eliphaz was saying to Job, “If you are restored to good standing in God’s sight, you will be almost like Adam was before he sinned.” Adam was in harmony with nature and the beasts of the field. A beautiful oneness existed between Adam and God prior to the sin. The principle being enunciated was, “If you do good, you will be rewarded accordingly. But, Job, you did something wrong.”

Consider the statement “Thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field”; that is, “You will be in harmony with inanimate nature, as well as with your fellow man.” This beautiful thought is true, but it did not apply to Job. At the time of the Civil War at Gettysburg, Abraham Lincoln’s address was preceded by that of a famous orator from New England, whose talk was more than an hour in length. Then Lincoln stepped up to the podium and gave an eight- or ten-minute discourse that was a masterpiece. The orator later admitted that he had overspoken. Here Eliphaz gave a wonderful speech, but it was not at all on the point.

As is stated at the end of the Book of Job, the very things Eliphaz was talking about did occur to Job later. He lived a longer life and had more children—in short, he was restored. Therefore, what Eliphaz said was true but not with Job at this time. The real crusher was the next statement, verse 27.

Job 5:27 Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good.

Eliphaz was now talking on behalf of all three comforters, two of whom had not yet even spoken. “Lo ... , we have searched it, so it is; hear it [Job], and know thou it for thy good.” Talk about rubbing salt in the wound! Eliphaz’s first discourse ended with this climax. According to *their* thinking and reasoning, the three comforters were the wise ones, and Job was the victim.

Job 6:1 But Job answered and said,

Job 6:2 Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together!

Now Job replied to Eliphaz. His “grief” was his emotional trauma and outburst. He was saying that if his grief were put on one side of the balance scale and the calamities (the testings of the Adversary—loss of property, goods, family, and health) were put on the other side, the scale would plummet downward on the side of his emotional trauma. The grief he was expressing to his supposed friends was disproportionate to the calamities and the evils that occurred in his losses. Not only could the three comforters not empathetically enter into the trauma Job was experiencing, but they thought his emotional outbursts were terrible. If they had properly weighed Job’s vexation of spirit versus the disaster and ruin he suffered, the three would have been more commiserative and sympathetic. Job was looking for comfort and help, and they were just adding to his misery.

Job 6:3 For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up.

Job’s loss was heavier than the sand of the sea. He was saying, “My grief is becoming unbearable. It is like heavy sand weighing on my soul.” The loss that caused his trauma was much heavier than the three comforters realized. They did not properly evaluate Job’s sufferings. His attempts to justify his complaints became meaningless because of the failure of the three to properly weigh what had occurred to him.

Comment: For the last half of verse 3, the King James margin reads, “I want words to express my grief.”

Comment: Job used a lot of analogies to nature in his responses.

Reply: Yes, he talked about animals, agriculture, the heavens, and mining. He had a tremendous background of experience.

Job 6:4 For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.

Job’s experiences and the remarks of the three were like poison-tipped arrows that pierced him. To a certain extent, he was blaming God for permitting the experiences. Job was feeling a great loss and weakness, and as he meditated on his woeful condition, or estate, it got worse and worse. Later chapters provide details of the “terrors of God” that Job had experienced during the seven days of silence. In addition to his not eating or drinking for that period of time, all kinds of thoughts went through his mind and spirit.

Q: Does David quote from Job in the Psalms?

A: Yes, some of the Psalms give evidence that David was familiar with the Book of Job.

Job 6:5 Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? or loweth the ox over his fodder?

“Does the wild ass bray or the ox low when it has food to eat?” The obvious answer was no, for the animals are satisfied when eating. But what was Job’s purpose in asking the question? He was likening Eliphaz and his two companions to the satisfied wild ass and ox. (Although the other two had not yet spoken, their attitude and actions betrayed their thinking.) The three were not complaining because they had not experienced the trials Job was having. By using these analogies, Job was telling the three that they had not empathized with him at all. They had a relatively comfortable life. Since they still had their homes, health, children, and wealth, they were calm, cool, and collected, yet they were ready to give advice to Job, who was in misery and in utter need of comfort. Instead of giving comfort, they added to his woes. When animals are eating, they are satisfied and thus do not bray or low to express discontent. But Job was in want, so he was braying and lowing.

Job criticized his comforters. Not only did they not complain, but because they were not in need, they were uttering praises and talking about the tender mercies of God. Job was complaining and saying in effect, “If you had the same experiences I am having, would you speak and act any differently?” Arab thinking is difficult for us to understand because the perspective is different from the thinking of Western culture. The subtle innuendos become very meaningful.

Job felt that he was suffering from the poison-tipped arrows of the Almighty and that the terrors of God were arrayed against him. Since the comforters did not have that experience, they were of no help to him whatever.

Q: Is the following the correct thought? Eliphaz had told Job not to complain, and now Job was saying, “You do not understand because you have not been through my experiences. Even the wild ass would bray if it did not have any grass, and the ox without fodder would low.”

A: Yes, but there is a double meaning. An animal cannot bray or low while it is eating because its mouth is already filled, and Job was drawing a lesson with regard to both himself and the three comforters.

Q: Why did Job use a variety of names for Jehovah?

A: Here Job used “the Almighty” and “God.” These were colder expressions in the sense that it was hard for Job to see the tender mercies of God in his experiences. Not understanding the permission of evil, he did not realize that God was permitting *the Adversary* to do the tempting and to produce the series of experiences. Job did not know another being was in the equation of the boils, property losses, etc. Consequently, he did not understand the situation—about the poison-tipped arrows and the terror of God. Job did not know the philosophy of the principle that evil is educational and preparatory for a later opposite experience of reward, glory, and honor. The three comforters also did not understand, but they concluded Job’s trials were for wrongdoing. Instead the trials were a result of doing good, and they were permitted in order to show how wonderful Job’s character was. If we had lived back there, we would not have understood either.

Job 6:6 Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt? or is there any taste in the white of an egg?

Again the obvious answer to the rhetorical questions was no. The unsavory thing that could not be eaten without salt was tasteless food. Instead of giving proper “food” to strengthen Job in his trial—instead of providing constructive advice and comforting words—the three comforters gave flat counsel. The Apostle Paul said, “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Col. 4:6). As a preservative, salt is constructive and healthful, and it purifies. Job was saying, “How can I

accept your advice when it contains nothing profitable?”

“Is there any taste in the white of an egg?” Commentators give multiple explanations, but the meaning would seem to be the following. The literal Hebrew is not talking about the white of an egg but about saliva that drools out of the mouth or mucus that drains from the nose. Not only was Job likening the advice the three were giving him to tasteless food, but it was really offensive. In other words, “Is there any sense from the drivel [drool] of dreams?” He was referring to an earlier comment of Eliphaz about a spirit that appeared to him in a dream and gave advice. Eliphaz turned around and gave that same advice to Job, saying, “The experience I had with the spirit in the dream teaches us that God does not trust angels, and He trusts mankind even less. Therefore, you should seek God for comfort.” The word translated “egg” in the King James is “dream” in the literal Hebrew, and “white” is “drool” or “spittle.”

Job 6:7 The things that my soul refused to touch are as my sorrowful meat.

Not only was the advice meaningless and disgusting, but the fact that Job was forced to listen to the advice compounded his misery. In his defenseless, sorrowful state, he had to eat their tasteless food, which was supposedly for his comfort and edification.

Job 6:8 Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing that I long for!

Job 6:9 Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off!

Job requested that God would grant him what he longed for: death. However, he sensed that God would not allow him to die. Job wanted God to loosen His hand even more so that he would expire and thus be put out of his misery. Although Job was undergoing unbelievable experiences, he sensed a curbing, a holding in check, and he was saying, “Couldn’t you relax your hand a little more so that I will expire?” Job sensed the scenario the book started with, namely, when God said to Satan in the second allegorical encounter, “You may cause Job all kinds of misery, but you cannot take his life.” Now Job wanted to die.

Job 6:10 Then should I yet have comfort; yea, I would harden myself in sorrow: let him not spare; for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One.

“Then [if I died] should I yet have comfort” because there is no suffering in the grave. The dead are silent, unconscious, and without pain. Job certainly did not believe in the hellfire theory.

“Yea, I would harden myself in sorrow.” If God would loosen His hand a little more, Job would help in the matter by bemoaning his fate even more intensely to hasten death. In other words, Job would cooperate by enhancing his own grief so that he would die and end his misery.

“Let him [God] not spare.” Job continued to express to Eliphaz his wish for death. “For I have not concealed [denied—NIV] the words of the Holy One.” Job knew that he had been faithful to God and that he loved the Lord God with all his heart. His whole life, ministry, and service—his judgeship, his visiting of the sick, etc.—were conducted with the thought of being a help to others and being in harmony with God. He felt he had tried to the utmost of his ability, even though he was fallen, to be faithful to God, and God knew that, so Job was really puzzled about his difficult experiences.

The integrity of Job’s heart, service, and life will come out in later remarks. He was a most unusual individual because he bared the vows he had made to God, and he felt he had been faithful to them up to this point. Therefore, he was utterly bewildered as to the reason for his

experiences. The New Testament tells that a man should judge himself in quietness (1 Cor. 11:28). In spite of our faults, when we search down deep into our heart, we know that trials come upon us (evil thoughts, evil deeds, etc.), but we also know if our will, which is the reins, or the motive behind the heart, is really to do God's will. In searching his integrity, Job felt that he had been true and faithful, so he was bewildered and wanted to be cut off in death and thus be at rest. He would prefer to de cease rather than to battle the experience any longer.

Job 6:11 What is my strength, that I should hope? and what is mine end, that I should prolong my life?

Job 6:12 Is my strength the strength of stones? or is my flesh of brass?

Job could not see the light at the end of the tunnel. He realized there was a danger because his flesh was not as brass and his strength was not that of a stone. He was saying, "If my troubles go on any longer, I do not want to end up cursing God," which is the very thing his wife had urged him to do to end his misery. Job wanted to die before he broke down completely and made thoroughly irresponsible remarks that could result in his utter destruction without hope of a future life.

Job 6:13 Is not my help in me? and is wisdom driven quite from me?

Job 6:14 To him that is afflicted pity should be shown from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty.

Job had been saying he did not understand his experiences, but now he changed the subject. He said to Eliphaz, "Even in my present situation, I still have wisdom and can understand good advice, but you are not giving it to me. In spite of all this misery, I am able to listen to what you are saying, but your words do not make sense."

Verse 14 supports verse 13. In fact, it is like the topical sentence for the rest of the chapter. Job continued speaking to Eliphaz: "To him that is afflicted pity should be shown from his friend." Job had expected to be comforted by his three friends and to be given some benefit and help for his misery, but his hope was in vain. As far as his own integrity was concerned, however, he still had his reasoning powers. "Is not my help in me?"

Q: If we were in Job's place, we would have spoken plainly to the comforters: "Your advice is worthless. You do not have a clue." But Job responded in an esoteric sort of way.

A: Yes, and that is why Rudyard Kipling said, "East is east and west is west, and never the twain shall meet." In his experiences, he found that the thinking, writing, reasoning, and grammar of the East were very different from those in our Western culture. If familiar with the language, those living in the Middle East and Asia would find Job's reasoning more understandable. To us, Job's reasoning is puzzling and different.

Most of the expressions Job and his comforters used were idiomatic in nature. A review of verses 2-14, stating them in "Americana" style, will show how superior Job's reasoning was in his rebuttal to Eliphaz.

Verses 2 and 3: "Oh that my grief—the relatively brief but rash outburst utterances of my complaint before God and man—were, on the one hand, laid on the balance of the scale. Then, on the other hand, if all of the heavy burden of the calamity befalling me—the loss of cattle, servants, family, health, and esteem of neighbors and countryman—were given due consideration and lifted up and placed on the other balance of the scale, the latter would far outweigh, as the sand of the sea, the former complaints."

Verse 4: “The poison-tipped arrows permitted of the Almighty, such as the advice and counsel you have just given, have had their delusional side effects. They produce in me a terror of God.” Or to think the matter another way: “The repetitive manner of your many sharp darts, Eliphaz, sucks up whatever spirit remains in the immune system of my soul.”

Verse 5: “Indeed you seem to view whatever I have to say as the braying of a wild ass, as the moaning of a dumb ox. The only reason you do not bray or moan for grass or fodder is because fullness of bread is before you, and you do not lack or want.”

Verses 6 and 7: “Besides, the mental food or provender set before me is unsavory, lacking salt or wise counsel. Is there any sense, substantive value, or taste to the drooling drivel of dreams that you proffer [a reference to Job 4:12-21]? Yet you seem to insist that I swallow that which but further intensifies my grief, the last thing my soul would desire or long for.”

Verses 8 and 9: “Oh, that I might have my request—oh, that God would grant me what I long for—that it would please Him to destroy me and He would further loose His hand [Job 2:6] and cut me off even out of the land of the living and not prolong my misery.” Little did Job know that Satan was the most active and responsible entity afflicting him.

Verse 10: “Then should I have comfort. Yea, to this end, I would willingly submit to even greater grief and desire further that God not spare the rod, for I have not falsely hidden the words of the Holy One or failed to declare throughout my life to others, as well as to myself, His counsel and instruction. Therefore, if death comes soon, my faithfulness of the past up to the present would not be marred but would be sealed intact.”

Verse 11: “In view of the fact that there seems to be no light at the end of the tunnel of my present experience, what purpose is there that I should desire the prolonging of days?”

Verse 12: “Besides, the trauma I am going through has left me so weak and fragile that I cannot withstand much more of the same. Is my strength the strength of stones? Is my flesh brass?”

Verses 13 and 14: “However, I am not yet entirely bereft of my reasoning faculties. Up to this point in time, I have endured and maintained my integrity of purpose and, therefore, have hope, as it were, against hope.”

Verse 14: “To him that is afflicted, ought not pity to be shown from his friend, for ought not one in the giving of improper counsel realize that he forsaketh fear of retribution from the Almighty?”

Job 6:15 My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away;

In that part of the world, wadis with water would suddenly dry up. Job drew the analogy that his friends were like these wadis. They appeared to be refreshing, but in reality, they were not. No comfort was forthcoming.

Comment: The New American Standard uses the word “wadi”: “My brothers have acted deceitfully like a wadi, Like the torrents of wadis which vanish.”

Reply: Yes, “wadi” is the correct thought.

Job 6:16 Which are blackish by reason of the ice, and wherein the snow is hid:

Job knew about snow and ice because there were mountains and snow in the area where he lived. Strangely, in the coolness of spring, the water traveling down a stream or brook appears to be dark when its source is melting snow from a mountain. In the summer months, the water in that same brook appears lighter and more cheerful. Therefore, as the water traveled down to the desert wadis from the mountains, it looked “blackish by reason of the ice.”

Job 6:17 What time they wax warm, they vanish: when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place.

Job 6:18 The paths of their way are turned aside; they go to nothing, and perish.

Verses 17 and 18 refer to the phenomenon of a wadi with plenty of water that dries up quickly in the heat of the sun. Job continued to rebut the remarks of Eliphaz.

Job 6:19 The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them.

The expression “troops of Tema” is a play on words. Bible dictionaries usually say that Tema had an Ishmaelite origin, an Arabic background, with people who led caravans across the desert. The “troops of Tema” and the “companies of Sheba” waited for water in the wadis so that they could replenish the water in their skins (their “bottles,” as it were).

Job was telling a little story that related to the three comforters, who had journeyed from their homelands to visit him in his time of need. These three individuals, or “brethren,” were not ordinary men, for they were advanced socially and intellectually above their compatriots. They came to Job as representatives of the accumulated wealth of wisdom from their respective homelands—as men of reputation, renowned for their wisdom. Thus the three were the “troops of Tema” and the “companies of Sheba” in that they represented the cumulative experience, counsel, and wisdom of their native provinces. The supposed purpose of their coming was to help Job. Job likened his storytelling and idiomatic play on words to the three comforters. With all the promise of what they could distribute to him, their counsel was a waste of words from his standpoint. It was drivel; it was dried up; it was of no benefit or solace to him in his need for commiseration.

Most of the statements had a double nuance when considered from the perspective of Job and sometimes, also, when considered from the perspective of how the comforters looked upon Job. And these statements often had a back-and-forth significance. Accordingly, Job was saying that when the three comforters came, he thought they would have the water to supply him with his want, but they did not. Instead Job told them of their lack in trying to comfort him.

Job 6:20 They were confounded because they had hoped; they came thither, and were ashamed.

The “troops of Tema” and the “companies of Sheba” were confounded representatively in the three comforters. When the three heard about Job’s experience, they traveled from a relatively long distance. It took time for them to come conjointly to visit him. In the meantime, Job was afflicted from head to foot. The three had heard about Job’s loss of goods, property, and sons and daughters, but they were unaware of his personal physical affliction. As they were approaching Job and could see him in the distance, they were surprised and shocked at his appearance, and they were ashamed. However, their initial reaction was proper—they sat silently beside him and fasted for seven days.

When the three first saw Job, they were at a loss for words as to how to advise him, but during the seven days, they had time to reflect upon his present condition, as well as upon his loss of goods and family. They had time to think what they would say to Job when he broke the

silence (Job 3:1). During the time of their silence, they were a comfort to Job; they were “brethren” to just sit quietly and sympathetically next to him. However, in reality, their commiseration lacked depth; it did not have the fullness or the sincerity that Job was hoping for when they began to speak. At this point (chapter 6), a little time had elapsed since the breaking of the silence.

All of this background was the reason Job talked about wadis and the expectation of caravan travelers traveling across the desert, or barren land. The three had hoped to be of usefulness and help to Job, but they were taken aback.

Job 6:21 For now ye are nothing; ye see my casting down, and are afraid.

Job was saying, “You see my cast-down condition and are afraid of my circumstance.” He must have been a sorry sight! Not only were they ashamed to give counsel, but they were also ashamed as Job’s countrymen, as his neighbors. Even the children mocked him. The three had come as friends to help, but when they saw him in such a state, they were embarrassed. It was like standing next to a leper or someone with a contagious disease. The three were confused, but when they began to speak, they warmed up to the situation and started to criticize Job.

Comment: The NIV captures the thought in verses 19-21: “The caravans of Tema look for water, the traveling merchants of Sheba look in hope. They are distressed, because they had been confident; they arrive there, only to be disappointed. Now you too have proved to be of no help; you see something dreadful and are afraid.”

Reply: Yes, that would be the thought. The “troops of Tema” and the “companies of Sheba” were represented in the three comforters.

Job 6:22 Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give a reward for me of your substance?

Q: Was Job saying, “Why did you come here? I did not invite you, and you are not helping me”?

A: That is part of the explanation.

Q: Was Job also saying, “I did not ask for any financial support”?

A: Yes, that is the other part of the explanation. The three might even have come with money to give Job for his loss of goods and thus to help him financially. But in his affliction, in his being covered from head to foot with sores and being in rags and tatters, he did not care about the goods. He wanted solace of soul. He wanted internal comfort, not external temporal things. Job was resigned to his losses, for he had said, “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD” (Job 1:21). Now he was looking for comfort. In his cast-down situation, money was meaningless, so he reminded the three with rhetorical questions: “Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give a reward for me of your substance?” Of course the answers were no.

Job 6:23 Or, Deliver me from the enemy’s hand? or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty?

In regard to the “enemy,” Job may have been referring to the Sabeans and the Chaldeans, who had stolen his goods and slain his servants. The “mighty” were those who were mightier than he in his present state. He was greatly reduced from a position of esteem, authority, wealth, and power. He even had a military background, as we will find out later.

Job 6:24 Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have

erred.

What was Job looking for? He wanted to be taught. “Teach me. Give me proper advice, counsel, and sympathy. Solace of the soul is the food that I want. Cause me to understand wherein I have erred.” Job was utterly confused as to the reason for his experience, for he did not know about Satan’s part in the situation. And the three comforters, being even more confused, relied on the current philosophy of the East, which deemed affliction to be the result of doing something wrong—and hence retribution from the Authority above.

Comment: Job was saying, “Show me where I have erred.” Instead the three were presuming his guilt because of the circumstances. Thus they were adding to Job’s problems, not helping him.

Q: Do Job’s experiences have a prophetic application?

A: Job represents the true Church, the Church of Christ, but we will have to wait for a fuller explanation. When we review all of Job’s experiences, we will determine what period of history is involved or if there is dispensational value. For instance, does the Book of Job lead up to an end-time experience, as well as provide insight into the experiences of Christians down through the age? We have always said that to understand an antitype, we should first consider the total literal circumstance, or situation, and then extrapolate, as a finished picture, the lessons that can be drawn. Yes, the Book of Job has prophetic value, but it is not a mathematical type. It shows the relatively common experiences of the true followers of Jesus throughout the entire Gospel Age. Thus a consideration of the patience of Job and his experiences is helpful to the Christian. The Apostle James said, “Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy” (James 5:10,11).

Job 6:25 How forcible are right words! but what doth your arguing reprove?

“How forcible are right words!” If the three had given Job right counsel and help and bolstered him in his weakness, their words would have benefited him.

Comment: For the last half of verse 25, “But what doth your arguing reprove?” the Revised Standard Version has, “But what does reproof from you reprove?” In other words, Job did not feel he had done anything wrong, but the three kept blaming him.

Reply: The three could not put their finger upon the reason for Job’s affliction. After the seven-day fast and silence were broken by Job earlier, then Eliphaz spoke as the elder, or the more important, of the three comforters. Now Job was speaking again, so a little time had elapsed since they had listened to Job’s grief, but instead of further questioning him and trying to get behind his trauma so that they could give proper counsel, they drew the wrong conclusion and added to his discomfort by their criticisms.

Job 6:26 Do ye imagine to reprove words, and the speeches of one that is desperate, which are as wind?

Comment: Verse 26 reads as follows in the NIV: “Do you mean to correct what I say, and treat the words of a despairing man as wind?”

This was a very soul-searching comment from Job. In his naiveness, he was pouring out his soul to his supposed friends, but he found that their counsel was empty. It did not supply his need. His utterances were the result of a deep emotional trauma, but the three were giving him

a lecture instead of sympathy.

Job 6:27 Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless, and ye dig a pit for your friend.

Job was like an orphan in his experience, bereft of parents and counselors. By their comments, the three supposed comforters were digging a grave for Job, crushing his spirit.

Q: Could digging a pit also have the thought of trying to trap Job? In their counsel, were they saying things to try to get him to confess?

A: That may be a superior thought in the sense that Eliphaz was not trying to destroy Job intentionally but wanted to entrap him into confessing what the real problem was.

Comment: That thought would be consistent with verse 15, which says the three “dealt deceitfully as a brook.”

Job 6:28 Now therefore be content, look upon me; for it is evident unto you if I lie.

In spite of his situation, Job was saying, “Look me in the eye when you talk. Instead of giving me a lecture, speak to my soul. Do you see any guilt complex in me? You have been talking to me for some time now. Have you noticed my conscience being troubled at any time?” Job was looking with sincerity into the eyes of his friends, and he expected a similar sincerity of intent and help. Evidently, Job’s appearance was so pitiful that the three averted him with their eyes rather than look at him too intently. If the sincerity of someone’s remarks is in question, the hearer usually turns aside his eyes to meditate. Job was saying, “Put aside all the phonetics that you are overwhelming me with, and look me in the eye. Give me something pragmatic and helpful. Let’s get down to business.” We get a little clue of the disposition and character of Job by just listening to his remarks.

Job 6:29 Return, I pray you, let it not be iniquity; yea, return again, my righteousness is in it.

Job 6:30 Is there iniquity in my tongue? cannot my taste discern perverse things?

Job was saying, “Am I a dumbbell? I had a reputation of being a judge. Even though I am in this sad situation, I have not lost my marbles altogether. I am not completely dense. What you are telling me I have heard before, as you also have.”

Next, what is the thought of “return” in verse 29?

Comment: A KJV marginal reference is Job 17:10, in which Job said, “But as for you all, do ye return, and come now: for I cannot find one wise man among you.”

Q: The NIV has, “Relent, do not be unjust; reconsider, for my integrity is at stake.” Is that a good rendering?

A: The NIV may be the preferred thought, but in the past, we considered Job to be saying, “Why don’t you go back to your homeland?” In that sense, “return” would literally mean “return.” “Do not incur any more responsibility for the wrong diagnosis you have been giving me. I do not need it. The more you speak and open your mouth, the more guilt you incur in giving improper counsel. I do not want your money or your goods, and you have not given me the right advice. You have not satisfied my need, so I would suggest that you three return to your homeland.” However, there is not enough evidence to prove the thought of “return” either way.

Comment: Only Eliphaz, one of the three, had spoken thus far, yet Job was really replying to all three. Would the other two have been nodding their heads or in some way making apparent their agreement with his remarks?

Reply: Yes, because Eliphaz used the pronoun “we” in Job 4:2, “If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved?” And he also said, “Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good” (Job 5:27). The body language of the other two would have shown agreement with what Eliphaz was saying.

Before proceeding, we will review verses 15-30, the end of the chapter. All kinds of translations give all kinds of explanations as to the words Job was expressing. To properly understand what he said is important, and some translations are better than others. The NIV and the RSV are usually superior, but we will give what we feel is the accurate translation. However, the translation is only the beginning of the story. The innuendo—what Job meant—is the other part of the story. What we need to know is, Why did Job speak as he did?

Verses 15-18: “As a sudden flood of waters from frozen heights above course through a wadi, rapidly disperse, and then disappear in the searing sand of the broad desert floor, so the unexpected appearance of you three [comforters] on the horizon, each with your band of servants, camels, supplies, and so forth, to guard you from the perils of the way, was a welcome sight of promising relief to my soul; but sad to say, my brethren, imagine my disappointment with the lack of sympathy and dearth of feeling that were reflected in your ensuing remarks, Eliphaz, and in the scolding I received from your tongue.”

Verses 19-21: “Apparently, you came with the expectation of seeing a person with my reputation and status in life, although bereft of goods, still with a noble and upright bearing. But what did you find? You found one who was bedraggled, covered from head to foot with loathsome, open sores and possibly contagious disease. Those accompanying you from the famed land of Teman, [that’s a proper translation based on the Septuagint and other reasons] noted for the wisdom of its inhabitants but also inhabited by the sun-darkened Sabceans, a prior people of different lineage, had the hope of a prosperous journey and the performance of a beneficial service on my behalf. But the spectacle all of you beheld completely unnerved you. You were confounded with the loss of words—what to say being momentarily brought to naught—and perhaps also tempted not to approach too near my bodily presence. And you were ashamed, similar to my neighbors and countrymen, to be seen too close to what apparently had been accursed of God for some unknown reason. But I must say this to your credit: you did overcome your inhibitions and sit down with me for the traditional mourning period of seven days and nights.”

Verses 22-25: “Did I say, Bring to me? Give me a reward of your substance? Deliver me from the enemy’s hand? Redeem me from the hand of the mighty? Teach me, and I will hold my tongue; and cause me to understand wherein I have erred. How forceful are right words properly applied, but what does your arguing reprove? Your arguments are not pertinent or relevant to the matter at hand; they miss the mark.”

Verses 26 and 27: “Do you imagine to reprove the words of one emotionally distraught, whose outbursts of expression are mere wind when compared to the cool, calm, clinical statements of a logician not under the stress? Even now as I speak, the three of you look upon me not with the former esteem you once held as a friend, but as one below that level, as one now destitute, deprived of all worldly goods and station, indeed, as it were, as an orphan. Again as I yet speak with you, Eliphaz, both Bildad and Zophar are bargaining and casting lots to see which one will have the first opportunity of plotting to ensnare and entrap me into admission of some secret sin or imagined fault.”

Verses 28 and 29: “Now all of you, agree to face and look upon me, and to your face I will not lie. Turn back, I beg you. Let it not be imputed to you for iniquity. Yet, yea, on the other hand, turn back again if you find any justification in this matter on my behalf.”

Verse 30: “Is there wrong in my tongue? Or cannot my palate discern things iniquitous?”

We have given this review to show that while Job, Eliphaz, and the others were deep thinkers, they did a lot with innuendo, making their words applicable to the situation immediately at hand. When we come to the next chapter, we will see a change, for Job dismissed the arguments of the three for the moment; that is, he disregarded the three, even though they were in his presence. Meanwhile, those who had accompanied the three on the trip were silently and patiently waiting. They were confused as to what to do, but they had to obey their masters.

Now Job would go into sort of a soliloquy. He had just made certain observations, and now he began to pour out his grievances to God. As we start chapter 7, we will see that Job started to change his mode in connection with the confrontation he was having.

Job 7:1 *Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? are not his days also like the days of an hireling?*

“Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth?” What is the thought here?

Comment: The NIV reads, “Does not man have hard service on earth? Are not his days like those of a hired man?”

Comment: The King James margin has, “Is there not a warfare to man upon earth?”

Reply: Yes, that rendering is closer to Job’s line of thinking. When one is committed to service, his life is burdensome and not necessarily happy. Christians are to “fight the good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6:12). They are in a kind of warfare against principalities and powers, as well as against the world, the flesh, and the devil (Eph. 6:12). Their warfare involves responsibilities and hardships, but of course joys and blessings are mixed in. Since Job was in a down period at this time, he saw only the negative side, which was rather bleak. He was forgetting the good times he had had previously.

“Are not his days also like the days of an hireling?” After a day’s work, a servant longed for two things. (1) He wanted his wages. As shown in the Parable of the Penny, it was the custom in the Middle East for the employer to pay a wage at the end of each day. (2) Since a servant usually worked during the heat of the day, he looked forward not only to the close of the day, rest, and wages but also to the coolness and shade of the evening. In this mood, or frame of mind, Job began to soliloquize about his condition. He was bordering on a fatalistic viewpoint.

Comment: Rotherham’s translation reads, “Is there not a warfare to a mortal upon earth?”

Reply: Even in the world there is warfare, but, thank God, we can go through life with a higher hope. Our warfare is very instructive and character-building, and we hope for a reward at the end of our life that is quite different from that of the world. The Apostle Peter said we should not be surprised at the trials we have (1 Pet. 4:12). Many of our experiences are the same as the world’s, but our situation is vastly different in that the experiences are educational and beneficial. The world, on the other hand, sees only the dark side. Of course Job lived at a time when there was not as much enlightenment by the Holy Spirit.

Job 7:2 *As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling looketh for the*

reward of his work:

Job 7:3 So am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me.

Comment: Rotherham uses “calamity” instead of “vanity.”

The “months of vanity” of Job’s life were being contrasted with the “wearisome nights.” Particularly with Israel, everything was based on the monthly, or lunar, calendar. The so-called Christian world uses a weekly calendar, but a monthly calendar was used in the Middle East. The short, brief nights Job was experiencing seemed to be long and unending. The type of thinking back there was so different from what we are accustomed to today.

Job 7:4 When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day.

Comment: When one is in pain and great distress, it seems as if the night will never end.

Reply: Yes, there is a restlessness at night, a tossing to and fro, while one waits for morning.

Comment: With Job continually thinking about his situation, his mind would not shut off. Of course he was in great physical distress, but the inability to sleep is usually caused by an overactive mind.

Q: When we are sick at night, we often hope we will feel better when morning comes. It will then be bright and light, and we will be out of the darkness. Was Job thinking that the night dragged on and on without hope but that hope would come with the dawning of the day?

A: That thinking was part of the situation. Job had hoped each day that perhaps he would improve, but he could not see much progress. His condition was getting to the point where he could no longer endure it.

Job 7:5 My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome.

Job must have been a sight to behold. Not knowing the reason for the permission of evil caused extraordinary pressure on Job.

Q: Did the “clods of dust” come from putting ashes on his head or perhaps from rolling in the dust as a sign of mourning?

A: Yes, and in addition, he may have been trying to relieve the itching.

Comment: Open sores cannot be bathed like normal skin. Also, in that climate, dust was blown about by the wind, and the dust would have clung to the oozing sores.

Reply: Impetigo is an infectious, dreadful-looking skin disease.

Comment: Job scraped his boils, or sores, with a potsherd, continually opening them up. He probably wore minimal clothing to avoid unnecessary irritation. And sores made sleeping difficult and uncomfortable.

Job 7:6 My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and are spent without hope.

Job likened the swiftness, the rapidity, with which a weaver’s shuttle goes back and forth to the

swiftly passing days in contrast to the long nights. The days of his life, the months of vanity, were going fast, but he was really zeroing in on his own end-time experience. He was thinking about his present “lifetime” with the loathsome disease and his mental and physical distress.

“My days ... are spent without hope.” The shuttle ceases to go back and forth when the thread runs out, when no more material is to be made. It is interesting that *tiqvah*, the Hebrew word for “hope,” can also be translated “thread.” The weaving of one’s life ends when he dies, when he swallows his spittle or has the death rattle (Job 7:19). We are admonished to be faithful unto death, for character building ceases at death (Rev. 2:10).

Job 7:7 O remember that my life is wind: mine eye shall no more see good.

Job 7:8 The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more: thine eyes are upon me, and I am not.

Now Job started to give his swan song. In his soliloquy, he began to talk to God. Thinking he was dying, Job was in a down period. At first, he hoped each day would bring a sign of improvement, but now he thought there was no hope and wished his life would end so that his misery would cease.

“O remember that my life is wind.” Job was commenting on the brevity of life. In comparison with everlasting life or eternity, the current life span, even if 80 years long, is like a breath of wind. Job was so depressed that he was asking, “Was anything worthwhile done?”

We, too, have down periods, as well as up periods of happiness and joy. The mixture builds character, as expressed in the Song of Solomon: “Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out” (Song 4:16). The informed Christian realizes that the different experiences are actually a Godsend in that they can work out a Christlike character. But it is hard to reason that way when we are in a down period. As the Apostle Paul said, “No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (Heb. 12:11). If we did not have the hope of tutorship in suffering, which Job lacked, how hard the trials would be! What a test of faith Job had! Considering his situation, he was a marvelous character. His faithfulness should shame us into being even more zealous in our walk in the narrow way.

Comment: Job’s trials were an indictment against Satan, for they prove that he enjoys causing misery and despair to those who love God. How desperately wicked and hardened his character is—and without hope of redemption!

Reply: Yes, he was behind the experiences Job was having.

Job 7:9 As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more.

Many, particularly Jewish philosophers, erroneously think this verse proves that Job did not believe in a resurrection. In Jesus’ day, there were three types of religious leaders: scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees. The Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection, and in Israel today, many of the political leaders have this attitude, which then affects the populace as well, so that many are agnostics and/or atheists.

The word “more” is italicized in the King James Version, showing it is a supplied word. In this case, the supplied word should be omitted, as in the Revised Standard Version: the one who “goes down to Sheol does not come up.” Without the word “more,” it is easy to see that Job

was talking about the current situation or generation. As reflected in later chapters, Job felt that the resurrection would occur many centuries in the future. To a large extent, the Pastor evaded explaining the Books of Job, Ecclesiastes, and, for the most part, Proverbs because of certain statements along this line. His time-consuming administrative responsibilities kept him from calmly thinking about the death and resurrection Scriptures in these books. Thus, in comparing *Reprint* and *Volume* references and other works of his, we find a paucity of comments on Ecclesiastes and Proverbs, which were written by King Solomon. However, the Pastor did explain parts of the Song of Solomon. Generally speaking, because he wrote so little about Job, very few brethren have even read the entire Book of Job. But now the Lord's people have the benefit of wonderful hindsight, and the light that shines brighter and brighter unto the perfect day is clarifying and opening up books and subjects not formerly understood (Prov. 4:18).

“The cloud is consumed and vanisheth away.” Clouds are ethereal like the wind. Since Job did not understand the permission of evil and the meaning of circumstances in life, it was natural for him, even though he was a godly person, to reason and philosophize this way. However, he did have a hope of the future, as will be seen in later chapters.

Q: Since we think of Job as representing the Church, why is there such an emphasis on his lack of understanding of the permission of evil?

A: For one thing, it helps us to realize that we cannot really enter sympathetically into the experiences of the true Church down through the Gospel Age, and particularly during the Dark and Middle Ages, when Christians did not have complete Bibles but had only scraps of the Bible at most. God's people received an extreme testing. In addition, the persecution was severe, so that many Christians had Job-like experiences. Christians at both ends of the ages live in a time of enlightenment. In the beginning of the Gospel Age, when Jesus and the apostles were on the scene, great happiness and joy existed, but that soon faded away. Now, at the end of the age, much enlightenment and understanding are available—sometimes to our detriment depending on our reaction.

Early Christians went through challenges based on suffering, and their test was to be faithful under those circumstances. The greater part of our experiences thus far in the Laodicean period seems to be standing up for doctrinal differences. Instead of a warfare of physical suffering and persecution for righteousness' sake, we are persecuted for faithfulness to the truth, to doctrines, and to principles. Therefore, we cannot fully empathize with those who experienced physical suffering with a lack of knowledge.

Job 7:10 He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more.

Verse 10 is true. A person who goes into the grave no longer returns to his house, nor does his place know him anymore. No matter how sorrowful a person is for the loss of a dear one, that anguish lessens as time passes. Therefore, time does heal the wound of the loss of people. Those with good leadership qualities who are extremely beneficial to mankind—let us say, like the seven messengers to true Christianity—are missed in a different way, but even they are not usually thought of that much. Verse 10, therefore, is a sobering reflection upon mortality. Still in a down mood, Job was saying that when he deceased, he knew not only that he would not be returning but also that the memory of him would soon fade away.

Job 7:11 Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.

Job continued to talk to God. Yes, he was soliloquizing, but he wanted God to hear his words. In other words, Job was thinking out loud. He felt that he could not suppress the anguish and torment of spirit that were engulfing him.

Job 7:12 Am I a sea, or a whale, that thou settest a watch over me?

Job compared himself to the sea and to a whale (or a sea monster, as some translations say). In trying to reason out and understand why he was receiving such experiences, he was saying to God in effect, “Back in the Creative Days, you set the boundary to the sea so that it would not overflow the land, and you took care of sea and land monsters (leviathans and dinosaurs) so that they would not harm man. Dinosaurs had their value for the time that they existed, and then you dispensed with them. I am not a sea monster but only a tiny mortal, made of clay. Are you setting a guard for me? You are boxing me up in this experience. Is that your intent? I cannot understand.”

Job was asking, “Why, why, why?” In later chapters, he said that he had previously tried to serve God with all his heart, mind, soul, and strength. He revealed intimate thoughts that were very unusual, showing his personal dedication to God. In his anguish, he was saying, “I served you wholeheartedly of my own volition in the past, when I was healthy and the sun was shining on me. Do I now need the trauma that I am going through when I tried to do my very best previously?” Job wanted an answer. Eventually the Lord did give him an answer, as will be seen in later chapters.

Job 7:13 When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint;**Job 7:14 Then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions:**

Job thought that when he went to bed, he would get rest and relief from the discomfiture and heat of the day and perhaps also some improvement in his health, but instead he had nightmares. Of course Job did not know that Satan was causing the bad dreams.

Job 7:15 So that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life.

The nightmares were so real and so frightening that Job was depressed and wanted to die. Satan conjured up terrifying dreams in his attempts to break Job down.

Job was very disappointed that his friends did not give him credit for his integrity. What a galling experience for him both mentally and physically! Job would choose death rather than life if this experience was to continue. Christians have these experiences too, for example, in suffering excruciating pain with cancer or another disease. Many have such traumas, but the big difference is that Job was being persecuted for righteousness' sake. Others are often not rightly exercised because their traumas are due to circumstances other than their living a Christian life. And we need a touch of both kinds of experiences—we have to suffer what those in the world go through, as well as what Christians go through.

Q: Although Job did not understand the permission of evil, wouldn't he have had a knowledge of Satan's existence through the fall in the Garden of Eden?

A: He would not have understood the way we do. For example, we see that Satan was allowed to intrude into Jesus' mind, tempting him especially during the 40 days in the wilderness following his baptism. People in past ages did not have such understanding, whereas we have the benefit of hindsight. We have the Gospels and the epistles of the New Testament, as well as the history of the Christian Church. Our knowledge far exceeds what was available in the past. People in former ages could see the power of the mind over the body, but they lacked other understanding. Very little information and history are available about Job's day, but as time went on, more and more history was recorded. In past ages, people often lived and died within an area of a few square miles, and they lacked the means of communication outside of their

limited area. Job knew about the Flood and about the destruction of the *nephilim*, for example, but not about Satan's intrusion into the mind.

Comment: When one has been ill for a long period of time, the thinking can get distorted. And even when we are healthy, we sometimes conscientiously question if our statements were as accurate as they should have been. Our thinking is imperfect when we are healthy, so how much harder it is for a seriously ill person to control his thinking.

Job 7:16 I loathe it; I would not live always: let me alone; for my days are vanity.

Job loathed his life, that is, his present state, or condition. He did not loathe his life previously when he was healthy and had his children.

"I would not live always: let me alone." These are fairly hard words, but Job could not understand why he was having such a strange and severe trial. In reviewing his past, he could not see any reason for his experience, so he was searching for a response. It was almost as though he wanted God to answer him right then and there as he was uttering this expression.

"For my days are vanity." The word "vanity" comes from the word "vain." Job's life seemed to have been wasted. He had made vows to serve God and had fulfilled them to the best of his ability. In addition, he had prayed frequently on behalf of his children that they would not depart from God, so not only did he keep a surveillance on his own life and behavior, but also he was very much concerned for his family. Having done everything dutifully, he could not understand why this horrific experience suddenly came upon him where he lost everything, including his health, appearance, and status. Job was searching for an answer, and certainly Eliphaz did not supply the information he wanted.

Comment: The word for "vanity" in Strong's is defined as "emptiness or vanity; figuratively something transitory and unsatisfactory." The idea of emptiness seems to fit nicely because Job had been full with children, flocks, riches, and good health, and now he was empty.

Reply: Yes, the word does mean "empty," but we were taking the slant of Job's asking, "Was my life worthwhile? In the days of seeming favor, was the watching of my character in vain?" In other words, if Job had not made vows and been circumspect, he could have lived for pleasure and self just like the world, and not for God.

Comment: The Apostle Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 15:17-19 are similar: "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

Reply: Yes, but Job lacked the understanding and the assurance that Paul had. Paul turned right around and said, "That is not the case, for what we are believing and hoping for is real."

Job 7:17 What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?

Job continued to reason with God. Verse 17 reminds us of Psalm 8:4, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" The similarity suggests that the words of Job may have come to the Psalmist David's mind, but David gave them a beneficial slant to magnify and praise God. His wonderment was that the great God, who had created the universe, should be interested in little man, whom He had made down here on the earth.

Comparing Job with David and the Eighth Psalm leads into other avenues of thought. We have

contended that Job was the first book of the Bible to be recorded. Next came the Pentateuch, which Moses was privileged to introduce. Job was in a rather unique position, for he lived in the period between the latter part of Joseph's life and the early years of Moses, and thus was not aware of the Pentateuch. With his wisdom, understanding, and consecration, had he known of the Pentateuch, his mood and expressions would have been different from those that were recorded. A study of the Book of Job gives us an appreciation of the saints of God in the Dark Ages with the relative paucity of information and Scriptures that were available before the Gutenberg press came into existence and Bibles were printed and distributed.

Since Job did not know that Satan was behind the experience he was having, he could only attribute it to God. The first place Satan, as a name, is mentioned in the Bible is in the Book of Job, but Job did not hear the allegorical conversation, so he could not see Satan's part. Of course the books of Isaiah and Ezekiel contain Scriptures that are sometimes interpreted as referring to Satan, but they were written much later.

Let us put ourselves in Job's situation. He would have known of the Flood and the conditions that brought about the Flood, that is, about the fallen angels who sinned. But what happened? When the Flood came, only Noah and his family (eight souls) were preserved. The *nephilim* were drowned, and the fallen angels were bound in *tartaroo*. Because the fallen angels were no longer on the scene, the people thought they had been destroyed and were no longer in existence. Therefore, Job could not have brought Satan into the picture as the one responsible for his circumstance. Moreover, the calamities had come on Job in one day. As he lost the different segments of his goods and possessions, servants came one by one to tell him what had happened. With everything occurring so suddenly, Job concluded that God had permitted the experience. The test on Job was very severe. Had we been in Job's place, it is questionable as to how we would have reacted.

Comment: In the entire Old Testament, the name Satan appears only four times other than in the Book of Job, so primarily the New Testament uses his name. Satan is mentioned one time in 1 Chronicles, which is before the Book of Job, but timewise, Job was written years earlier.

Reply: Yes, much was brought to light in the New Testament. Of course Isaiah chapter 14 talks about Lucifer, and we read about the sons of the morning in a late chapter of Job. But at this time, Job did not have the understanding.

Comment: Because Satan's name is not mentioned firmly in the Old Testament, some Jews and even some Christians do not believe in a personal devil. They feel the concept was contrived in the Chaldean and Babylonian captivity, and they do not place the Book of Job in antiquity.

Reply: Yes, the Babylonian history tells about a flood and about fallen angels, and although Satan was given a different name, he was the individual being talked about.

With Job living between Joseph and Moses, what was the connecting link whereby the Old Testament was preserved for posterity? Noah lived both before and after the Flood, and so did his three sons. Therefore, they had firsthand experience of what happened before, during, and after the Flood. Noah lived to age 950, so presumably he died first, although we do not know with certainty when Ham and Japheth died. However, we do know how long Shem lived. Therefore, the history of what happened was faithfully recorded, as well as the genealogy of Adam's children. The whole historical record was carried over, or past, the Flood by Noah and then given to Shem, but since Shem died before Job came into existence, there had to be a connecting link. The Bible names only three individuals who might have preserved the record up to the time of Joseph's death. Joseph got at least part of the record from Jacob, and we believe the other part was supplied in another fashion. The connecting link between Joseph and Moses was probably Amram, the father of Moses. Jethro, the priest of Midian, was recognized

by God in a way, and there was Elihu. Thus three individuals could have been a connecting link. Possibly Jethro had some information, and Amram had the more important information. With a supporting link, no hiatus occurred in the handing down of the records to posterity, which of course includes us.

With regard to the Pentateuch, the sixth chapter of Genesis contains a link about what happened to Satan without his name being specifically mentioned. The sixteenth chapter of Leviticus speaks of Azazel, and the Balaam account in the twenty-second chapter of Numbers indicates some information was available at that time. Thus there was a paucity of information before Moses, and relatively few people were knowledgeable with regard to the Word of God. Then, during the time of Moses, a wealth of information exploded upon the scene. In that way, Moses was something like Jesus. When Jesus came on the scene, there was an explosion of knowledge about God that previously was not available.

Comment: The Book of Job was written by Elihu after the fact and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the use of the proper name Satan was in that vein.

Reply: Yes, we hear about the name Satan in the first and second chapters of Job, which were written afterwards. Elihu was a young man at the time, and Job was a very mature person.

Back to verse 17. We can now understand how Job and David wrote from two different perspectives, with David having much more information. Both, however, were addressing God. In the beginning of chapter 7, Job was soliloquizing, and then he began to talk to God.

Some could take the slant that Job was talking to the three comforters here and that he was sarcastically asking why they had set him as a target, but since he had already addressed them in chapter 6, such an interpretation would be repetitious. In chapter 7, Job's chief complaint was not with God Himself, but it was that God was not telling him the reason for his experience.

Job 7:18 And that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?

Notice the wording. Job was speaking about a trial every day and every moment, but he was actually talking about his own experience. He was tried every morning and every evening.

Job 7:19 How long wilt thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?

Job 7:20 I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself?

Job 7:21 And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? for now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.

In verses 19-21, Job came to the conclusion that maybe he was having this experience because he had sinned, but he did not know what the sin was. Now his mood changed. He felt that he must have sinned, but what was it and why could he not be forgiven? Verse 19 expresses his desire to die and thus end his misery.

Comment: Job wanted to die, yet the Lord, the "preserver of men," visited him with life every morning.

Then Job added, "Thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be." A comparison of this part of verse 21 with verse 9 shows that some words were supplied by the translators. "He that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more" should be "He that goeth down to the grave

shall not come up.” Many scholars have felt that Job did not believe in a resurrection, but that is not true, as proven by later verses. Because of their thinking, those scholars incorrectly supplied certain words. Here “shall” and “be” should be deleted. If a word is to be supplied, verse 21 should read, “Thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I am not.” The italicized words are not warranted. If Job died, then when God came to visit in the morning, he would “not be” at that time. Notice, also, that Job said he would “*sleep in the dust.*” He knew that death was a state of unconsciousness.

Job’s comments show he thought he was dying, but he wanted death to come faster. Although he did not know the reason for his affliction, he felt it was incurable. He wanted the peace of mind of forgiveness so that he could die with more comfort.

Q: In verse 21, was Job saying he wanted the Lord’s forgiveness before he died, even though he did not know what the sin was?

A: Yes, that is one point, but in asking for forgiveness, he wanted to know what his sin was. He knew he was not a perfect being. All honest people in past dispensations were aware they were not perfect, and they experienced twinges of conscience when they said or did something they regretted.

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

Eliphaz was the first comforter to speak. Now it was Bildad’s turn, and later Zophar would speak. In the literal translation for chapter 6, which has been glossed over, Job referred to their casting of lots with regard to setting a snare, or trap, for him. The thought of a “snare” does come through but not the thought of casting lots. Evidently, Bildad became the next speaker through the casting of lots. Eliphaz was naturally the first speaker because he was the firstborn of Esau, and the other two comforters did not have such an impressive background. Perhaps, also, Eliphaz was the oldest of the three. According to Mideastern courtesy, the three had waited for Job to speak first after the seven-day period of silence. Now Bildad would start his examination of Job.

Comment: Scofield made an interesting comment, as follows: “Eliphaz is a religious dogmatist, whose dogmatism rests upon a mysterious and remarkable experience. Did a spirit ever pass before Job’s face? Did Job’s hair of his flesh ever stand up? Then let him be meek while one so superior as Eliphaz declares the causes of his misfortunes. Eliphaz says many true things, as do the others, and often rises into eloquence, but he remains hard and cruel, a dogmatist who must be heard because of one remarkable experience.”

Reply: Yes, Eliphaz made a lot of the dream he had, as if it gave him authority. But of the three, he was also given more significance because of his lineage and his age.

Job 8:2 How long wilt thou speak these things? and how long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind?

In listening to the conversation of both Job and Eliphaz, Bildad now had his list of grievances, starting in verse 2, against the comments Job had just made.

“How long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind?” Bildad accused Job of being a bag of wind, but his criticism was not new, for Eliphaz had more or less said the same thing. In subsequent verses also, Bildad did not bring up anything radically new in his reasoning, but he spoke more tersely than Eliphaz. A “strong wind” is a damaging wind.

Job 8:3 Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?

Bildad falsely accused Job of criticizing God for being unjust in His providence toward him. The answer to Bildad's two rhetorical questions was to be "Certainly not!"; that is, "God does not pervert judgment or justice as you, Job, seem to imply."

Comment: This reasoning has been carried over to the present day. Some Christians have the philosophy, or thinking, that if one is not prospering or doing well, something is wrong with his spiritual relationship with God. Such a premise or conclusion is hurtful today just like the words of Job's supposed comforters back there.

Reply: Yes, and to a certain extent, that point is brought up in verse 6.

Job 8:4 If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression;

Comment: "If" really means "since." Bildad was saying, "Since your children sinned against God, they deserved to die."

Reply: The same theme—namely, "If you do something wrong, you will get punished in God's providence"—seems to permeate the message. As the Apostle Peter pointed out, godly people suffer for two reasons: for their own mistakes and for educational purposes, testing, and proving (1 Pet. 2:19,20).

The three comforters felt that Job's children must have sinned for them to lose their lives. The last half of verse 4 shows they were convinced the children had sinned because they were punished at the very spot where the frivolity (excess drinking, partying, etc.) had occurred. The fact they were visited with such a radical judgment was proof in the comforters' minds. They judged Job the same way—that he, too, must have sinned because he was in such a deplorable situation. What a trial for Job to experience!

Job 8:5 If thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty;

Bildad was implying that since the children had received death as a judgment, Job should now make supplication to the Almighty for himself. He was saying in effect, "Job, it would be advisable for you to go to God in prayer and supplication to ask for forgiveness for yourself."

Job 8:6 If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.

Bildad continued, "If thou wert pure and upright." In Job 1:1, God Himself declared Job to be "perfect and upright," but the three comforters did not know that. Bildad was saying, "If you were pure and just, this circumstance would be temporary. The fact that the circumstance is lasting some time proves you are guilty." Job's grievance was that he wanted to know why he was suffering, and he had been asking God audibly in the presence of the three comforters. Bildad said, "Job, if you were right, and if you took the steps of prayer and supplication to inquire of God concerning your mistake, He would answer your request. You would get an immediate response and come back into His favor. But because you are not following these steps, there is silence, and you are not getting an answer to your questions." This advice was obvious to the three comforters as they observed Job and the providences that were happening to him.

Starting in verse 2, Bildad was going through a mental list of objections that developed as he listened to the conversation taking place between Eliphaz and Job. He uttered the objections, one after the other: Job's words were like strong wind, he perverted the judgment of God, his

children died because they had sinned, and if Job was pure, he should seek God and ask for forgiveness. The objections of Bildad and Eliphaz were similar, but Bildad expressed them in a terser fashion, whereas Eliphaz was a little gentler.

Comment: Much of what the three criticized Job for was the very reason the Lord, in a special way, favored Job. For example, they questioned his righteousness, yet God commended Job as being one of the only three who, by their own righteousness, would be saved (Ezek. 14:14,20).

Reply: The prologue to the Book of Job mentions that he was the greatest man in the East not only in wealth and judgment but also in being “perfect and upright” (Job 1:1).

Comment: The three told Job to commit his cause to God, and that is exactly what he did in a very real way. They questioned his righteousness, yet the Lord identified him as righteous.

Reply: Because the comforters could not read Job’s heart and they were puzzled, their words should have been few. If, on the one hand, they had had a right heart condition, they would have been equally perplexed with Job, but on the other hand, their culture taught that God punishes the wicked and prospers the righteous. Therefore, it was difficult for them not to react as they did.

Comment: We assume Job was older when this experience came upon him. Since the comforters knew of his past, they assumed that previously he was righteous and now, all of a sudden, he had committed a heinous sin. Thus they were prejudiced because of his prosperous past versus the sudden calamity, and they felt conclusively that he had sinned.

Reply: Yes, the three comforters knew of Job’s unusual past. The arguments of Eliphaz and Bildad were that God rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked, so, according to their reasoning, Job must have been righteous in the past when he prospered. Now the logical question was, “What did you do that caused a change in your situation?”

The three were familiar with Job’s past, but in their present judgment of him, they overspoke in what they did not know, making criticisms that were negative and unwarranted. They should have been much gentler in making inquiry and not have rendered hasty judgments. We can see the problem that existed and what a trial it was for Job. Neither he nor the comforters knew the reason for his sufferings, but they commented anyway. The comforters should have been much more delicate in their handling of Job. Lacking empathy, they did not commiserate deeply enough with his situation. Had they done so, their comments and inquiries would have been much more carefully couched.

Comment: It is hard to understand how friends could be so pitiless and merciless in their comments. They could see the poor man and what he was suffering.

Reply: Job’s experience helps us see how people in the nominal Church view the brotherhood and make judgments. Because of the culture they were raised in, they think they are in the truth, and they make judgments accordingly. Of course we feel the same way, and this attitude influences our judgment and thinking about others. We can understand a little better because of the Holy Spirit, and in addition, we were earthly before we consecrated. Therefore, we have two kinds of savvy, or understanding: (1) Our experience before consecration helps us to understand thinking and behavioral conduct. (2) Being consecrated, we have more behind us in considering different practices, doctrines, and behavior than those in the nominal system who are not Spirit-begotten. Only a small minority in the nominal system really have the Holy Spirit. Because there is a mixture, with many unclean birds, as it were, the thinking is much like that of the three comforters. In effect, then, Job’s three comforters represent the thinking of nominal Christians toward the truly consecrated, and Elihu represents the thinking of the Great

Company. The experience of Job himself pictures that of The Christ. The Book of Job is very thought-provoking.

Job 8:7 Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase.

If we condense verses 7-10, Bildad was telling Job to look back to the forefathers. “What I am saying to you, Job, is the wisdom of the past, which we have been taught.” However, traditional wisdom is not necessarily true. Each axiom or fact has to be examined to see if it is true. Bildad was saying, “We have been cultured and taught that God rewards the righteous and that judgment comes on the wicked.” There is a measure of truth in that statement, for as a general rule, those who lead a righteous, pure, ennobling life do prosper but not necessarily. There are many exceptions where righteous people suffer.

Comment: Ultimately we see that Job did prosper—and more than previously—but the permission of evil was not understood.

Reply: That was the basic problem until Moses came. The Book of Deuteronomy brings out the point that God proved the Israelites in the wilderness wanderings to see if they loved Him with all their heart (Deut. 8:2,16). This remarkable change of thinking, which permeates the Book of Deuteronomy to quite an extent, took place when the Pentateuch came on the scene. Job lived before this information was made available, whereas the Israelites were cultured and indoctrinated with the wisdom of the first five books of the Bible. Job did not have access to that understanding and knowledge, but with what little information was available, he excelled exceedingly. Later chapters show that he was almost like Solomon in many of his observations.

“Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase.” Was Bildad saying that Job’s beginning was small?

Comment: Bildad was saying that if Job had been faithful, his greatness and his material possessions would have grown and grown instead of being reversed.

Q: Was Bildad just continuing on from verse 6 and saying that Job was now small? If Job would admit his wrong, he would greatly increase, and prosperity would be his latter end.

A: That observation may be correct, but then the verb tense would have to change from “was” to “is”: “Though thy beginning is [now] small.” If the Hebrew verb is present tense, the thought would be, “Though now you are brought down to nothing, yet if you take the proper steps, things will change not only for good but also for greater good—and maybe to what you had originally.” Otherwise, as the King James is written, the thought would be, “Job, if you had been faithful, your greatness would have kept increasing. Your small beginning would have blossomed out into greatness.”

Comment: Even if the verb is past tense, if we were talking to someone about current circumstances, we might project into the future and say, “Even though you started out with nothing, you could end up with quite a bit.”

Reply: That explanation is certainly to be considered. In any event, some of Bildad’s statements were almost prophetic, for Job did greatly increase.

Job 8:8 For inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers:

Q: Since Job apparently lived between Joseph and Moses, who are the “fathers”?

Q: The NIV reads, “Ask the former generations and find out what their fathers learned.” Was Bildad saying, “Go to the older ones, who have more experience and information”?

A: Of the three comforters and Job, Eliphaz seems to have been the oldest—even though Job himself was old at this time. Bildad’s comment was directing Job to Eliphaz, among others.

Bildad was telling Job to seek the advice of others. Many think there is wisdom in a multitude of counselors, but that is not necessarily true. Even with a multitude of counselors, wrong advice can be given, as shown in 1 and 2 Kings. It is nice to think that in a democratic society, one gets more wisdom, but some individuals have more understanding than a multitude of others. We are products of our own environment, whether we realize it or not, and the Lord certainly knows what the true situation is. Bildad wanted Job to inquire of the old-timers. The majority of statements that have been handed down over generations—perhaps over thousands of years—are very sound. In Job’s instance, the judgment of the three was wrong.

Job 8:9 (For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow:)

This comment of Bildad is true, as testified in Proverbs, Psalms, and other places. If the three comforters had measured their lives, which were 200 years at the most, against those of the first dispensation, when Adam lived 930 years and Methuselah was 969, for example, they would have known that the human race was degenerating with briefer life spans.

Job 8:10 Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?

We appreciate the sentiments of hymns because we realize that past Christians wrote them based on their experiences and the feelings of their heart. Some hymns beautifully express our own sentiments, and we can learn a lot from hymns. However, we have to be careful of incorrect sentiments. The same is true of people who write and make wise utterances from a worldly standpoint. We appreciate many statements of people of the past, whether Christians or worldly people, who wrote with a desire to preserve for posterity some gem thoughts they had learned from a lifetime of experience. That is what Bildad was saying. “Shall not they [the fathers of the past] teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words [wisdom] out of their heart?”

Job 8:11 Can the rush grow up without mire? can the flag grow without water?

The Revised Standard Version reads, “Can papyrus grow where there is no marsh? Can reeds flourish where there is no water?” The obvious answer to both questions is no. The “flag” is the top of the reed, more commonly called cattails.

Job 8:12 Whilst it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb.

Generally speaking, even when reeds have water, they are a brownish rust color, giving an appearance of deadness. In trying to draw a lesson, Bildad was straining for something in nature to prove his argument in regard to Job’s situation. From Bildad’s standpoint, Job’s claim of innocency, like the reed, belied the fact that he was at fault.

Job 8:13 So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite’s hope shall perish:

In verses 11-13, Bildad was saying, “Reeds that grow in marsh areas are abundant and green, but at a certain time, for some mysterious reason, they turn brown and wither—and not because a sickle has been put to them. They simply perish. Reeds are an example in nature of those who appear to worship God in their greenness but are really forgetting Him. Hence they

are mystically, invisibly, cut off by God. Such are the paths of all who forget God and are hypocrites.”

Comment: Then in comparing Job to the reed in nature, Bildad was calling him a hypocrite, that is, one whose conduct, character, and truthfulness do not match his profession.

Reply: Based on his observations of nature, Bildad reasoned, “The reed fits your situation, Job. In spite of your profession of innocence, you have forgotten God, and the hypocrite’s hope shall perish.” Of course Job was bemoaning his circumstance, but the comforters took his mournful state and his anguish of spirit as evidences that God’s favor had departed from him. They reasoned that if God’s favor were with him, he would not be in his present condition. As far as they were concerned, the prima facie evidence was his situation and bodily appearance. Therefore, Bildad likened Job to a reed that withers.

However, when cattails are put in a jar without water, they last for a long time. The point is that Bildad was drawing too much of a conclusion from the reed. He was trying to find something to prove to Job that his professions did not match his outward appearance and condition, as well as his inner emotions and expressions of perplexity and anguish—and even, at times, his questioning of God’s motive.

Job 8:14 Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider’s web.

According to Bildad, the very fact Job was in a down period indicated not only that he had forgotten God but that he was a hypocrite whose hope was cut off and whose trust was as a spider’s web. Bildad’s thought of a “spider’s web” can be applied either of two ways: (1) Job’s trust in God was not stable. (2) From God’s standpoint, Job was wavering and in a precarious mode of destruction.

Job 8:15 He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.

Bildad was talking about the fragility of a spider’s web and the lack of real support. From a mathematical perspective, a web is extremely strong, as well as flexible, but from a human perspective, it can be broken very easily.

In short, Bildad was saying that the arguments and statements Job was making in his own defense were untenable, for they did not match the manifestation of his inner emotions and his physical state. Both the inner and the outer man of Job, as far as Bildad was concerned, did not square with the protestations of innocence. “Job, you have some nerve to question God about these matters!” He was trying to show that Job was at fault.

This was Bildad’s first speech. With his second speech, we will see a strangeness in his reasoning, which went back and forth.

Job 8:16 He is green before the sun, and his branch shooteth forth in his garden.

Comment: According to Bildad, Job had been prosperous and in good physical condition, but calamities came as a result of disobedience.

Reply: That seems to be the thought, although Bildad’s reasoning and remarks are harder to understand than Job’s. It is easier to follow Job’s reasoning with the many examples he used pertaining to the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms. With the comforters, we have to try to fathom their motivation, and their examples did not always square with the situation.

Job 8:17 His roots are wrapped about the heap, and seeth the place of stones.

Bildad was still talking about the reed, and specifically about its roots.

Comment: Previously Job was prosperous, but then as he supposedly turned away from God and sinned, it was like the roots of a plant looking for water in a pile of stones. The roots did not find the nourishment they needed, so the plant withered.

Reply: Yes, that seems to be Bildad's thought, but it destroyed his earlier reasoning. There was an incongruity in his reasoning. For example, it is like saying that the image has been smitten and is being ground to powder, yet the nominal Church will come back into great power for one hour. When an individual reasons along one line in one place and along another line in another place, the two do not harmonize because one line of reasoning is at fault. Here the heap of stones showed a lack of water, yet earlier Bildad said the reed withers while it is yet green and has water.

Comment: In other words, in verse 12, Bildad said, "While the reed is yet green and not cut down, it withers before any other herb," and then in verse 16, he said that when the sun should be scorching the reed, it was shooting forth, or growing. His logic was twisted.

Reply: Yes. If we were listening to a discourse, for instance, and the speaker did not have his reasoning straight to start with, we would find incongruities.

Job 8:18 If he destroy him from his place, then it shall deny him, saying, I have not seen thee.

Now Bildad struck out in a different vein. With the three comforters and Job all thinking he was going to die, Bildad seemed to be saying to Job, "In spite of your previous reputation as the greatest man in the East, when you perish, you will soon be forgotten. The memory of your prior existence and good works will mean nothing. Instead people will think of your latter experience. Posterity will not remember you because of the departure of God's favor." Bildad was almost saying, "It would have been better had you not been born."

Job 8:19 Behold, this is the joy of his way, and out of the earth shall others grow.

Q: In verses 19-22, was Bildad trying to end his comments on an up note?

A: Yes, but that up note was rather meaningless after all of Bildad's negative remarks. He was saying, "If your statement about the integrity of your soul is correct, then you can expect restitution and a return to your former circumstance."

Job never said he was entirely innocent. The nature of his argument was that to the best of his ability, his pursuit through life was to live according to his conscience toward God. He knew that his purpose was unwavering in serving the Lord, and then sudden unexplainable catastrophe had come upon him. Job never said he was inherently perfect, but his intentions were steadfast. He said he was anything but a hypocrite, for both he and the Lord knew what he had been thinking. Later he will be vindicated along that line.

Bildad was saying, "If your statements are correct, then your future will be grand. The Lord will extend His favor to you." Bildad was giving almost a spider's web of encouragement here. He was holding out what he did not feel was a reality, but if Job was correct, his circumstances would be restored. Later, when Job was vindicated, Bildad and the other two comforters had to confess to him before they would be restored to favor.

Job 8:20 Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil doers:

Job 8:21 Till he fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing.

Job 8:22 They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame; and the dwellingplace of the wicked shall come to nought.

Remarkably, and contrary to his real intent, Bildad was uttering a prophecy in verses 20-22 that did come true for Job. Although Bildad used different illustrations, his reasoning was basically the same as that of Eliphaz.

Job 9:1 Then Job answered and said,

Job 9:2 I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God?

Job agreed with the concluding remarks of Bildad, but he was still confused about his circumstance. He admitted that God would not cast away a perfect man to destruction, but then in the next breath, he asked, "How can a man be perfect in God's eyes?"

Job 9:3 If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand.

Job knew that if he were a defendant before a court of law with God as the prosecuting attorney, he would lose his case, even though he was convinced of his relative innocence. He could not really reason with God and give specific particulars in defense of his integrity (although he tried to do that a little later).

Incidentally, when the scribes and Pharisees tried to reason with and trap Jesus, his wisdom was so superior that in the end, they were embarrassed. Jesus was always able to give a rebuttal to the sarcasm and criticism of the scribes and Pharisees, and they went away ashamed, relatively speaking.

Job 9:4 He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?

The Pastor explained about the four cardinal attributes of God: love, power, wisdom, and justice. Job recognized two of the attributes as being supreme: wisdom and power. He agreed that God had the other two attributes but could not understand them. Job could see God's power and wisdom in nature, but love and justice were a problem to him.

We are very blessed here at the end of the Harvest, as were the early Christians during the Apostle Paul's ministry, to have a tremendous amount of understanding of Scripture. Many questions that ordinarily would be stumbling blocks and hindrances to the development of faith have been removed for us. Therefore, the test today in being able to stand is along a different line from the testing during the Dark Ages.

Job 9:5 Which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his anger.

God "removeth the mountains, and they [the mountains] know [it] not." Mountains are removed through an earthquake and/or a volcanic eruption. An area that has been stable for many years can suddenly be affected by an earthquake. Today seismic equipment predicts earthquakes, but down through history, most earthquakes were sudden and unexpected. The shaking may last only a few seconds or minutes, even though there were tremors not perceived by normal human sense. Here Job was speaking of a violent earthquake, such as the

sudden explosion of a volcano, “which overturneth them in his [God’s] anger.” Previously there was no perception of an impending problem.

Job was describing his own experience. He was prosperous with goods, livestock, wealth, family, and reputation, and all of a sudden, in the same day, he was bereft of everything except his wife. Job’s personal experience was like that of a mountain which suddenly erupts without any prior indication. Job was making a truthful and consistent analysis. He did not know that he was being tried by Satan, but he could see that the suddenness of his calamities was superhuman, supernatural. Therefore, who caused the calamities? He concluded that God must have given His assent.

Job 9:6 Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble.

Job 9:7 Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars.

God “shaketh the earth out of her place” and “commandeth the sun, and it riseth not.” In other words, God’s power is such that if He did not want the sun to come up, it would not do so. *Everything* is under His control. Therefore, when sudden catastrophe came upon Job, who did not know about the permission of evil in the sense of character development and perfection for a future office, he could only conclude that God knew about the calamities and did not prevent them from happening. When an earthquake occurs, there is a reason for it; that is, conditions underneath the surface of the earth cause an earthquake to come forth suddenly. Job was very, very puzzled over his personal catastrophe, for God knew about the situation, and Job could not harmonize the two points. He was giving an honest appraisal of the providence that had occurred to him. His wisdom was such that it could not have happened without God’s knowledge. Job was questioning, “Why?”

God “sealeth up the stars.”

Comment: The fact God named all of the stars indicates they are all accounted for (Psa. 147:4).

Reply: Yes, the title “LORD of hosts” pertains to the galaxies, although of course God is the Emperor of all things: the spiritual realm, the earthly realm, the animal kingdom, the vegetable kingdom, the stars, etc.

Genesis 2:1 reads, “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, *and all the host of them.*” This text is usually applied to earth’s solar system, but it seems to pertain to other galaxies as well. The other galaxies are much further developed than science would lead us to believe. In other words, they are all relatively finished. We believe that Genesis 2:1 includes the whole galactic system. What man has observed through telescopes of occurrences in the heavens actually took place in the very, very distant past and has nothing whatever to do with the current condition of the heavens. We are living much later, and a lot has happened subsequent to what is now observable by the Hubble telescope. Therefore, we think the stars have been fixed, and the minimum amount would be comparable to when the Lord started to order the surface of earth. At that time, a chaotic condition and waters prevailed over the surface of the earth, and then began the Seven Days of Creation. We believe that all of the planets in other solar systems are developed at least to this minimum situation, and water does not necessarily have to cover the whole surface of the planets as it did with the earth prior to the Seven Creative Days. We cannot judge the degree of development by the moon and the other planets in our solar system, which are relatively barren, because we do not believe they were ever intended for habitation. Only the earth was meant to be inhabited in our particular solar system. In the other solar systems as well, only one of the planets may be especially intended for habitation, although we would not rule out that there could be several planets.

For emphasis, we will repeat an important point. What we observe in the heavens *now* actually occurred in the *far, far distant past*, and we are completely unaware of what has happened subsequently—say, hundreds of thousands of years later.

Comment: The average astronomer’s professional career spans perhaps 40 years, which is nothing timewise in comparison to the activity that has transpired in the heavens because the light or information has not reached the earth yet.

Reply: Yes, that is right, for the information is still en route. Just this past week some seriously questioned the theory of global warming, which is based on reasoning with present data. Global warming and global freezing periods have occurred in past ages. Scientists say that the average global temperature has increased one degree in the last ten years, but in reality, that observation is minuscule, for man is very limited in his observations and education.

Q: Does the word “sealeth” in verse 7 have the thought of “finished”?

A: Yes, the stars were finished up to or for a certain purpose and then put on hold until the Kingdom Age is completed. This subject is tremendous, but we will use one more suggestion. The fact that Jehovah has rested from all of His physical creative works suggests that He is finished with that work (Gen. 2:2). However, He is very active doing work in other fields of endeavor, such as with the New Creation. Pertaining to just the earth, each Creative Day usually ended with a work accomplished, but the same principle would apply to works that God did previously; that is, He has rested with those works too.

Comment: The Hebrew word translated “sealeth” is *chatham*, which, according to Young’s *Analytical Concordance*, has the thought of “finish.”

Job 9:8 Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea.

Verse 8 is one of at least 50 Scriptures in the Old Testament showing that God did the creating, not Jesus. God *alone* spread out the heavens.

We do not know how long God was alone before He started to create other sentient beings. Genesis 1:1,2 says, “In a beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep [the waters].” But how long the earth was in that condition we do not know. We believe that the physical realm of the galaxies, etc., goes back almost to eternity. A lot happened when God was alone, for certainly He was not just sitting in a chair meditating. God exists from infinity to infinity, and He was doing things—but what, when, and where He was doing are the question marks.

Q: Is verse 8 speaking in the sense of the entire cosmos and not just our little heavens and earth down here?

A: That is exactly what we have been saying.

Q: What is the thought of “spreadeth out”?

A: God spread out the heavens like a carpet, and not like a three-dimensional ball.

God “treadeth upon the waves of the sea.” In other words, He has complete mastery over the wildest of the elements.

Q: Is there a similarity to Genesis 1:2, which says that God’s Spirit hovered over the face of the waters?

A: In principle, yes.

In saying He “treadeth upon the waves of the sea,” God is talking to our finite minds. Some have suggested, properly we think, that God commanded the oceans, whose surface is slightly higher than the land or shore portion of the continents. In other words, a force holds back the proud waves lest they overlap the land inordinately in disobedience to the command of the Heavenly Father that they be restricted to the beds in which they were deposited. The seas cannot go beyond certain boundaries. We see this principle in science even with a drop of water, for a sort of cohesive quality exists on the surface of the water, causing the water to cling, even though we do not normally notice the tendency. For instance, if we delicately fill a sharp-edged glass with water, the water will go a tiny bit higher than the edge before it spills over, but we need a microscope to observe that phenomenon. However, with oceans, which are a larger perspective, we can see the tidal system, that is, the high and low tides. If Jehovah can walk on the wings of the wind, if He can walk on the clouds as if they were a carpet, then certainly He can walk on water, which has more mass than a cloud (2 Sam. 22:11; Psa. 18:10; 104:3).

In summary, therefore, verse 8 is saying that Jehovah has complete, absolute control, and nothing can happen haphazardly to catch Him unawares. His control assures that everything will abide by His ordinances.

The King James margin indicates Job was speaking about the height and the tempestuousness of the sea, as noticed especially by those who are in a boat during a rough storm. The waves are higher than the boat. Job was not speaking of a placid sea but was saying that God’s control is so masterful that He can walk smoothly on a tempestuous sea with its wild ups and downs and not have the least disturbance.

Comment: We often think of the effect the moon has on the sea and on tides, so perhaps in verses 7-10, Job was connecting the celestial bodies with the waves of the sea down here.

Reply: Yes, Job was making a comparison. The same principle applied.

Job 9:9 Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south.

Job mentioned four things: Arcturus (the Great Bear), Orion, Pleiades, and the chambers of the south. For these constellations, the King James margin gives the Hebrew: *Ash*, *Cesil*, and *Cimah*, respectively. The Pleiades has seven major stars, but there are perhaps a total of a million stars within that one constellation.

Comment: Since Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades are all northern constellations, verse 9 is being all inclusive by mentioning the chambers of the south. Job was saying that God made all of the constellations, both the northern and the southern ones.

The term “chambers of the south” pertains to constellations that are not seen in the Northern Hemisphere, but people in ancient times, in Job’s day, knew of their existence because of the stars that appeared at times on the horizon. (Of course today we can see the southern constellations from observatories that are located in various places around the earth: India, China, etc.). By extrapolation, people of that day could imagine that the few stars they saw were like the tip of an iceberg, and they felt that other constellations existed, even though they could not see beyond the horizon. Job tells us that God “hangeth the earth upon nothing,” that God sits upon a sphere (Job 26:7). To a certain degree through extrapolation, the ancients did not see the earth as flat, even though the great bulk of science and mankind in general thought otherwise in the Middle Ages. At that later time, most people were not given to thinking on

deep matters, for other problems occupied their time and attention. In Job's day, the nomadic tribes had plenty of time in the desert to observe the stars and the heavens, but as civilizations and nations grew, that ability became more and more limited until the days of Galileo and others, when telescopes were invented. Today, in spite of the lights of civilization, telescopes and other aids enable man to see a great deal more than the ancients, but the ancients could see a lot more than others for thousands of years afterward. Job lived in approximately 2000 BC, and we are living 2,000 years AD, so there is a 4,000-year differential between his day and our day. But only the last 200 years or so has astronomy come into a new realm of understanding, advanced thinking, and observation. Between Job's day and the last 200 years, there came more and more darkness of understanding, especially as the AD era approached.

The point is that Job was aware of these constellations, and in observing them, the ancients imagined figures in the sky so that the constellations were identifiable. However, while Job was aware of these constellations, he was not aware that God was listening very attentively to his remarks. We know this to be a fact because in Job chapter 38, God mentioned these same constellations and elaborated on them, giving information Job was not aware of. For instance, God mentioned the "sweet influences of Pleiades" and the terrific wildness of the constellation Orion (Job 38:31). What seem to be wandering stars in Orion are indeed under complete control. Stated another way, the stars of Orion seem to be at variance with the laws of the celestial realm, but they are not. Lord willing, when we come to chapter 38, we will discuss this aspect of Orion further and also try to give a spiritual application to the constellations.

It is interesting that Amos 5:8 mentions the Pleiades and Orion: "Seek him [God] that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is his name." Obviously, some of the people in Old Testament times were thinkers but not the average public, who were more or less engrossed in satisfying the pleasures of the flesh in one fashion or another.

The chambers of the south, whose existence Job could perceive, were a fragment of the signs of the zodiac. Of the 12 constellations comprising the zodiac, Job used personalized names, as it were, for three of them: Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades. Some of the 12 signs are in the Southern Hemisphere.

Job 9:10 Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number.

With his limited observation in the clear sky, free of the pollution of today, Job could see so many stars that he could not number them. He knew that what he could observe in the Northern Hemisphere was only a fragment of the whole. Hence he was saying that the wonders were beyond imagination. As time goes on and we learn more and more about the galaxies, we realize that they are becoming more and more innumerable.

Job 9:11 Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not.

This verse reminds us of something Eliphaz mentioned in his first speech. He related a strange experience in which a shadow passed by him, causing him to feel sort of a chill and the hair on his scalp to rise (Job 4:12-21). Then a spirit being spoke to him about experiences in the netherworld. Eliphaz tried to apply the principles of that experience and advice to Job's situation. Moreover, Eliphaz claimed the experience had given him superior wisdom. Now Job was speaking similarly in saying that God could pass right by him, and he would not even know it. In other words, Job was saying, "God moves mountains with earthquakes. Man does not see Him doing this, but the effects of His *great power* are seen. God, who originally made the heavens, can stop the sun and hide the stars. Why, He could go right by me, and I would not even know it."

We are also reminded of the advice Jesus gave to Nicodemus about the wind. Jesus said (paraphrased), “The wind goeth where it listeth. We do not see the wind, but we see its effects” (John 3:8).

Job 9:12 Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou?

Job certainly had this experience where things were taken away from him, but he did not know about Satan’s part in the testing. Therefore, he could only attribute the calamities he was experiencing to the fact that God had permitted them. He did not know that his reaction was to be a demonstration of his faith and the constancy of his reverence for Jehovah. Job was in the dark in regard to the reason for his trial, and we can understand his experience to a certain extent.

This portion (chapter 9) of Job’s remarks was the low in his career, that is, where he questioned God and was on the brink of teetering. Job’s words help us to see how God permits experiences to come on His people. The type of test that Job had was also experienced by Abraham and Jesus—and it also happens to all who are very elect in God’s sight. Not everyone has such testing because many are not capable of handling even the beginning of the experience. Consider what Job went through before he got to this point. Many of the Lord’s people do not have such trials because they prove to be of Great Company material. The very elect of both the Old and the New Testaments get excruciating experiences to test their faith; that is, the same principle applies to both classes. Here Job was undergoing his Gethsemane experience, and he was at his low period. When Job speaks in a later chapter, we will see him beginning to emerge as a wonderful fixed character; he was coming out of this experience for the good. Now he was in the furnace, just as the clay pot is put in the kiln to harden its surface. He was a wonderful character to start with. In God’s sight, there was no one else like him in the earth. Job was somewhat like Moses, who was described as the meekest man in all the earth, but Job was not yet crystallized to the extent that God desired for usefulness in His service in the Kingdom Age and beyond (Num. 12:3). We think that in the distant future, wonderful things will be done for Job, Moses, Abraham, and other faithful ones of the past who do not get the divine nature.

Comment: Back in Job 1:21, Job said, “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” It seems that at the beginning, Job had an understanding, but as time went by, he had opportunity to start questioning. When the calamities first occurred, he accepted them with no problem, but as time passed and he reflected on the situation and the comforters started to speak, he came to the point where he was now starting to question.

Reply: Yes, innately Job was a wonderful character. A later chapter will reveal some of the extraordinary things he had done before the calamities occurred, but he was not yet crystallized at this point. Now he was in the furnace. In Gethsemane, God’s hand was heavy on Jesus, in fact, almost to the breaking point, so that he said, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death” (Matt. 26:38). On the Cross, he cried out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46). Such excruciating experiences occur at the extremity of one’s testing. After that crucial period, Jesus got the feeling that he had done all he could, and he ended up with a triumphant cry, “It is finished!” (John 19:30). Such examples in Scripture indicate that anyone who gets the divine nature must have a test somewhat along this line to the extent that he is able to contain it. Of course not all will be tested to the same degree of severity, but the test will seem just as severe *according to the capabilities* of the individual. Severe testing is a necessity for those who make their calling and election sure.

It is true that Job was now beginning to question the reasons for his experience, and this was a test of patient endurance. As the Apostle Paul said, “Having done all, [we are] to stand” (Eph. 6:13). The last test of the Christian is patience. The Heavenly Father is called “the God of [all] patience,” and we can imagine His patience in witnessing and intently watching the severe testing of His people (Rom. 15:5). We think He is particularly focused on His children at that critical moment in their life.

Job’s questions and/or statement about God in verse 12 is correct: “He taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou?” There was a nobility in Job’s expression in that he realized God’s greatness. While we cannot fathom why God permits certain experiences to come into our lives, if we realize His greatness, we must trust Him that certainly they are for our good.

Job 9:13 If God will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him.

Who were the “proud helpers”? They were the three comforters. Job recognized the necessity for stooping under God, for prostrating himself before God. Even though he did not know the reason for his experience, he realized that in humility, he must acquiesce and submit to God’s greatness in every way.

Now he was telling his comforters of the necessity for their pride to be humbled. In the very nature of their advice to “comfort” Job, they unconsciously took a superior attitude; that is, they presumed themselves to be superior to Job. An air of superiority was apparent in the mode, manner, and spirit in which they tendered their instruction to him. Therefore, Job was more or less saying that they would have the same experience: “You cannot understand why I am having this experience. Do not be surprised if you get an experience along the same line in order to humble you for your attitude in trying to comfort me.”

Comment: The NIV reads, “God does not restrain his anger; even the cohorts of Rahab cowered at his feet.”

Reply: “Rahab” is mysterious nomenclature that is usually attributed to Egypt, but the thought here is quite different. Of course this “Rahab” has nothing to do with Rahab the harlot. Rather, the term in the literal Hebrew refers to a mysterious *personage*, specifically to the Adversary himself.

Comment: For the term “proud helpers,” the King James margin says that the Hebrew means “helpers of pride or strength.”

Reply: Yes. Of course the Adversary is the chief one of pride. We were just going into the history of the word “Rahab,” but the word, as used here in verse 13, applies more to principles than to personages. Nevertheless, it is interesting to know about the personage in the sense that Satan is the epitome of that which is contrary to everything God is looking for in his people. God desires them to have the spirit of Jesus, rather than that of the Adversary, which is one of pride and self-esteem. Verse 13 is referring to the pride and self-esteem of the three comforters, and these characteristics had to be removed if they were to gain life.

Job 9:14 How much less shall I answer him, and choose out my words to reason with him?

Job was expressing faith. Faith trusts God when everything seems to be the opposite. Faith cannot grow unless it is tested by doubt, for faith is drawn out of a person. Faith grows, receives exercise, and develops when the climate of doubt comes into one’s environment. It is strengthened if it responds in a proper mode when doubt appears. Job did not know why God was permitting his suffering, but the experience was excruciatingly drawing out the quality of

faith and developing it. A similar situation was the importunate widow who continually went before the judge with her problem (Luke 18:2-5). After a while, she was such a nuisance and a pest that he granted her desire. In this parable, Jesus was giving an example of how faith develops.

When doubt comes, many people fail to stand the test. Such a failure becomes critical in their life, for they usually go astray subsequently. We believe, however, that God does not test everyone alike because He realizes many do not have the material to start with; that is, He does not want to test an individual above that which he is able. Therefore, most do not overcome sufficiently to become of the very elect class. In His kindness, they get life in the Great Company, but they are spared this particular severe test of faith. The trial of our faith is much more precious than gold that perishes (1 Pet. 1:7). The word “trial” in that context means “proof”; that is, the *proof* of one’s faith is more precious than fine gold. The trial itself is very, very precious, but to *pass that test faithfully* is a wonderful blessing—it far surpasses anything that this world could offer.

Here Job was in the crucible with the heat turned up. As we will see later, this testing would bring out what a wonderful individual he was. In fact, God mentioned Job, Noah, and Daniel as being exceptional (Ezek. 14:14,20).

“How much less shall I answer him [God], and choose out my words to reason with him?” Job was saying that he would never win any argument or reasoning with the Lord. After all, God is our Creator, so we have to trust that He has a good reason for allowing every experience.

Job 9:15 Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my judge.

In the past, as some have noted in the Hebrew, the language Job was now beginning to use was more like that in the judicial system of his day. He was speaking in a legal fashion, as though a court case were going on with a judge, a claimant, and a defendant. Job said, “Even if I were righteous (which I am not), I would not answer, but I would make my supplication to my judge” (paraphrase). In other words, Job did not know why he was having these experiences, and he wanted to know the reason. He would like to go to court, before the bar of justice with God Himself, so that he could receive satisfaction. He knew that he was not perfect but felt that he was perfect in his intentions to serve God, and he did not want to waver in that regard. He wanted to hold fast to the conviction of his faith that he tried to do his best and that he was not disloyal in any sense. However, although he would like to make supplication to his judge, he felt, as time went on, that he could not plead his cause before the Almighty.

Job 9:16 If I had called, and he had answered me; yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice.

The pronoun “he” refers to God. What was Job saying in effect? If seven wise men were talking on this subject, there would probably be seven different answers. The turmoil of conflict residual in Job’s soul was very deep. As will be admitted later on, he was utterly confused about his situation.

Comment: If Job had received an answer immediately, the answer might have been taken for granted. The fact that he had to wait, and then, by the Lord’s grace, get an answer later caused him to appreciate the answer ever so much more. As time passes and an answer does not come, doubt enters the mind. The questions start to come: Has the Lord deserted me? Am I not pleasing Him? Then the understanding, when it does come, is so much more precious. Paul had that experience. He asked three times before the answer came, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in your weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9).

Reply: Sometimes in our experiences, we have darkness in the daytime and see worlds of light at night, figuratively speaking. When we are properly exercised by our trials, they become treasured experiences we will never forget because we successfully surmounted them. However, Job was still in the trial phase here, in the furnace.

Q: Verse 16 brings two thoughts to mind. (1) Was Job saying he did not believe God would answer him because of the punishment he seemed to be getting? (2) Or was Job saying he did not believe God would hearken to his petition in asking why he was having the experiences?

A: Job certainly viewed God as being vastly superior in wisdom and power. He felt that even if he pleaded his cause, he would end up defeated because he could not reason with the great Creator Himself. If he tried, he would fumble for words, but regardless, he was yearning for an answer. However, he did not feel capable or worthy of formalizing his question. Scriptures are sprinkled in the Old Testament somewhat along this line. For example, in his experience with the seraphim, Isaiah felt he was a man of unclean lips, whereas he was the opposite in his daily living (Isa. 6:5). The presence of the holiness and righteousness of God was so overwhelming that Job was at a loss for words, yet he wanted an answer. He wanted to make his supplication to his judge, but he was afraid to do so. Job felt there was a reason for the delayed answer, but he could not fathom it.

Comment: Job did not know what he had done wrong, but he felt that he could not reason with God because God knows everything.

Job 9:17 For he breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause.

Job felt he was receiving the “wounds *without cause*,” but actually, there was a reason for his suffering. Remember, this was the low point of Job’s experience. He being tested by the Adversary. And God wanted the Adversary to be convicted of the fact that Job was not righteous just because of all his temporal blessings but that Job truly was a very noble person who wanted to serve Him in deed and in truth and not because of any fleshly reward or prosperity. Again we refer to his earlier words: “I was naked when I came into the world, and I am naked going out. *Blessed be the name of the LORD*” (Job 1:21 paraphrase). To be able to say such words under his dire circumstances would seem like the climax of faithfulness, but the Lord’s hand was still pressing down on Job in spite of that wonderful profession. The entire experience was for Job’s eternal benefit, and he will receive a greater reward because, as we shall see, he even went beyond this statement. Job’s resignation to the divine will was shown, yet he desperately wanted an answer.

What happened later on is that almost subconsciously, he began to think on subjects he had never considered before—and with great depth. As time went on, he began to understand the reason even without being told. He asked why, why, why, but after a while, little by little, he began to understand, and he came out of the experience wonderfully.

Job 9:18 He will not suffer me to take my breath, but filleth me with bitterness.

Job 9:19 If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong: and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead?

Job 9:20 If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.

Job 9:21 Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life.

Verses 18-21 continue the theme of being in court with Job's use of legal terms. Hebrew scholars do not fully grasp the terms. We will find out in later chapters that Job had almost a supernatural wisdom on some subjects. We got a smattering of that wisdom with his mention of Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, but subsequently he went into different realms almost like Solomon. Indirectly we will find out what type of man he was prior to his sufferings.

Suppose we were in court and the one finding fault with us was God. In searching our heart, we could feel that we had truly wanted to serve God with all our heart, soul, and strength and that we had done the best we could. But when God would appear in court, we would be stammering so much that as we went to testify to profess our innocence, out of our mouth would come the words, "I'm guilty! I am sorry for what I did! I didn't mean it!" Job was saying, "God is so awesome, and who am I? How could I stand before One with such power, strength, and wisdom? I would be a stammering fool no matter what I felt."

Meanwhile, the comforters were listening, and Job's words had an effect on them. As time went on, they began to see there was something about Job that they themselves inherently lacked, but it took a long time for them to be convicted of this fact.

"If I [attempt to] justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse." Job was saying he would condemn himself. At first, he wanted the matter to be resolved in a court case, but the more he thought about it, the more he felt his thinking was foolish. "If God did come before the court and I tried to plead my cause, I would be an utter idiot. I would convict myself."

In an early chapter of the *First Volume*, the Pastor mentioned that when we are searching for the Creator and information as to what we are, what the future holds, who made us, and where we are going, one of the things we should realize is that we are created beings and subjects of a great Emperor. Therefore, God must be the epitome of wisdom, justice, love and power. As His creatures, we can be only a feeble representation of those qualities. Therefore, in our questioning mode and search for truth, if we see that God has created us and that there seems to be some purpose or plan in nature, we should have humility of heart and be in a meek attitude of waiting for information. If we are sincere, we should anticipate being rewarded for our search. These principles of natural faith are wonderful, but natural faith can go up to a higher clime with experiences such as Job was having and such as Christians have in the Gospel Age. When natural faith is tried and we are rightly exercised, that natural faith goes to a much higher level.

"Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life [if I were in the presence of God]." Job realized the greatness of the Heavenly Father. At first, he wanted someone to plead his cause, but on second thought, he felt to do so would be fruitless.

Comment: In verse 18, the word "bitterness" is actually in the plural in the Hebrew, and "bitternesses" would mean the hard trials he was going through.

Job 9:22 This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.

Job's words would not have been quite as brusque as they sound. He was just observing that in life, calamities come on both the righteous and the wicked. In contrast, the two comforters who had spoken thus far felt that Job's experiences must be the result of his having done something wrong. In other words, Job was not talking with bitterness. However, he was puzzled as to why calamities come on the righteously inclined. The more Job thought on this situation, the more he would subsequently begin to see that there was a reason for the experiences. He was getting nearer to the point of this realization.

Job 9:23 If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent.

The RSV reads, “When disaster brings sudden death, he mocks at the calamity of the innocent.” The NIV is similar: “When a scourge brings sudden death, he mocks the despair of the innocent.” This verse is difficult to understand.

Comment: Job was not talking about God but about the scourge itself. Figuratively speaking, the scourge was laughing at the trial.

Comment: Changing the pronoun from “he” to “it,” which we have the liberty to do in English, helps the meaning.

Job 9:24 The earth is given into the hand of the wicked: he covereth the faces of the judges thereof; if not, where, and who is he?

An experienced observer of the affairs of life saw that the so-called judges were amenable to bribes and favoritism. To a large extent, family interests perverted the judgment of the courts. Also, the judges were influenced by personal prejudices. Generally speaking, it was difficult for one who was seeking redress to get satisfaction in the courts because of various perversions of justice such as favoritism to the rich, family influence, and personal prejudices against the poor. The Prophet Malachi spoke similarly. The present condition is quite different from the future, when the Kingdom is established.

“If not, where, and who is he?” The NIV reads, “When a land falls into the hands of the wicked, he blindfolds its judges. If it is not he, then who is it?” The RSV reads, “The earth is given into the hand of the wicked; he covers the faces of its judges—if it is not he, who then is it?”

Comment: It helps to reverse the wording: “Blindfolded judges give the land into the hands of the wicked.”

In the back of his mind in his questioning mode, Job could not fathom God’s reason for permitting injustice to prevail. We are so blessed to have the Harvest message, which tells us not only the philosophy of the Ransom but also the reason for the permission of evil. Job gradually came to a certain degree of understanding of the permission of evil but not to the extent that we have been privileged to understand here at the end of the Gospel Age. Therefore, our tests should be proportionately severe according to what we are capable of enduring. Hopefully, by God’s grace, we grow stronger and stronger in the truth and in faithfulness so that we can endure more for the Lord’s sake. We pray for the inner strength that He can supply, and not for our own strength, which would certainly result in failure.

Comment: It seems that Job, at this point, was starting to figure out that evil does not come from God.

Reply: On the one hand, Job could not understand that evil would come from God, but on the other hand, he still did not know the reason for the evil.

Comment: Job knew that evil existed, but he did not attribute it to God. When (in verse 23) he said that the scourge would laugh at the trial of the innocent, he knew that God would not laugh at the trial of the innocent. Then in verse 24, Job was saying that the earth is in the hands of the wicked at this time, so again, trouble and wickedness cannot be attributed to God.

Reply: Yes, Job certainly saw that evil men prevailed, generally speaking.

Comment: His comforters were trying to convince Job that he was evil.

Reply: Job was thinking, “Oh, Lord, give me an answer.” In wanting more information, he was in a crucible experience, and he was crying while the pestle was grinding. We say that the perfections of Jesus’ nature being ground in the crucible of experience brought out a pure, fine incense that was a sweet savor and fragrance in the sight of God. To a very small degree, Job was having the same experience himself. He was crying in the crucible to know the reason for his calamities, but that information was being purposely withheld for his eternal welfare.

Many have trouble understanding why God allowed His dear Son to be crucified on a cross, but when we see that not only the honor and the welfare of Jesus himself but also all he will do in the future will be more and more to God’s glory, we can understand the reason for his experience. Since we are creatures of emotion, the last thing we would want is to have our son suffer, but the wisdom God has and is exercising is different from what we, by nature, would do. The last thing we would do is the best thing that could be done. In other words, the temporary permission of evil is the best and wisest thing that could have happened. The short life of the permission of evil will work out an everlasting good.

Job 9:25 Now my days are swifter than a post: they flee away, they see no good.

“Post office” and other words are related to “post.” A number of words in the Hebrew, as well as in the Latin and the Greek, have filtered down to our present language.

Comment: The RSV and the NIV have “runner” instead of “post.” *Strong’s Concordance* defines “post” as “to run.”

Job 9:26 They are passed away as the swift ships: as the eagle that hasteth to the prey.

Verses 25 and 26 are coupled together. Job was referring to his current experience. He felt he was going downhill fast. As time went on, he did not expect to survive because the experience was so telling on his physical frame.

Job’s days “passed away as the swift ships.” The expression “swift ships” and a few other remarks are clues that Job was in Egypt at one time. Generally speaking, the ships of those days were not fast. The exception was the boats of the Nile River, which were made of reeds or papyrus and thus were light. With the wind and the current, the ancient craft did travel quickly. The Mediterranean Sea was quite different from the Nile, which flows from south to north.

Job 9:27 If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself:

Job 9:28 I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent.

Verses 27 and 28 would be relatively hard to understand except in the context of a court case with a plaintiff and a defendant. If the one opposite Job was God, and Job was the party doing the complaining, the contest would be overwhelmingly in favor of the One he purportedly had the complaint against.

Chapter 9 was the low point of Job’s experience, and he got perilously close to stepping over the margin. We will see in the next chapter, however, that Job began to slowly emerge victoriously from this experience. Now he was in the critical phase, but later his attitude became more fixed.

Q: In verse 27, was Job saying he was weary of the difficult experience but realized he needed to go through all of it in order to get the full benefit?

A: That will become true in the next chapter. Notice that in the first verse of chapter 10, Job did the very thing he was afraid to do at this point. “My soul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.” Job was fearful of the outcome of the experience. He realized he was deteriorating, and now he would reveal a little more of his present emotions.

Job 9:29 If I be wicked, why then labour I in vain?

Job was on the negative side of the scale. In the next chapter, he would say the same thing but on the positive side of the scale. The progression is an interesting study of crystallization of character. Here he was examining himself and was very negative in his present mode.

Job 9:30 If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean;

Job 9:31 Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.

Job would be pushed in the mud, as it were, in this contest in which he was trying to debate his cause with the Almighty God. He had already said that God was beyond understanding and had illimitable and overwhelming influence and power. In the next chapter will come a radical change but not now. Job knew he was innocent, yet he was teetering.

It would be interesting to know the cleansing value of “snow water.” Of course it was cool and refreshing. The Scriptures mention the water that flows from snow-capped Mount Hermon, which, spiritually speaking, represents the truth emanating from God’s throne and coming down to us as heavenly refreshing liquid manna. In any event, from a natural standpoint, it was evidently felt at that time that snow water had a cleansing value.

If Job tried to justify himself before God, and God gave him a little push, he would fall in the ditch and be in the exact opposite situation.

Job 9:32 For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment.

The thought of a court of law continued. The Hebrew is legalistic. Job was awed not only by God’s power and wisdom but also by his own insignificance if he were to contend with God in any fashion.

Job 9:33 Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.

A “daysman” would be an intermediary. From the simple standpoint, Job was saying that since God was on the one side, there was no possibility of a “daysman” stepping in and putting one hand on the one party and the other hand on the other party and reasoning out a satisfactory solution.

It is interesting to realize that Elihu was listening to the whole conversation from beginning to end, and later he actually assumed the role of a “daysman.” Thus there were not only the three comforters (or *discomforters*) but also Elihu as a silent listener in the background.

Q: Does this verse show Job’s insight into the fact that a mediator is needed between God and man?

A: Yes, Job saw the necessity for a mediator, but he did not fully understand the philosophy. He did believe in a Messiah, however, for he said, “I know that my Redeemer liveth” (Job

19:25). Job had some sort of clue, for when we listen to his whole experience, we can inferentially extrapolate certain clues, or truths, without fully knowing how much he clearly understood. The same is true of Abraham, who looked for a city that had foundations whose builder and maker was God. That statement in Hebrews 11:10 indicates Abraham had more understanding than we know from the Genesis account of his history and life. Job lived prior to the Law Covenant, before there was an explanation of sin and its different varieties. People did not feel the guilt on some matters that was felt later, after the introduction of the Law, and still later, after the gospel of Jesus at the First Advent. Now we see with more distinction the gradations and kinds of sins that we are responsible for as, let us say, just natural human beings. People could not be condemned for what they were not instructed in. Nevertheless, some extremely intelligent human beings existed both before and during Job's time. In the Book of Job, we get a wonderful insight into God's dealings with Job.

Job 9:34 Let him take his rod away from me, and let not his fear terrify me:

Job 9:35 Then would I speak, and not fear him; but it is not so with me.

What was "not so" with Job at this particular period of his experience? He was not getting the assurance he desired, so he was imploring God. It is interesting that Job poured out his feelings to fellow man, whereas people usually keep such feelings to themselves. At times when Job was talking, he almost forgot the comforters entirely. He would be talking with God, as it were, and then all of a sudden come to the realization of the comforters. His talking to God and then to the comforters went in and out like waves.

Q: In the midst of difficult trials, it is often hard for us, as Christians, to reason properly. As Hebrews 12:11 says, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless *afterward* it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Was Job saying that if the calamities were removed from him and he was in a period of calmness, he could then look back and discuss and perhaps understand better?

A: That will be particularly true in the next chapter.

Job 10:1 My soul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.

Notice the words "my soul" (twice), "my life," and "my complaint." Job's soul was weary of, or loathed, his life. In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul informed us that Christians are of a dual nature: the new man and the old man. The new man is in the vessel of the old man. Stated another way, the new creature has a monkey on his back. Although Job did not realize the duality in quite the same way that Christians do, he felt the conflict. He was making a distinction between his soul and his life—his experience in the flesh. He was weary of the experience he was having in the flesh, which was taking him downhill. One perspective of Job's saying, "I will leave my complaint upon myself," was that he felt like giving up. The NIV is closer to the thought: "Therefore I will give free [loose] rein to my complaint." When a rider wants his horse to gallop, he loosens and flaps both reins. Job would now do what he feared to do a little while ago. He would give free rein about his present situation.

Job 10:2 I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; show me wherefore thou contendest with me.

It is hard to see from the written statement that Job's mood was beginning to change. He was softening under his experience and getting into a tender mode. Unfortunately, the various translations do not bring out the tenderness. "I will say unto *Eloha*"—not only to God in the singular (instead of *Elohim*) but to God in an "Abba, Father" mode. Job was appealing to God as

a Father but almost in a feminine gender. About 60 years ago, Brother Kirkwood gave a talk entitled “The Mother Love of God.” Certainly God is complete just as, on a much lower scale, Adam was complete and had a fullness before Eve was taken from him. The Heavenly Father has these traits, and even the Apostle Paul got in that mode when he yearned for those he had been privileged to bring into the truth, likening them to a fetus in the womb.

Under the crucible experience, Job was becoming a little more tenderized, and he was appealing to God something like Moses did. When God said to Moses, “Step aside and let me wipe out the Israelites,” Moses interceded and reasoned, “Oh no, do not do that. If you destroy the Israelites, people will say that you brought them out of Egypt but were not able to bring them into the Land of Promise.” Moses and Job were very unusual personages.

Job 10:3 Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress, that thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands, and shine upon the counsel of the wicked?

Knowing what is coming in this chapter, we would like to word verse 3 a little differently: “Is it good for thee that thou shouldest crush me, that thou shouldest disregard [me] the work of thine hands, and shine [with favor] upon the counsel of the wrong?” The word “wicked” is a little too strong. In the New Testament, the term “the wicked” sometimes means “the lawless,” a lesser degree, and here Job was talking about the counsel of his comforters. He was not saying that they were wicked persons but that they were giving wrong counsel, bad advice. When Job’s comments are softened, another perspective is given; namely, he was beginning to emerge from the crucible as a different person.

Job 10:4 Hast thou eyes of flesh? or seest thou as man seeth?

Job 10:5 Are thy days as the days of man? are thy years as man’s days,

Job 10:6 That thou inquirest after mine iniquity, and searchest after my sin?

The answer to the rhetorical questions of verses 4-6 is, “Of course not.” Similarly, Paul asked, “Should we sin so that the grace of God may abound?” (Rom. 6:1 paraphrase).

Job 10:7 Thou knowest that I am not wicked; and there is none that can deliver out of thine hand.

Job 10:8 Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me.

Job 10:9 Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again?

The wording in verses 7-9 is tender, as some other translations bring out. Job was talking about the skill with which the Heavenly Father made man and the delicate operation of bringing all the functional parts together in such a marvelous fashion. It was like David’s asking, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” (Psa. 8:4). To a certain extent, David and Job glorified even the physical creation that God had made.

Job was trying to reason with God but not in a combative mood. “There is none [and Job included himself] that can deliver out of thine hand. Thine hands have shaped me and knit me together like a garment. Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as clay, and to dust wilt thou again bring me?” Job was pleading, and his sense of judgment was beginning to set in that there was some reason for his experience. His faith was groping for a handle on the matter. He was getting closer and closer to a realization but was not satisfied yet. He felt that

he was innocent and that God knew of his innocence.

Job 10:10 Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese?

Job 10:11 Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews.

Job was talking about his own bodily appearance and shameful experience. He felt as if he had been poured out like milk and curdled like cheese; that is, he felt exposed. Some commentators give a very technical explanation about the body itself and how wondrously man is made, but Job was talking about himself, as some ensuing verses will verify.

Imagine seeing Job as he was speaking. We should keep in mind that he had not eaten any food for seven days, and now he was speaking for the second time. Since he had a disease, his skin was probably wrinkled, and his sinews showed. Depending on the circumstance, someone who is starving may have either a swollen belly or the opposite. In this case, Job was apparently skin and bones. When a person loses a lot of weight, the skin takes on a rather strange appearance. And Job's skin was darkened somewhat (Job 30:30). Therefore, in verses 10 and 11, he was recognizing his deplorable state.

Job 10:12 Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.

Job 10:13 And these things hast thou hid in thine heart: I know that this is with thee.

Job was talking about his previous condition, that is, before the calamities had occurred. He was comparing his former situation in the days when he was recognized as an honorable person and the favor of God had shone upon him. He was saying, too, that God was thoroughly familiar with both his former and his present state, in which he was curdled like milk. However, while God knew these things, He was not doing anything to relieve Job's suffering. In an indirect way, Job was asking why God did not answer him and tell the reason for his sufferings. How unbelievably blessed we are to understand the philosophy of the permission of evil in the Harvest period! Many Christians in the Dark Ages had experiences similar to those of Job.

We are living in a peculiar period at the end of the age. In the Middle Ages, people spent long hours in labor and servitude. Life is very different today—for example, brethren can carry around a laptop computer instead of heavy books—but under current circumstances, it is more difficult to attain the Little Flock. Even earlier in the Harvest period, when the Pastor was alive, the way of life in this country was rural and agrarian.

In verses 10-13, Job was saying, “Lord, you know my present situation, and I am aware that you know it.” He was waiting for a reply.

Job 10:14 If I sin, then thou markest me, and thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity.

Job continued, “If I sin, then thou markest me”; in other words, “If I sinned, then my calamities are justifiable. I should expect to be skin and bones.” But Job had searched his heart and did not think he had sinned. Later we will learn a little more about Job and realize the intensity of his vows—what he did time after time over years of faithfulness to God. Already we have seen that he regularly prayed for his children lest they sin. If he was worried about his children, we can be sure he was circumspect about himself to make sure he was obeying the Lord.

Job 10:15 If I be wicked, woe unto me; and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head. I am full of confusion; therefore see thou mine affliction;

“If I be wicked, woe unto me; and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head.” Job knew it was impossible to serve God perfectly, but in searching his heart, he realized he had done the best he could, that is, as far as was humanly possible. Moreover, Job must have searched his heart with great regularity. In contrast, we live in a careless generation today. In the past, because of the rigors of life and the shortness of leisure time, people worshipped with great energy at an hour that was most propitious. Today the Laodicean spirit comes right into our midst, and we must be on guard against it. However, as prophesied events start to occur in the world, the Lord’s people will be energized. Events will wake up both the wise and the foolish virgins to consider whether their daily walk is consistent with their consecration.

“I am full of confusion; therefore see thou mine affliction.” Even though Job was full of confusion in his thinking, he expressed himself remarkably well for being under duress. He was saying that Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar could see his affliction.

Job 10:16 For it increaseth. Thou huntest me as a fierce lion: and again thou showest thyself marvellous upon me.

“For it increaseth.” Not only had Job fasted for seven days and suffered disease, but now he was being badgered by the three comforters. Not only was he full of confusion about the permission of evil upon himself, but he had to listen to the three comforters each speak in turn. As Job was replying, the next comforter was waiting for an opportunity to speak—and did so as soon as Job was finished.

“Thou huntest me as a fierce lion.” The three comforters were hunting Job like fierce lions. They were waiting for an opportunity to badger him. Out of respect for his former situation when Job was the greatest man in the East, they let him speak and did not interrupt, but they were just waiting for their opportunity to pounce on him.

“And again thou showest thyself marvellous upon me.” This part of verse 16 can be taken two ways. Job was confused as to the reason for his current state in comparison with his previous honorable state. Now the three comforters were hunting him fiercely, but in the past, God had shown favor to Job in different ways—in his travels, in his knowledge, etc. Job could not harmonize the permission of evil. In the apostles’ day, the permission of evil was very clear, as shown by Peter’s statement “The trial of your faith ... [is] much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire” (1 Pet. 1:7). But in the Middle Ages, few Christians had a Bible, and if they did, they had to keep it hidden. Moreover, without electricity, their hours for reading were very limited.

Job could not understand the admixture of good, favor, and happiness with his present sufferings, but a marvelous change would come over him. The very experience he was going through made him think, so that later he made some unusual statements. Under this pressure, the real inner man of Job was beginning to emerge and get stronger bit by bit as time went on.

Q: It is a little confusing to think that Job was talking to the comforters and then to God in the same verse. The NIV reads, “If I hold my head high, you stalk me like a lion and again display your awesome power against me.” Verse 17 then mentions the (three) witnesses. Was Job talking to God about the three comforters?

A: Yes. Job wanted to know why God was permitting the experiences.

Comment: As Christians, we all have unusual experiences, harsh as well as joyous. While we know the Lord is permitting other agencies to tempt us, we also know that He could (and does) stop whatever is not in our best interest. Evidently, we need disappointments and trials

to cultivate in us a greater appreciation for that which is right, true, and just. The comparison is beneficial.

Job knew the three comforters were better-than-average people. They had sacrificed by traveling a long distance to comfort him, and they had come with the motive of helping him. However, they did not understand his situation; they misread his experience just as Job himself misread it. Their badgering was not done with the intent of destroying him. They meant well, but they thought, “Job, why don’t you just admit that you have sinned? Tell us what is causing this problem.” But Job could not give them an answer because he did not know. Therefore, regardless of the motive of the three comforters, the effect of their remarks was to badger Job. Their supposed “help” just added to his sufferings.

Job 10:17 Thou renewest thy witnesses against me, and increasest thine indignation upon me; changes and war are against me.

“Thou renewest thy witnesses [plural] against me.” Of the three “witnesses,” only two had replied so far. Zophar would speak next.

We should keep in mind that all the time Job was talking to God, he was speaking about the three comforters. Job was saying that their remarks were an increase of indignation upon him. Not only was he wrinkled and skin and bones—not only was he afflicted with this loathsome disease—but also he was being assaulted verbally.

Q: For “changes and war are against me,” the NIV reads, “Your forces come against me wave upon wave.” In a war, attacks occur in different waves. Is that what Job felt he was getting from the comforters?

A: Yes, that seems to be the principle. Job was experiencing one battle or skirmish after another with scarcely a lull in between. After only slight relief, another wave would come.

Job 10:18 Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? Oh that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me!

Job 10:19 I should have been as though I had not been; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave.

Job wished he had died at birth or as an infant, that is, before he came to any conscious state. He did believe in a resurrection, as he would confess later in his anguish. When the burden of his present experience was compared with the favor of his former experience, the burden far outweighed the favor. Therefore, he felt it would be better if his life had been terminated at birth.

The inflection Job used in speaking would soften some of his remarks. It is true that he was questioning God, but in a more respectful way than some of the words might seem to indicate.

Job 10:20 Are not my days few? cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little,

The greatest honors will go to those who suffer the most, all things being equal, because the Lord wants to crystallize those individuals and bring them forth to their highest eternal good. If Job had lived in the Gospel Age, he certainly would have qualified for the Little Flock, for he proved he could be entrusted with the divine nature and immortality. Not everyone will have such severe experiences because not all prove to be of that caliber. God’s hand was heavy on Jesus, our perfect pattern, for his eternal good. The furnace is sometimes very hot for the clay.

“Are not my days few? cease then ... that I may take comfort a little.” Job thought he would die, but he wanted a little respite. He was getting weaker and weaker and was almost to the breaking point. He was asking for a few quiet breaths before he deceased. Job was talking from personal experience, not from a philosophical standpoint.

Job 10:21 Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death;

Job 10:22 A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.

Of course verses 21 and 22 are a picture of gloom, but the meaning can be misconstrued. When Job said, “I shall not return,” he meant, “I shall not return then, *at that time*”; that is, Job would not return until the resurrection. He had some inkling that the fruition of God’s plan—whatever that plan was—was not near at hand. The Messiah had not yet come, and there was no indication that the fulfillment of God’s plan was imminent. Somehow he saw that it was way down the road.

Job surely did not believe in a hellfire of torment, for he said death was a “land of *darkness*.” Death was the land of the unknown. “Light is as darkness” in the sense that the dead know not anything.

Death is a land “without any order.” The Egyptians thought of the grave as the land of chaos. Incidentally, clues in the Book of Job show that Job knew about Egypt. One clue is the mention of “swift [papyrus] ships” (Job 9:26). Death was considered a land of uncertainty, darkness, and chaos. The pope recently denied that the Roman Catholic Church ever taught hellfire and says that death is a place of nothingness. He blames the teaching of hellfire on those who attend the Roman Catholic Church.

As soon as Job stopped talking, Zophar, who was champing at the bit, began to speak. Job was not given a moment’s peace.

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

Job 11:2 Should not the multitude of words be answered? and should a man full of talk be justified?

Zophar spoke strong words against Job.

Comment: Zophar was the youngest of the three comforters because he was the last to speak. Also, he had less modesty and prudence in his speech.

Reply: It is true that his remarks were cruder. Yes, deference was given with regard to age, the only exception being that a position of authority took precedence over age.

Comment: According to Young’s *Analytical Concordance*, the name Zophar means “rough” or “hairy,” and his speech was the same.

Reply: Yes, and Zophar can also mean “chirper.” At present, it is difficult to pin down a definitive meaning of the name and especially the history of “Naamathite.” The reason for this particularity of name and location is that when the Kingdom is established and this generation comes forth from the tomb, the people will be astounded to realize how the detail in Holy Writ matches the reality. The result will be more reverential awe of the knowledge of God and the providential protection of this historical record and its accuracy. People of all generations who

belittle the Word in the present life will be humbled in the Kingdom.

Comment: Although the Book of Proverbs had not yet been written, Zophar used the principle of Proverbs 10:19, “In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.” However, this principle did not apply to Job, for Zophar was wrongly accusing him.

Reply: Yes, even though the saying was not recorded by Solomon until years later, it was recognized as a fact. A fool is known by the multitude of his words—and usually by the emptiness of those words! What about the long-winded speech of Eliphaz? Prejudice makes one inconsistent in his reasoning and judging. Sometimes when a person talks too much without substance, another individual will indicate that fact by making a mouth with the thumb and fingers of his right hand and then silently moving them repeatedly open and closed.

Job 11:3 Should thy lies make men hold their peace? and when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed?

This verse is even stronger. Zophar was saying, “Your protestations of innocence are lies.”

Comment: According to *Strong’s Concordance*, the Hebrew word translated “lies” can also mean “a brag.”

Job 11:4 For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes.

In quoting an excerpt of a previous remark of Job, Zophar gave an improper slant and criticized Job.

Comment: It sounds as if Zophar did not have any sympathy for Job’s situation. Instead of considering Job’s character and past, which manifested an upright life, he entered right into the attitude of the previous two speakers.

Reply: Of the three comforters, Zophar seemed to have the least empathy. No allowance was made for Job’s suffering and loss. How strange that all three comforters lectured Job! When they come forth from the tomb, they will be embarrassed, for they themselves were guilty of speaking a multitude of unprofitable words.

Job 11:5 But oh that God would speak, and open his lips against thee;

Zophar was coming up to a climax. In verse 4, he quoted Job’s prayer beseeching God for an answer as to why he was having this experience: “I am clean in thine eyes.” But then Zophar gave the blunt comment of verse 5. In other words, “Oh that God, whom you just prayed to, might speak and let you know the true facts.” The comforter was a tormentor.

Job 11:6 And that he would show thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is! Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.

Zophar was implying that he knew the secrets of wisdom. He was praising God in one sense, but the motive was to justify and give strength to his criticism of Job. “Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.” How cruel!

Comment: With all that Job was suffering, Zophar did not think it was enough.

Comment: Zophar did not know what Job’s iniquities were, so he was talking out of the side of his mouth.

Comment: Jesus gave the example of the Pharisee who prayed and said, “God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican” (Luke 18:11). Zophar’s attitude was like that of the Pharisee.

Job 11:7 Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?

Job 11:8 It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?

Zophar was implying that Job’s depth of understanding was relatively shallow. Earlier Job had talked on sublime thoughts (about the Pleiades, Orion, and Arcturus). Although Zophar probably subconsciously realized that these statements were superior to his own, he was saying that Job was speaking more intellectually than was warranted because he did not have depth of understanding. Actually, Zophar was questioning Job’s motives. Job was known for having an unusual ability to judge and thus help many people of all classes, but Zophar’s blunt statements were scotching Job’s reputation. In reality, Zophar was unworthy to judge someone of Job’s stature.

Comment: We can apply this principle about understanding the motives of others to Christians in the Gospel Age. Generally speaking, the Great Company does not really understand the motives of the Little Flock.

Reply: That is true. While the three comforters do not represent the Great Company, the Great Company thinking is the thinking of others as well, so the principle certainly applies.

Comment: One Bible commentator suggested that of the so-called comforters, Zophar had the least substance in his argument. Plain and simple, he was saying Job was wrong.

Reply: Zophar did not weigh the facts of the situation, whereas a judge should accurately consider both pro and con as much as possible. Otherwise, judgment is perverted.

Job 11:9 The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.

Of course this statement is true, but like Zophar, many people utter similar statements without giving much thought to their words. For instance, when the Apostle Paul spoke about the height and depth of the wisdom of God, his words were far more meaningful than those of someone with no substance. Zophar’s comments reveal his character to some extent.

Job 11:10 If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him?

“If he [God] cut off, ... shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him?” The tenor of Zophar’s comments was somewhat coarse, although he was trying to make his words sound better than his thinking would warrant. Clues later on will show that the Heavenly Father was listening to all of these back-and-forth conversations between Job and the comforters. By the time the three finished with Job and then Elihu spoke, the situation was almost as if the Heavenly Father could not contain Himself, and He revealed Himself not only to Job but also to Elihu and the three comforters by speaking at length to enlighten them as to their real nothingness. He honored Job in another way, as we will see in a late chapter.

Q: Is the Revised Standard Version better for verse 10: “If he passes through, and imprisons, and calls to judgment, who can hinder him?”

A: The selection of a jury seems to be implied, so that wording sounds reasonable and could be

superior. Certainly that thought can be gathered from the Hebrew. Different scholars have admitted that many statements in the Book of Job have an official lawyer tone they cannot fully understand. One who lived back there could give these Hebrew words a slightly more distinct meaning than we can grasp through an English translation.

Q: Was Zophar going so far as to imply the following? “God has appointed the three of us to come here and deliver this message to you, Job. Our counsel is sanctioned by the Lord.”

A: Yes, he was more or less taking the tone of Eliphaz in a prior comment, where he, as the first of the three to speak, said, “We [meaning the three of us] have judged this matter already” (Job 4:2 paraphrase).

Job 11:11 For he knoweth vain men: he seeth wickedness also; will he not then consider it?

Zophar had nothing favorable to say about Job. He wanted Job to bare his soul before God, and of course the other two comforters wanted to know the details as well. Zophar was saying Job was a vain man in whom God saw wickedness, but he did not know what that wickedness was. Zophar implied that the more Job talked, the deeper he was digging his own grave. With the permission of evil not being understood, the three were sure Job was suffering because of something he had done. As we proceed, we will see from Job’s statements that eventually he understood, little by little, more and more of the reason for the permission of evil.

Job 11:12 For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass’s colt.

“For vain man would be wise.” Zophar was saying, “While you may be a vain person, Job, you can change the situation. All you have to do is to confess to God, and then your vanity will become wisdom. Confession is the wise course to pursue. Instead of incessantly maintaining your integrity before us, if you admit to God the true situation that you are at fault, your vanity can be changed into wisdom.” In counseling Job what to do, Zophar was implying that Job’s statements were on the level of a jackass, that they were the braying of a wild jackass.

It is interesting that in long conversations with different parties, certain words go into the memory bank and then come up from time to time regardless of who made the original statements. Here Zophar repeated, or reused, terms stated earlier in another way (Job 6:5). Another example of the recurrence of previous statements was Job’s reference to the dream of Eliphaz (Job 9:11). Thus statements, whether they were for or against someone else, are sometimes reused in another way to further an argument.

Job 11:13 If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him;

Here Zophar was counseling Job what to do and how to pray. On occasion, Moses lifted his hands in praying. A raising of hands sometimes occurs today in prayer groups. If natural, it is not wrong in principle, but hands are often raised by those in an emotional fervor. Sometimes an entire audience will raise their hands and wave them back and forth, demanding cognition of their involvement in the theme being considered at the time. Bending the knee, falling down prone, and/or raising the hands in accompaniment with prayer is a natural mode and in most cases represents great sincerity. However, emotionalism can imitate this reaction in a false type of reverence.

Comment: If the situation were different, some good advice was sprinkled in with bad advice. When we give advice to brethren, we need to be careful that it is scriptural, not emotional. What we say should not be based on our *feelings* and what *we* think is good advice.

Reply: Yes. In this case, it is obvious that Zophar misjudged Job and considered him both

physically and morally decrepit in God's sight. He was saying, "God is merciful. Give my counsel some consideration. Prepare yourself and you will be startled with the results." Zophar was echoing the earlier reasoning of Eliphaz but presenting it in a more abrupt fashion.

Job 11:14 If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles.

Zophar really meant, "*Since* iniquity be in thine hand." What is the thought of "tabernacles" (plural)?

Comment: Perhaps the plural term refers not only to Job's house but also to the dwelling places of his children, for earlier the comforters had accused Job of suffering partly because of sins his sons had committed.

Reply: That explanation sounds reasonable.

Job 11:15 For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear:

Zophar was certainly assuming the role of being Job's superior. Not only was he critical, but also his bragging indicated that he looked upon Job as being inferior to himself.

Job 11:16 Because thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away:

Job 11:17 And thine age shall be clearer than the noonday; thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning.

Job 11:18 And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope; yea, thou shalt dig about thee, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety.

Job 11:19 Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid; yea, many shall make suit unto thee.

Verses 16-19 are rather remarkable considering the character of Zophar, as revealed in his statements thus far and what he will yet say. It is almost as though the Holy Spirit was forcing out of his lips words of truth and a prediction. Jesus said, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise" (Matt. 21:16). Of course Zophar did not have the purity of a "babe," but out of the mouth of fools sometimes come statements of truth.

Q: The thoughts of verse 19 are incorporated into Psalm 23:2-4. Were these conventional or wise sayings that were passed down, or did Zophar originate the statements?

A: We cannot say one way or the other, for we are given only a portion of history. One thing does stand out, however. We have the benefit of knowing the end of the matter, and hindsight is usually much clearer than foresight. We can see that there was a happy ending to Job's experience. Zophar could predict Job's future, but he predicated that future on whether Job would prepare his heart and turn to God. The thoughts could be Zophar's own thinking, but it is strange that they were stated so wonderfully about noonday and the brightness of morning.

Comment: In a previous series of discourses on the Book of Job, the following comments were made: "What a foolish statement! Zophar said Job should forget his sufferings in the midst of the severe experience itself. Afterward that would be possible, but how could Job forget when he was in pain from head to foot? A Christian who is seriously afflicted with pain and disease has difficulty even uttering an intelligent prayer with proper decorum. The mind is confused in

such a circumstance, but Zophar was saying, ‘You would not be in this situation unless you had sinned.’”

Q: Was not Zophar continuing to say, “Once you have put the iniquity behind you, then you will be able to forget your misery like water that has passed by”?

A: We can reason either way. Certainly Job was suffering. Zophar was mindless and cruel in his badgering of Job, and he was more severe than the other two comforters. Remember, Job had one experience after another. It is unbelievable that the comforters could reason with Job and expect him, in his misery, to have a clear mind to present his case in a dispassionate, judicial manner as though nothing were wrong when he was weak and suffering greatly. The three were intent on being counselors.

There is a lesson here from another standpoint. The principle seems to exist in human society that subconsciously all want to be a “doctor” and a “teacher.” People are not in a learning mode except when it benefits them. Of course it is proper for Christians to think of *future* blessings and honors because God has encouraged such thinking by the promises He has given in His Word for those who are faithful unto death. But to try to be physicians and teachers on a large scale down here in the present life without proper direction from the Almighty—going by our own instincts—puts us on dangerous shoals. Giving instruction and advice to others should be done only to a very limited extent.

The Book of Job is very searching in regard to the human makeup. It is extraordinary that God has preserved this book with all of its comments so that we can reason on it.

“Thou shalt take thy rest in safety” (verse 18). In giving a little prophecy, as it were, Zophar said that Job would take his “rest in safety” if he turned to God. At the end of the Book of Job is a brief synopsis of how his life turned around. Not only did he have a happy future, but many looked to him for advice—even more than previously.

Job 11:20 But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.

When do the “eyes of the wicked” fail? Actually, many wicked people prosper with wealth, popularity, and/or power and then die peaceful deaths. The Scriptures tell us that what a man sows, that he shall reap—whether or not he is a Christian. Those who do not get the reaping in the present life will get it in the future life either when they are resuscitated or when they receive a spirit life, immortality, or a reward as an Ancient Worthy. In other words, there are many instances when Zophar’s statement is not true as regards the present life. An example is when people, even wicked people, die with confidence of a heavenly reward, even though they may have done great injury to God’s people. We cannot judge people, but we do know that being wicked does not mean one will suffer more than another in the present life. In fact, the case might be just the opposite. However, Zophar’s statement is true as regards the future life.

Comment: In the previous treatment of Job, the thought presented was a little different. Zophar’s comment was paraphrased to say, “Job, if you continue on in your wickedness and do not heed my counsel, then your hope of salvation will be about as solid as the giving up of a belch of wind. That is how solid your hope is under your present condition because you have not really prayed earnestly to God and confessed your guilt. Not only is your salvation like a belch of wind, but also your destiny is hopeless. [Note: Giving up the ghost does not mean dying in this context.]”

Reply: That explanation sounds better. When we are in the mood and are quiet and do not have any interruptions, we can think a little more coherently than in a question-and-answer

mode. However, the present type of study is beneficial in other ways. When the discourse method is compared with the question-and-answer mode of study, the latter is helpful, as the Scriptures indicate: “Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things” (Gal. 6:6). In short, the earlier thought sounds more reasonable for verse 20.

Comment: The King James margin gives the thought of a breath of wind.

What is “hope”? Many wicked people die with an unfounded hope. To understand what “hope” means from a scriptural New Testament angle is quite different from wishful thinking. Many are convinced they will be one of the Little Flock, even on their deathbed, but that is not necessarily the case. One’s salvation has to be left in the hands of God. In the final analysis, He is the One who determines salvation. Many people confuse strong wishful thinking with hope. The Apostle Paul had true hope when he said, “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness” (2 Tim. 4:8). His hope was based on a review of his life and knowing, like Job, the integrity of his soul. In knowing that his life matched his conviction, he felt confident in having achieved a crown. Even though Jesus was at an extremely low point on the Cross, he died with confidence, crying out triumphantly, “It is finished!” Not only did he mean that his sacrifice was complete, but also he died with a conviction of victory. But even if we make our calling and election sure, there is no guarantee that any of us will die with that confidence. In many cases, that is true, however, and true hope “fadeth not away” (1 Pet. 1:4). True faith and hope bring the Godlike, principled love that is taught in the Scriptures.

Job 12:1 And Job answered and said,

Job 12:2 No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you.

Zophar had just finished his comments, and Job now replied. Zophar and the other two comforters had assumed a superior attitude all along, so Job, with a form of sarcasm, noted that they were presuming to give him counsel. However, their type of counsel was shallow and meaningless. Quotations and sayings that had come down historically were being parroted. With Zophar, the last speaker, uttering certain common, well-known sayings, Job now said, “I and others know about the sayings you are using because they are axioms that have been handed down.” That meaningless type of counsel would not last, whereas the counsel of the ancients, who lived prior to the Flood, was time-proven and meaningful. Not only did the shallow, empty axioms the three counselors used from time to time not originate with them, but the three comforters were not really sympathetic to Job in his predicament.

Job 12:3 But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these?

Job was saying, “The advice you are giving me is common knowledge. One does not need great wisdom to use these sayings.” The three comforters’ lack of empathy and entry into Job’s suffering hindered their counsel from being meaningful to him.

Job 12:4 I am as one mocked of his neighbour, who calleth upon God, and he answereth him: the just upright man is laughed to scorn.

Job said that he was “as one mocked of his neighbour [Zophar].” Zophar called upon God, who supposedly answered him and granted wisdom. In other words, the “neighbor” in this case was Zophar, the one giving the counsel. The three comforters felt so confident in their relationship with God that in giving advice to Job, they were actually lecturing him. They assumed a superior attitude and looked down on him. The “just upright man” (Job) still did not know why he was suffering the affliction, and he honestly wanted to know the reason for his experience.

Job was an object of laughter and scorn. If we reason backwards, it was because God did not answer Job that the three laughed him to scorn. Job had been calling on God and was troubled because he did not receive an answer. However, the three comforters felt that God was not silent with them. Their attitude was, “It is obvious, Job, that God is not answering you because you have done something wrong, and up to this point, you are continuing to try to justify yourself.” Job then responded that in examining his own heart, he could not find the fault and thus felt he was just. Of course he did realize, as stated earlier, that he was an earthly creature just like everyone else in some respects, but in his lifestyle and intent before his affliction, he had consistently tried to please God. Not understanding the permission of evil, he was puzzled as to the reason for his affliction.

Comment: The literal version of the Bible reads as follows: “I am a laughingstock to his friend; he calls on God, and he answers him: the just, the upright one, is a mockery.”

Job was being sarcastic in implying that God was listening to the three comforters but not to him. He was questioning the validity of their ability to counsel him because they were really lecturing him and not giving constructive advice and empathizing with him as a friend would do. Lacking respect for Job because of his present condition, Zophar made remarks that were crude and completely unwarranted. In seeing people who are crippled, blind, lame, etc., we must realize that their physical condition has nothing to do with them as individuals before God. We must guard against a judgmental attitude that can adversely affect our reasoning. Along another line, the environment, such as the weather on a dark, damp, cold day, can affect our feelings and, consequently, our reasoning. Conversely, we are happy on a sunny day with the birds singing. Unfortunately, these things sometimes warp our thinking, judgment, and decision making—but they should not.

Job 12:5 He that is ready to slip with his feet is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease.

Verse 5 is in line with what was just said, but the translations differ radically because the word “lamp” has various meanings such as “torch” or “red-hot brand.” However, the King James translators seem to have correctly captured the gist of what Job was saying by using “lamp.” One primary reason is that before his affliction, Job had the reputation of being the greatest man in the East; that is, he was a “lamp.” His brilliance and counsel had been an example as well as his sympathy for the poor and his prayer mode, but the three were saying, “Look at Job’s sad state now.” They were implying that Job’s reputation was superficial and that he did not really possess the qualities he was reputed to have. For proof, they pointed to his current state and appearance.

The attitude of the three was, “Job, instead of giving counsel to others, you are the one in need of counsel.” Jesus was similarly taunted while on the Cross. “You claim to be a physician. You gave advice and healed many people, but look at your pathetic state now. If you are what you claim to be, come down off the Cross.” Such criticism can pierce the heart of the one to whom it is directed. Thank God, Jesus did not come down from the Cross! Of course the ones doing the criticizing were not on the Cross. They were at ease while speaking to someone in dire physical straits. Armchair counselors often do not have experimental knowledge. Job’s feet were ready to slip in his sorrowful state, yet he was despised by those who were at ease.

The Apostle Paul followed the principle “To the weak I am weak, to the strong I am strong, and to the Jew I am a Jew.” In other words, we are to judge the situation or environment of the one we are addressing.

Comment: The American Standard Version reads, “In the thought of him that is at ease, there is

contempt for misfortune; it is ready for them whose foot slippeth.”

Job 12:6 The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly.

Verse 6 reminds us of Malachi 3:15, “Now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.” The three saw Job as a victim of disease, a curse, and misfortune, but Job replied, “Your advice does not fit the picture because in nature, as well as among mankind, the wicked prosper. They that do evil live a comfortable life.” Of course it is understood that both the righteous and the unrighteous suffer hard circumstances and have good experiences, but Job was taking only one side of the coin. The Bible says that the righteous prosper, but how? They may not prosper in the current life, but eventually, in the long-term experience, after the present life has passed away, the righteous will benefit more than the wicked. The destiny of the wicked in the next life will have a negative twist that must be overcome, whereas those who maintain their righteousness add years to their life—not necessarily in the present life but in the future life. One may be laying up treasures now that cannot be discerned, but in the next life, it will be manifest that they benefited from their experiences in the current life. Job was saying, “You are judging me because of my condition, but look at nature and at mankind. What you are saying is only a *half* truth. It is half true and half wrong.”

Comment: The following Scriptures fit the circumstance. “Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning” (Psa. 73:12-14). “I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree” (Psa. 37:35). “Righteous art thou, O LORD, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root: they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit: thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins” (Jer. 12:1,2).

Reply: Job had happy days previously. The Lord rewarded him for many years with goods, cattle, and family. The time of his affliction was much shorter. Therefore, when we look at Job’s entire experience, he had more than 50 years of great benefits, so his suffering was of relatively short duration. From God’s standpoint, it was but a watch in the night. And later Job was rewarded with lengthening of days in the present life. Although his experience was really very short-term, it was like a severe illness or great pain in that a minute can seem like an hour.

Comment: In regard to the “tabernacles of robbers,” Job may have been thinking specifically of the Chaldeans and the Sabeans, who had actually pillaged his flocks.

Job 12:7 But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee:

Job 12:8 Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.

It is interesting to see all the beasts that Job brought into the picture. In spite of his condition and the badgering of the three comforters, his mind was collected enough to reason in detail.

Job 12:9 Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this?

We are reminded of how Paul occasionally resorted to natural reasoning to rebut the thoughts of false or misinformed brethren. For instance, he said, “Doth not even nature itself teach

you?” (1 Cor. 11:14). He summed up what Job said here. And we may say, “Does not common sense tell you?”

Job 12:10 In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.

The soul of every living thing and the breath of all mankind are in God’s hand. The wisdom of the ancients was available to those living in Job’s day, which, if we are correct, was before the Bible was written in its current form. Moses came after Job and collated the Bible at that time. In other words, there was common understanding back there without the Pentateuch.

Job and the comforters were quite cognizant of much understanding they had gleaned from the ancients who lived after the Flood, such as Noah and Shem, let alone Abraham and Isaac. But the knowledge of the comforters was superficial. They lived much shorter lives and did not have the same grasp of science, animals, and humanity that those who lived for 300 years had.

Job 12:11 Doth not the ear try words? and the mouth taste his meat?

Job 12:12 With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding.

Job 12:13 With him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding.

Job was saying that just as he and the three comforters possessed the two senses of hearing and tasting, so the axioms or proverbs that had come down through history had withstood the test of time. For us today to get the benefit of understanding why these sayings were time-honored, we have to stop and meditate upon them. There are two types of brilliant people: (1) those who simply collect and remember a million facts and repeat them and (2) those who *reason* on the facts they collect. Job was saying, “Does not the man with average intelligence realize the variety of food that God made and the different kinds of music? All of these are pleasurable and beneficial to mankind.” Job was questioning the depth of understanding of the three who were trying to give him advice when, regardless of age, they were really youngsters in understanding.

Comment: Zophar, the youngest, was the last comforter to speak. It is interesting that after his remarks, Job reasoned on wisdom: “With the *ancient* is wisdom.”

The hoary head would be particularly applicable to the profound understanding of Noah, for example, who lived 350 years after the Flood. And Shem lived even longer. We forget that the wisdom before the Flood was carried over by those who were especially esteemed for their knowledge and understanding.

Q: Isn’t God the One with wisdom and length of days?

A: In verse 12, the Hebrew word translated “ancient” is in the plural, the thought being, “With the aged [ones of the past] is wisdom.” However, in uttering these words, Job almost naturally thought of the Ancient of days, the most ancient One, that is, God Himself. In reasoning concerning Zophar, the comforter who had just spoken, Job thought, “Who is more ancient than God Himself?” Then, from verse 13 through the rest of the chapter, Job continued to speak about God.

Job was saying, in verse 12, that the aged ones of the past, such as Noah and Shem, had far more length of days than the three comforters, and the wisdom and experience they passed down was much more meaningful. The wisdom of the comforters was more in the nature of axioms and platitudes and superficial experience. In short, the three were not qualified to be advising Job.

Job 12:14 Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again: he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening.

Comment: The NIV reads, “What he [God] tears down cannot be rebuilt; the man he imprisons cannot be released.” Thus Job was showing the sovereignty of God; that is, once God does something, it cannot be undone.

Reply: Yes, the latter half of the verse seems to refer to a prisoner. We are reminded of the statement that when Jesus opened the door in the Philadelphia period of the Church, no man could shut it (Rev. 3:8).

Job 12:15 Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up: also he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth.

In different ways in nature, we observe the withholding and also the giving of rain. Wadis are a good example. Being bone-dry for most of the year, wadis are like highways for walking to various destinations in the wilderness, but when the rains come, flash floods race through them like a roaring freight train. Floods coming down wadis are sometimes beneficial in bringing silt, but in the Sinai area, where the upper regions have little soil to provide friction, the water rushes down with such great force that it even carries loose stones and boulders at times. In other words, a dry spell can be followed by an overwhelming inundation of water.

Also, Job and the others were familiar with the conditions in ancient Egypt, where a dry period was followed by flood waters coursing down the Nile River and causing a four-month flood in the delta area. Although restrictive in some ways, the four months of flood waters blessed the land.

Q: Could Job have been referring back to the Flood of Noah’s day?

A: Yes. Taking that suggestion a little deeper, we can reason as follows. Since no rain had fallen prior to the Flood, and dew, or mist, had come up from the ground, no one back there would ever have dreamed that water would come down from above. For 1,656 years, the water, or moisture, for growing crops had come from a ground distillation and not from clouds above. The Flood fits well into the principle of the omnipotence of God—everything is completely within His control.

Job 12:16 With him is strength and wisdom: the deceived and the deceiver are his.

“The deceived and the deceiver are his.” A variety of explanations and translations are available on this portion of text. One suggestion is that it refers to the Adversary and those whom he has deceived. They are entrapped and boxed in, even though they are seemingly given great liberties. They are completely subservient to the strength and power of God.

Comment: Verses 14-25 are similar in structure, referring to God: He breaketh, He shutteth, He withholdeth, He sendeth, He leadeth, He maketh, He looseth, He girdeth, He overthroweth, He removeth, He taketh away, He poureth, He weakeneth, He discovereth, He bringeth out, He increaseth, He destroyeth, He enlargeth, He straiteneth, and He causeth.

Reply: Yes, there is a rhythmic flow. In fact, many expositors who are familiar with the Hebrew think of the Book of Job as a song. The language is so beautiful and rhythmic that the book is considered to be wonderful, deep lessons which are poetically expressed.

Job 12:17 He leadeth counsellors away spoiled, and maketh the judges fools.

God causes wise men to be stripped of their supposed wisdom.

Job 12:18 He looseth the bond of kings, and girdeth their loins with a girdle.

In the case of an autocratic king who rules with a mighty hand, God can strip such a one of that authority and bind the king's loins with a girdle, if it so pleases Him in His providence. In ancient history books, we sometimes see an illustration of a king who became a prisoner, and in his humiliation, he was divested of his gorgeous robes and left with only a loin cloth, which is a symbol of servitude. In other words, in God's providence, a despot can become a humble slave. These various verses are like opposites: the Lord giveth; He taketh away.

No stratum of society, including the elite or privileged classes, escapes the pervasive control that God has over humanity—not kings, princes, heirs to the throne, judges, priests, ministers, or counselors. Nothing can escape His attention, and nothing can be done without His permission. Of course we are speaking not in the sense of authorization or endorsement but in the sense of the Heavenly Father's having, at His fingertips, absolute control over His entire domain, physical and spiritual.

Job 12:19 He leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty.

Some translations have the thought "He [God] makes priests walk away stripped [disrobed, naked], and the mighty he overthrows."

Comment: According to Young's *Analytical Concordance*, that same Hebrew word is translated "priest" 725 times and "prince" only once.

Job 12:20 He removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged.

"The trusty" would be close counselors or advisers. The one in authority felt that there was no possibility of betrayal and that the individuals could be trusted to give sound counsel. Some marginal notes render this portion of the verse, "He [God] turns aside the lips of the trusted." The lips move when a person talks, and it is as though God can control the very enunciation of words. For instance, to provide opportunity for King Saul to come to his senses, God mechanically moved his lips to prophesy. Down through history, God has given opportunities of repentance to evil people who follow pernicious ways in trying to better themselves in one way or another. For those who do not favorably respond, their obstinacy and perseverance in self-will become even more apparent to an independent observer.

God "taketh away the understanding of the aged." Verse 20 is another example of the back-and-forth reasoning that pervades this chapter, from verse 14 on, pertaining to God's omniscience and omnipotence to have others, if He so desires, do His bidding.

Job 12:21 He poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty.

God can pour scorn on nobles, causing them to lose the esteem and honor of their positions. Instead of their position and stature eliciting admiration, the situation can be reversed to provoke scorn.

In addition, God "weakeneth the strength of the mighty." One translation has, "He unties the belt of the mighty." For example, a world-renowned champion wrestler may be given a belt with a large gold buckle to honor him as being mighty. God can untie or break that recognition of might. People who have a belt as a badge of honor usually flaunt it before others, as though

challenging anyone to untie it, but the Lord can remove the belt with the utmost ease.

Job 12:22 He discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death.

In this case, the two halves of the verse state the same thing. To the average citizenry, death is the deepest darkness, the deepest unknown. Spiritually speaking, the principle is as follows. We have been brought out of darkness into the marvelous light of truth. The secrets, or mysteries, in God's Word are covered to the natural mind, but to the consecrated, they are wonderful light and understanding.

Job 12:23 He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again.

God enlarges nations, and He straitens them (boxes them in, makes them narrow). An example is natural Israel, to whom wonderful promises were given but not appreciated. Consequently, the opposite experience of the Diaspora came upon the Israelites. Egypt is another example; the ten plagues straitened this rich, powerful nation.

Job 12:24 He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way.

Job 12:25 They grope in the dark without light, and he maketh them to stagger like a drunken man.

“He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth.” A common expression is to take the starch out of a person. God “causeth them [the chief people] to wander in a wilderness where there is no way [no delineation of a path to a destination].” Winds blowing the sand in a desert quickly cover a person's footsteps, erasing all traces of a path. What a scary position to be in! How thankful we are, as Christians, to be able to communicate with the Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus for advice! When we are in situations like this, where there is no clear direction as to how to proceed, we have the blessing of being able to lean more heavily upon God and His providence. However, these verses are talking not about the consecrated but about mankind in general. The unconsecrated grope in darkness without light; they stagger to and fro like a drunken man. Excerpts of the vocabulary in the Book of Job are reflected elsewhere in Scripture, such as the Psalms. “They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end” (Psa. 107:27; compare Isa. 24:20). The excerpts show that the Book of Job was available to Jewry in later generations. Even though Job dwelled in the land of Uz, his writings were known in Israel.

Job's long reply, which covers chapters 12-14, followed the words of Zophar, the least and the last of the comforters to speak in the first round. Zophar's comments, short as they were, provoked Job to speak longer in response to him than to the others, perhaps because of the coarseness and the blunt manner of the remarks. Subsequently, the other two comforters also became blunt and coarse as a result of what Zophar started. He opened a Pandora's box, as it were, with his statements. He loosened the tongues of Eliphaz and Bildad to be more explicit in their evil surmising of Job's real problem being the supposed sin he was concealing from them.

Comment: In Job 11:2, Zophar said, “Should not the multitude of words be answered? and should a man full of talk be justified?”

Reply: What Zophar said brought out the baser instincts of the other two comforters.

In later chapters, we will reflect on the type and antitype of Job, the three comforters, and

Elihu. When we look back at the end of the book, we will get an overall dimension that will be profitable and helpful in providing up-to-date information on not only principles of character but also enlightenment with regard to what has been happening during the history of the Church and the Gospel Age.

Job 13:1 Lo, mine eye hath seen all this, mine ear hath heard and understood it.

Job 13:2 What ye know, the same do I know also: I am not inferior unto you.

“Lo, mine eye hath seen all this.” What did Job’s eye see?

Comment: Job saw all of his experiences: the blessings and the trials.

Reply: His experiences were certainly part of what he had seen, but more was involved. Since verse 1 is an artificial division of the narrative, perhaps this verse should have concluded chapter 12. In other words, in his lifetime, Job had seen or heard the matters enumerated at the end of chapter 12. He was quite aware of what was going on and had noted things that were happening under God’s providence in earth’s affairs.

Comment: Job said he was not inferior to the three comforters. Thus he was commenting on what the three had spoken to him about God.

Comment: The principle is the same as when the Apostle Paul had to list his credentials. The false teachers were discounting him and his ministry, and it was necessary for him to defend his faithfulness and show his equality to the other apostles.

Reply: We would slightly soften the wording of verse 1, as follows. “Lo, all this mine eye hath seen, and mine ear hath heard and understood such things.” Not only was Job on a par with the three comforters—he was not inferior—but also he had had his own up and down experiences and had witnessed events in earth’s affairs. Thus Job was quite aware of what was going on. Therefore, what the three comforters were attempting to do with the illustrations they used was actually redundant. They were voicing things that Job already knew and thus were not of much assistance or comfort to him. He needed something else besides the lectures they were giving him.

Job 13:3 Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God.

The implication is that the comforters were comfortless to Job, so he could only turn to the true source of comfort: the Almighty above. The King James translation is good—“I desire to *reason* with God”—whereas many other translations use the word “argue” or “debate,” which is not in harmony with Job’s nature. Even though he spoke blunt common-sense statements, he did so with a native humility that does not always come through in the translations. On the one hand, Job was in a teachable frame of mind, which the three comforters did not recognize or credit him with. And on the other hand, they were not supplying the answers and sound advice he was looking for. Considering the comforters’ lack of understanding, it would have been better for them to commiserate with Job, for at least then they would have been of some comfort. Instead they gave meaningless talk.

Job 13:4 But ye are forgers of lies, ye are all physicians of no value.

The word translated “forgers” means those who smear the reputation of another. Thus the thought of verse 4 is something like this: “Yet, however, you are smearers of deceit; all of you are worthless physicians.”

Comment: Rotherham's translation is similar: "For in truth ye do besmear [me] with falsehood, Worthless physicians all of you!"

Job 13:5 O that ye would altogether hold your peace! and it should be your wisdom.

Comment: Proverbs 17:28 reads, "Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding."

Job 13:6 Hear now my reasoning, and hearken to the pleadings of my lips.

Comment: Job was saying, "Now be quiet and listen to what I have to say."

Reply: Yes, that would be using today's language.

Job 13:7 Will ye speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for him?

The word "wickedly" seems a little too strong. A better translation would be, "Would you on behalf of God speak unrighteously, and for him talk deceitfully?" In what way did Zophar "talk deceitfully"? Zophar (and the other two comforters) had wrong heart motives with regard to what they thought of Job. One manifestation of this wrong attitude was that they twisted the meaning of the Lord's words. In addition, they misjudged Job and did not give him credit because they were deceived by his physical appearance.

Comment: In Job 11:5, Zophar said, "But oh that God would speak, and open his lips against thee." Zophar was trying to speak for God, and now Job was saying, "If you are presuming to speak for God, are you going to do it deceitfully?"

The three were prejudiced against Job because of his appearance and current situation. Prejudice is prejudging, which is not righteous judgment. A righteous judge carefully weighs both sides of an issue and does not make a hasty judgment.

Job 13:8 Will ye accept his person? will ye contend for God?

Job was asking, "Would you accept his person before the faces of God?" The Hebrew has "faces" (plural). The showbread on the Table of Showbread in the Tabernacle of Moses was the "bread of presence" or the "bread of faces"; that is, there are many facets to the judgment of God and His thinking, as brought out in the four-faced cherubim in Ezekiel chapters 1 and 10.

"Will ye contend for God?" The thought seems to be, "Before the faces of God, would you show partiality? Would you, Zophar, in representing God, show respect of persons or partiality in judgment?" The questions were rhetorical, and the answer was, "Of course not!" Incidentally, a judge, *if truly impartial*, should be able to be both a prosecuting attorney and a defense attorney for the same individual. A judge should inherently possess both capabilities, but unfortunately, man's fallen nature necessitates a division of the responsibility. Therefore, a judge, a prosecuting attorney, and a defense attorney are all present in a trial in order to try to come to righteous judgment. Some Bible scholars recognize the legalistic terminology in the Book of Job and, from one perspective, the allusion to a trial and a courtroom scene.

Job 13:9 Is it good that he should search you out? or as one man mocketh another, do ye so mock him?

Comment: Job was warning the three comforters to keep silent because God would hold them accountable for their words.

Reply: Yes, not only would Zophar and the other two be accountable for their critique of Job, but to have God search them out would be rather scary. Job was implying, “You had better be careful in your criticism of me because as you judge others, you will perhaps be judged by the Almighty yourself.”

Job 13:10 He will surely reprove you, if ye do secretly accept persons.

Verse 10 is plainly stated except for the word “secretly.” The reference here does not seem to be about taking bribes, although those with money, power, or influence sometimes try to sway the judgment of the judge or of the jury. The thought seems to be, “If you rebuke others, surely God will rebuke you if you secretly harbor or show partiality because of the appearance of others—that is, if you are prejudicial in the criticisms that you pronounce.” And of course, as has been stated, the permission of evil was not understood, especially before the First Advent and later when the Bible became available. The general prejudicial attitude or thinking was that the person who contracted a disease had sinned. In France even today, the accused person is considered guilty until proven innocent. Here in the United States, the reverse is true: one is considered innocent until proven guilty.

Job 13:11 Shall not his excellency make you afraid? and his dread fall upon you?

Q: What was Job’s disposition in uttering these words? Was he angry?

A: Here, following the last reply of Zophar, Job was rebuking the three comforters, especially Zophar, but not in a crude way. In earlier chapters (prior to chapter 11), Job was despondent, feeling the effects of his very trying crucible experience. But now, as a result of being tried in the furnace, Job’s character was beginning to crystallize, and he was becoming a little more confident that he was right. He did not know why God had permitted the experience to come upon him, but now, in chapters 12-14, he was starting to weather the storm better. Before that, Job knew he was innocent as far as any grievous sin was concerned, but he was puzzled because he could not find any serious flaw in his own character, search though he may. Of course Job realized he had the sins of Adam, but inherited weaknesses could not be the reason for his affliction. At present, he was feeling more justified in his thinking than previously.

Comment: In Job 11:6, Zophar had said, “Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.” Job’s contention or rebuke seems to be that the three thought they were speaking for God. They should have kept their opinions to themselves, but since they were demanding that Job confess his supposed sins and repent, he was saying, “If you are wrong, God’s excellency should make you afraid, for His dread will fall upon you.”

Reply: Yes, they should have weighed their critique of Job much more carefully. In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus taught us a wonderful principle to always keep in mind: “Forgive us our debts [trespasses], as we forgive our debtors [those who trespass us]” (Matt. 6:12).

Comment: A comment in a previous study said: “The reasoning of the three comforters in regard to Job was pure imagination. They brought God into their criticism of Job to justify that criticism. They were judging according to their impressions of Job, who, being a sick man in a deplorable condition, no longer looked like an upright, just, steadfast man of God. Job asked, ‘Are you not afraid to bring God into the type of judgment you are making?’”

Reply: Yes, that is true. If the mediator of two alienated parties—God on the one hand and man on the other—begins to take solely the part of God, then he is already prejudiced. He would not be a true mediator in considering all facets of the matter. A mediator is supposed to be impartial in trying to bring two alienated parties together.

A defense attorney who knows his client is definitely guilty would not want to handle the case, but he is forced to do so under the circumstances of the law today. And a prosecuting attorney may know that the one he is prosecuting is blameless, yet it is his duty to prosecute that individual. Even in a perfect legal system, if the ones who administer the law are imperfect, as well as those being judged, the desired results will not be attained. It would take a superhuman judge, representative, and/or type of mediator to get proper and just judgment.

Job 13:12 Your remembrances are like unto ashes, your bodies to bodies of clay.

Notice the word “remembrances.” In their arguments, the three (Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar) often quoted commonly used and understood maxims, proverbs, or time-honored sayings. The gist of Job’s remark was as follows. “Your sayings do not apply to my situation. We are not on the same wavelength. Under other circumstances, the advice might be apropos, but in my experience, it is not pertinent. Instead of being beneficial, helpful, and uplifting, your comments are the opposite. There is no backbone or substance to ashes. When rubbed in the hand, they smear, and the same is true of clay. All of your statements lack substance.” Job was speaking of potter’s clay, that is, clay before it is molded and baked.

Job 13:13 Hold your peace, let me alone, that I may speak, and let come on me what will.

“Hold your peace” in the King James marginal reference is, “Be silent.” The three were badgering Job. Before he stopped talking, their criticism was already prepared.

Job 13:14 Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in mine hand?

Job was asking, “Why do I sink my teeth in my own flesh, and put my life in jeopardy in my own hand?” A rhetorical question usually demands a definitely implied yes or no, but this question was a little different. Job wanted the three comforters to assume the attitude of being listeners to his side of the story.

Job 13:15 Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.

This verse, which is quoted quite frequently by Christians, shows that Job’s character, in spite of all his afflictions, was firming up and solidifying. His character was getting more and more crystallized, even though everything around him was negative. A transformation was taking place in his inner thinking, and he was manifesting a wonderful acquiescence to God’s providences. He was saying in effect, “I do not understand why God is permitting these experiences to come upon me, but He must have a reason.” What an excellent example he was!

“But I will maintain mine own ways before him”; that is, “Surely I will reason my ways before his [God’s] face.”

Job 13:16 He also shall be my salvation: for an hypocrite shall not come before him.

Comment: Based on verses 15 and 16, Job was saying that he would continue to do what he had been doing, for if he changed now, he would be a hypocrite.

Reply: Yes, and Job knew he was not a hypocrite because he had searched his heart. The New Testament tells us to examine ourselves from time to time and to make an appraisal of how we are doing. We should set ourselves aside and review our life and the sincerity of our intent, for all will come before the judgment seat of Christ. We should not judge ourselves in comparison to others, however, but should examine ourselves to see whether or not we are going forward and making progress in zeal and love for the truth. Such examination helps us to be on guard.

In reasoning on his past as a judge in the gate, Job knew that his motives had been pure, well-intentioned, and not in any sense false. He knew he was not a hypocrite and said that God would be his salvation, his deliverance.

Comment: Job had heard the reasoning of the three comforters, and now he was saying, “Go away, all of you. Let God kill me, but I will appeal directly to Him.”

Job 13:17 Hear diligently my speech, and my declaration with your ears.

Job 13:18 Behold now, I have ordered my cause; I know that I shall be justified.

Job was swinging over to a positive side, or attitude, from his former negative, despondent feelings. He was saying, “I have now set my case in order, and I know I will be vindicated [justified].”

Evidently, God will choose for the Little Flock those who, as they develop in maturity, are able to be tried more and more severely and yet continue to make progress. A study of Jesus’ life reveals his development and wonderful progress.

Job 13:19 Who is he that will plead with me? for now, if I hold my tongue, I shall give up the ghost.

The King James is quite different from the Hebrew, which reads, “Who now can bring charges against me? If so, I will be silent; I will willingly die.” Verse 19 concludes Job’s remarks in rebuttal to the charges of Zophar in chapter 11. As we continue through the Book of Job, we will see that Eliphaz and Bildad each spoke three times against Job, and Zophar spoke twice. Thus a long interchange of thoughts went back and forth between Job and his so-called comforters, and as time went on, Job outlasted or wore out their criticisms, in spite of his pitiful condition, so that the three finally gave up. Job was getting stronger and stronger, whereas earlier he was almost ready to throw in the proverbial towel.

Job 13:20 Only do not two things unto me: then will I not hide myself from thee.

Job 13:21 Withdraw thine hand far from me: and let not thy dread make me afraid.

Job 13:22 Then call thou, and I will answer: or let me speak, and answer thou me.

Q: In verses 20-24, was Job basically asking for something more concrete than the comforters’ circumstantial evidence of his suffering all of the calamities?

A: Yes. With verse 20, Job ceased to respond to the charges of Zophar and now turned his attention to the Creator. Therefore, the balance of chapter 13 was Job’s address to God; that is, Job was turning his attention and speaking to God alone, petitioning for a response. Of course the three comforters were listening.

Verse 21 lists the two things Job did not want God to do to him: (1) withdraw His hand and (2) make him afraid.

Moses was the next patriarch to come on the world’s stage, and verse 22 reminds us of his reasoning with God. From verse 20 to the end of the chapter, Job was addressing his complaint to God.

Job 13:23 How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my

sin.

Job made a direct query to the Lord: “How many are mine iniquities and sins?” In searching his heart, Job could not find any real transgression. Yes, he had faults but not transgressions that would warrant the type of experience he was having, with one calamity occurring right after the other and then the three comforters coming and adding to his misery. He just could not understand why God’s providence had allowed the calamities to occur without providing any relief. Job was making an honest inquiry. He had already said that if the comforters could find any substantial sin, he would willingly admit his guilt and die. But before he died, he wanted to know why he was having this experience. The philosophy of the permission of evil was not understood by Job or his predecessors to any great depth. We are blessed with that understanding, as were the disciples in the early Church when Jesus and the apostles were on hand. Between the early Church and the Harvest period, there was a dearth of understanding.

Job 13:24 Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?

Job was not aware that he was being directly tempted by the Adversary. Satan was in the background manipulating things, probably even putting suggestions in the minds of the comforters as to how to charge Job. Being unaware of what was happening, Job thought God must be responsible for permitting the afflictions. God was proving to the Adversary not only the inherent worth of Job, even though the latter was a fallen creature, but also that Job, in his earlier life, had merited God’s favor with wisdom, influence, and means.

Job 13:25 Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro? and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?

Being despondent and not having eaten for quite a while, Job was losing weight and becoming gaunt. In addition, his flesh was drying up like that of an older person. From Job’s dramatic perception of the situation, he was like worthless material being blown about in the wind, and the Lord was right there, chasing him. In pursuing strong questions and using figurative language, Job was trying to prod the Heavenly Father to respond. He was doing his best to get an answer of some kind, but all he got was silence.

Comment: The Heavenly Father was no doubt very much impressed by the attempts of this little “leaf,” Job.

Reply: We sometimes think of Job’s suffering, anguish, and mental torment, but when we realize the size of God and the angels, then planet Earth is nothing by comparison, as the Prophet Isaiah said, and man is less than nothing. The human race is like microbes that can think and speak and reason. Imagine a huge giant looking down at a little crumb that is reasoning with him! From that perspective, the situation is somewhat humorous.

Job 13:26 For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.

Again Job spoke about his youth, but he had reformed from his former situation with repentance and contrition, and he had made a series of vows to God, as we will see. Once he made the commitment to serve God as best he could in his imperfect flesh, he felt that from that time on, he had led a consistent life to the best of his ability in trying to serve God, and he had prayed daily with sincerity and truth in his heart. Nevertheless, he realized that prior to the commitment, he had sown some wild oats, as the saying goes.

Q: Would the remembrance of happenings in his own youth have led to his making offerings for his children (Job 1:5)?

A: That is very likely. As Job continued to expose his thinking, we are accumulating a library of information about him. We are able, to a limited extent, to put ourselves in his position.

The thought of the first part of verse 26 is, “Why do you figuratively tabulate [or enumerate] my sins?” In other words, Job was saying to God, “You are making a list of sins, but I am not hearing a response of even one charge from that list. Surely there must be something—if not one cardinal sin, then there must be a multitude of venial sins.” He was trying to provoke God into responding, but all he got was silence. Job felt he would die in a little while anyway, so while he was in this emotional frame of mind, he momentarily lost his balance. We know that he had inherent faith in God and a belief in a future resurrection, but while he was talking, he got carried away.

Job 13:27 Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks, and lookest narrowly unto all my paths; thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet.

The thought of verse 27 is more along this line: “You put my feet in stocks, you look narrowly on my path, and you note even the footsteps that I leave behind.” Job was referring to God’s careful scrutiny of him and the straits God had put him in. There were stocks back in Job’s day.

Job 13:28 And he, as a rotten thing, consumeth, as a garment that is motheaten.

The NIV has, “So man wastes away like something rotten, like a garment eaten by moths.” Job felt he was the one who was wasting away like a moth-eaten garment. In other words, “God, you consider me as a rotten thing that wastes away like a moth-eaten garment.”

The three comforters would have been astounded. From the top of his head to the soles of his feet, Job was a mess to behold, but out of this strange situation, the comforters heard a forceful, lucid rebuttal to their charges.

Job 14:1 Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.

Comment: The brevity and turmoil of life are expressed here.

Reply: Yes. To the Lord, a thousand years are as one day, and a day is as a thousand years. Moreover, we have no idea how long the angels have been living. Therefore, the life span of man is even less than a drop in the bucket, as it were.

Job 14:2 He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.

In discussing the brevity of life, Job noted that a babe comes forth like a flower. To a certain extent, the axiom is true that all babies are beautiful; that is, they are beautiful until they grow up. It is almost as though God, in nature, has made babies attractive so that the parents care for and cuddle them, but as time goes on, the genetic makeup, disease, and/or an accident causes the individual to become less attractive. The older one gets, the more certain it is that infirmities and blemishes will come forth.

Job 14:3 And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee?

Job 14:4 Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.

Job considered himself a member of a fallen race. His profound question, “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?” is often used to show that a ransom to redeem man cannot

come from the fallen human race. Therefore, some being from outside the human race had to provide the Ransom for Adam. To think of someone lifting this sin-benighted, diseased earth out of the quagmire of sin would be hopeless if the matter were viewed from the natural standpoint, for the human race is beyond *human* repair. Only Divinity can provide a solution. We are very blessed to know about and understand the philosophy of the Ransom as part of the Harvest message. With the limited knowledge man had from the time the apostles went off the scene until the Harvest, Christians were justified by simply believing what God said but without understanding. A somewhat analogous example is that the Ancient Worthies performed sacrifices that God ordained, even though they did not understand the philosophy behind the sacrifices, because they trusted He had a reason. Their faith and trust in an unseen, intelligent, pure Creator were rewarded.

Job 14:5 Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;

A decree was put on the human race: “in the day that thou [Adam] eatest thereof dying thou shalt die” (Gen. 2:17; see KJV margin). Therefore, all things being equal, no one has lived more than a thousand years. Methuselah, the oldest human being, lived to age 969. However, while all are under the penalty of death from a legalistic standpoint, the execution of that penalty is another matter.

Job 14:6 Turn from him, that he may rest, till he shall accomplish, as an hireling, his day.

“Turn from him [man], that he may rest.” Behind this philosophical bent of mind and the comments, Job was referring to himself. He was saying to God, “Turn from me, that I may rest, till I shall accomplish, as an hireling, my day.”

Comment: Feeling his time of death was near, Job wanted to be left alone and relieved of his pain. Following verses show that a tree stump has the hope of coming back, but he did not.

Reply: Yes, Job wanted to be left alone. Of course he believed in a resurrection but not anytime soon. Job saw there was hope of a future life but only in the very long term.

Q: What is the thought of a “hireling” in this context? In the KJV margin, the Hebrew word translated “accomplish” is given an alternate of “cease.”

A: A hireling who works all day is entitled to some rest from his labor. Accordingly, Job was asking God for cessation from the travail so that he could die in peace.

Job 14:7 For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.

We have all observed that if a tree is cut down, a shoot will come up and, if left alone, grow into a tree again. Resurrection is frequently seen in the botanical realm. For instance, if a potato, a fruit of the ground, is cut into pieces and buried, it will grow into a plant and bear fruit the next season. Following a short cessation of life, there is a coming forth. “Truth, though crushed to earth, will rise again” is a slogan. In a generation or so, something beneficial may come out of a temporary repression, but while the repression is happening, it seems to be an unendurable experience of an interminable length of time. Job saw the reality of a resurrection as being long-term down the road.

Job 14:8 Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground;

We are reminded of Jesus' and the Apostle Paul's reasoning on the resurrection using the illustration of a seed. Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). Paul's words were, "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body" (1 Cor. 15:35-38). In other words, a seed has to die in the ground in order to come forth as a plant or tree or whatever.

In Fort Masada in Israel, because of the manner in which the Jews committed suicide, their corpses, with one or two exceptions, were never found. However, about a thousand years later, seeds of grain were found, and those seeds, if put in the ground, grew and produced edible crops. Thus the seed, while dry and alive in the bin, has to die in the ground and be given water in order to come forth as fruitage.

In mentioning the root waxing old in the earth and the stock dying in the ground, Job's thought was, "What I am saying now is sort of a contradiction. I am old and withered. If I die, I do not expect to come forth right away, but in nature, fruit comes forth within a short time cycle, usually seasonal." Job was comparing long-term and short-term revival.

It so happened that while Job was now noting the short-term revival in nature, that same thing happened to him later, when he was restored to favor. But Job's experience was the exception, not the norm. It is a rarity indeed for anyone to be brought forth from the tomb. How many "Lazaruses" have been awakened from death?

Job 14:9 Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant.

Job 14:10 But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?

In verse 10, Job was again speaking of man (himself) as short-term. Man dies and is gone.

Comment: One cannot pour water on a dead man and have him spring back to life.

Job 14:11 As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up:

What is the allusion here? What kind of waters? Wadis overflow with water for a brief time, but for most of the year, they are dry, barren valleys. Rivers also dry up, and so do "seas." Incidentally, a large inland sea in Russia, the Aral, which is located at the foot of the Ural Mountains, has been radically drying up.

Job 14:12 So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

"So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the [earthly figurative] heavens be no more." However, Job did expect a resurrection.

Job 14:13 O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!

Verse 13 is self-explanatory, proving that Job believed in a resurrection in the far-off future. Of course "grave" is the Hebrew *sheol* here.

Job 14:14 If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till

my change come.

Job asked a question: “If a man die, shall he live again?” Then he answered the question in the affirmative. “All the days of my appointed time will I wait [asleep in the tomb], till my change come.” In verse 12, Job likened death to a sleep. Thus he had knowledge of the sleep of death, but the awakening was way, way down the road.

Job 14:15 Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.

Q: How did Job know there would be a resurrection?

A: Based on verses 12-14, Job obviously expected to die and knew that he would remain in the tomb state until an “appointed time” when his Redeemer would call and awaken him from the sleep of death. Job’s knowledge was quite different from what we might normally expect in light of present truth. We are spoiled, as it were, with our much knowledge yet not having the horrific experiences commensurate with what we have received. Job 19:25-27 reads, “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another [a pretender—see KJV margin]; though my reins be consumed within me.” Of course Job did not understand the distinction of natures and the limitations that man has down here in the flesh, for God’s divine nature in glory is so powerful that no man can see Him and live. But that was not Job’s understanding, so we will have a brief review now.

“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive ... went out, not knowing whither he went.... For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.... These [the Ancient Worthies] all died in faith, not having received the promises, but *having seen them afar off* ... and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.... But now they desire a *better country, that is, an heavenly*: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city” (Heb. 11:8,10,13,14,16). Two points especially stand out in this citation: (1) The Ancient Worthies saw “them [the promises] afar off.” Even though the Ancient Worthies looked for a future Kingdom and a reward for their faithfulness to God, they saw that the Redeemer was way down the stream of time—that many, many years would elapse before they would realize their expectation and hope. (2) They desired a “heavenly” country.

Now we again quote Job 19:25, “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.” Job’s expectation with regard to the resurrection was very much like that of Christians for 1,500 years down through the Gospel Age. There was a dearth of knowledge with both the Ancient Worthies and the Christian Church on the permission of evil and the doctrine of restitution. The Pastor gave an unusual explanation of the Parable of the Lost Coin, saying that the lost coin was the doctrine of restitution, which was clearly understood by the Apostle Paul but not subsequently until the Harvest period. Restitution, with two major salvations, one spiritual and one earthly, is one of the lost doctrines that the Lord brought to light through the ministry of Pastor Russell.

Let us imagine that we were living at the time of Job. Moses had not yet come on the scene, so the Law, with all of its pictures and explanations, was not available. Therefore, Job was thinking on these future topics from his perspective. When Jesus came at his First Advent, he brought to light life and immortality (2 Tim. 1:10). In other words, the distinction between life and immortality was not clearly understood until the gospel came, and the Apostle Paul was permitted to elucidate the two subjects in much greater detail.

What made the Ancient Worthies think their reward would, in reality, be *heavenly*? Hebrews chapter 11 mentions that Abraham looked for a city whose builder and maker was God, and the context shows the Ancient Worthies were expecting a heavenly change. Little information was given prior to Job's day but just enough for us to see how the Ancient Worthies came to this conclusion. A major factor was the translation of Enoch. Later, by means of translation, Elijah was visibly taken up into heaven and disappeared, and Philip was translated in the Gospel Age from the riverside, where he baptized the Ethiopian eunuch, to a city at least 20 miles away called Azotus. But Job was only familiar with the translation of Enoch. "And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: And *Enoch walked with God* after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And *Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him*" (Gen. 5:21-24). We believe that this translation (or disappearance) of Enoch—his being snatched away with a rapture—was known to those who lived before the Flood. During Enoch's 365-year residence in that locale, there came a remarkable change. The Pastor surmised that Enoch was translated to another planet, the point being that Enoch *did not die*. Two *Reprint* articles state that Enoch has never died, even though he was under the death sentence. Enoch could live longer than the thousand-year day because the death penalty was specifically on Adam, who had to die within that time period. In other words, the prohibition placed on Adam did not necessarily apply to Adam's progeny.

Hebrews 11:5 also tells of Enoch's translation: "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." "Translation" in the context used here means that Enoch was bodily taken from one place and borne away to another place.

Let us consider this Scripture again: "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death [that is, *not experience death*]; and was not found [why?], because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Surely the people who lived before the Flood realized what had happened to Enoch, and that information would have been carried over into the time period of Job, even though he lived 700 or 800 years after the Deluge. Certainly Job knew about Enoch because Noah and Shem lived after the Flood, let alone Ham and Japheth, so a lot of information of what had occurred before the Flood was made available to Adam's children after the Flood.

When angels appeared to men, they appeared in bodily form, generally speaking. Sometimes they appeared as a stranger with no special glory attached to them and, consequently, did not overawe humans with their presence, but in other cases, they stunned people when they materialized in their mission from God to impart information. The point is that if we were Job and only this limited information was available to us, we would think the difference between angels and men was that the former could materialize and disappear (dematerialize) and that they were from some unknown region in heaven where God abides. If we were in Job's place, we would have little knowledge of the spirit nature itself, and this is one reason why Job pictures the thinking of the Christian Church down through the Gospel Age. It is also the reason why the concept of a visible physical rapture is so prevalent among a number of Christians today. This limited information was the common understanding of true Christians during much of the Gospel Age but not at the beginning of or in the Harvest period. When God's true people did not have the whole Bible, just fragments, their faithfulness to Christ as their Savior and the persecution they received for their faithfulness were sufficient for them to make their calling and election sure.

Genesis 6:2 is another condition Job would have known about. The angels of God, beholding that the daughters of men were fair, "took ... wives of all which they chose." To do so, those angels had to materialize, and not only were they in a bodily form but they married women

down here. This information opens up another panoramic vision. The angels are called “sons of God”; that is, they are all *males*. We never hear of a “daughter” of God, yet the angels were created with the ability to procreate. In other words, God instituted a procreative ability in their frame, but they were never tempted because there were no females. However, when Eve was created and the angels saw her beauty, latent sexual desires came forth—desires that had not surfaced up to that time because they lived in a pure atmosphere such as we will attain if faithful. Because of the atmosphere and purity of the Kingdom change, there will be no more evil thoughts and no more inordinate desires.

The point is that angels had a procreative ability; they were created in the image of God as spirit beings yet were like Adam, an earthly creature, with regard to procreation. Therefore, when the angels materialized, they had the ability to procreate, and now that there were women who could bring forth children, disobedient angels with inordinate sexual desires produced children who became “giants in the earth” (Gen. 6:4). Angels could never have had children at all unless God, the Creator, had given them that capability. Thus only God possesses the privilege of giving to other individuals the ability of creation of any kind; that is, others get the ability to procreate in a secondary sense from the Creator.

And so, based on the accounts of Enoch and the angels before the Flood, Job would think the difference between a perfect earthly being and a spirit being was the ability to materialize and dematerialize. Furthermore, with his limited understanding, he would think that when the fallen angels dematerialized, they returned to a physical condition in another realm in heaven. With the institution of the Mosaic Law and the coming of the prophets, the understanding got increasingly clearer little by little, and then later, when Jesus Christ came with his new gospel, an abundance of information was provided to give a startlingly clearer understanding. Of course Jesus could not expound on these subjects because the Holy Spirit was not given until Pentecost, so the Apostle Paul was used for further revelation. Today we have a tremendous understanding of these principles and doctrines—and a correspondingly greater responsibility for the knowledge we possess. An experience yet future along this line will come on the Church to test each of the consecrated as to true worthiness or unworthiness.

When all of Job’s statements are considered, we see that he did not expect, when awakened from the tomb, to come back to the locale of the land of Uz. He did not expect to see the land of Uz anymore, for that condition was fading and ephemeral—it was past history, and there would be a completely new situation. With these thoughts in mind, we can understand a little more clearly what he was thinking when he uttered some of the statements in subsequent chapters. Otherwise, to think of just earthly restitution for Job, we would be puzzled by certain statements. The Ancient Worthies had a spiritual hope, but they did not have much knowledge of the work they would be doing down here during the Kingdom Age. Likewise, they did not understand the philosophy of the permission of evil, the Ransom, etc.; they simply took God’s word that He would send a Redeemer.

Incidentally, when Hebrews 11:13 says, “These all died in faith, not having received the promises,” we know Enoch was an exception to the general rule because verse 5 said he was translated so that he would not see death.

Job 14:16 For now thou numberest my steps: dost thou not watch over my sin?

Job was comparing his former state—his previous life before the calamitous events of losing prestige, family, goods, and health—with his current situation. He was honest in his intent to please God and had made several vows to bolster his intention to serve faithfully, but now he could not understand what was happening to him. He felt that God was examining him too closely, that He was being too particular in regard to what faults Job might have. He said, “God is numbering my steps. I am being held accountable for something I cannot comprehend.” Job

knew he was not perfect, but his heart intention was perfect.

Job 14:17 My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity.

Comment: Verse 16 is a statement, not a question, in the NIV: “Surely then you will count my steps but not keep track of my sin.” And verse 17 is also a little different from the King James: “My offenses will be sealed up in a bag; you will cover over my sin.”

Reply: The grammar in the Hebrew allows for either a question or a statement in verse 16 and for either translation according to context in verse 17. Sometimes, such as here, it is helpful to view both applications, since both are permissible. The NIV is superior to most translations for the Book of Job.

Job 14:18 And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place.

The context in verses 18-21 indicates a rather pessimistic viewpoint. Christians sometimes sing, “Change and decay all around I see.” When viewing or contrasting their consecration, Christians see that everything around them is eroding and in a state of degradation. Even in nature, mountains of stone are eroding. Water comes down, taking soil with it and washing away rocks. Perhaps in a million or a billion years, the mountains will be a plain. This erosion phenomenon seems to indicate, as do certain Scriptures, that some day in the far distant future, earth’s inhabitants will be translated to planets in other parts of the universe. Ecclesiastes 1:4 states that the earth abides forever, but that text does not necessarily mean that the *surface* of the earth will abide for eternity. The erosion process in nature can be beautiful, but a time feature is involved. The long-term picture of the planet is one thing, and the short term is another. The short term is obvious with man going into the tomb. Little babies are so beautiful when they are born that it is no wonder people love them. A baby has not yet experienced deterioration, and a young child is just filled with energy. Running around with excitement, the child finally, with sheer loss of energy, falls asleep like a babe. But a child grows to be a teenager, a young man or woman, a mature person, and then an old man or woman—until the Grim Reaper causes the individual to go into the tomb. And so when one looks at the short term and then at the long term, the picture would be rather pessimistic if there were no God. How thankful we can be for the existence of a wise, benevolent, and intelligent Creator!

Q: On a much smaller scale, the shoes of the Israelites were miraculously sustained so that they did not wear out during the 40 years of the wilderness wanderings. Could not the earth also be miraculously preserved?

A: The wearing out of earth is not a dogmatic view, but it seems reasonable because in all of the other galaxies, there would thus be a testimonial of people who had lived on earth; that is, their testimony would be taken out into the created realm of Jehovah. Certainly in the short term, the washing of the rock that Job observed is a fact of nature, but nature could be renewed just as the leather soles of the Israelites were renewed, if such were God’s will.

“Surely the mountain falling cometh to nought [a mountain becomes a plain], and the rock is removed out of his place [both the loose rock and the eroding rock—see the next verse].”

Job 14:19 The waters wear the stones: thou washest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth; and thou destroyest the hope of man.

Even diamonds wash into the riverbeds in some areas of earth. In looking around, Job could see change and decay. He was a tremendous philosopher and observer. The three comforters and Elihu were not to be compared to Job, whose superiority becomes very evident as we

meditate upon his comments.

Comment: “Thou destroyest the hope of man.” The greatness of God is shown in waters that wear out stones and in mountains that crumble. In comparison, man’s hope in himself is utterly destroyed.

Job 14:20 Thou prevailest for ever against him, and he passeth: thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away.

Job 14:21 His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.

What does verse 21 remind us of?

Comment: King Solomon talked about nature in the Book of Ecclesiastes.

Reply: Although Solomon made similar observations in Ecclesiastes, that is a more negative book. In contrast, the Song of Solomon is a positive book, and the Proverbs are up and down. Ecclesiastes is a gloomier book because Solomon wrote it in the latter part of his life when he was disappointed with his previous choices and the wrong course he had taken. We could describe Ecclesiastes as penance from the pen of Solomon. He felt that with all the glory he had attained, what had it really amounted to?

In answer to the question, we were thinking more about David. In several of the Psalms, he spoke about nature, going into detail about vegetation, animals, the earth, and the habits of man. His outlook was quite different from that of Solomon. Generally speaking, as far as nature is concerned, David’s outlook was rather optimistic, although of course he did observe the sin of man.

Comment: “His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not.” The Pastor used this verse to show that there is no knowledge in the grave.

Reply: Yes, this verse is cited, as well as some of David’s words in the Psalms, Solomon’s thoughts in Ecclesiastes, and other comments of Job. In using those statements, we excerpt from Scripture certain verses to prove a point, but when the verses were originally written in their context, that was not the major point being enunciated. For example, when the Ancient Worthies, being perfect, speak on a subject in the Kingdom Age, their doctrinal teaching will be perfect. Since they will be speaking a “thus saith the LORD,” comments could be extrapolated and applied in other areas not specifically intended for emphasis at the time of original utterance. Similarly, the Apostle Paul quoted frequently from the Old Testament and gave a Gospel Age application. This happens so often that many who believe we are now under the New Covenant do not realize that when Paul was excerpting principles and lessons from the Old Testament, he did not mean they were having a full fulfillment at that time. Along the same line, when Jesus cast out the money changers, he said, “It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves” (Matt. 21:13). He was quoting from Isaiah 56:7, but that verse has a Kingdom Age application. By going back to the Old Testament, we often find that the context shows, without question, a Kingdom Age application, but the *principle* can be used for a Gospel Age application. Thus excerpted statements can be used to prove other points.

Job 14:22 But his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn.

In verse 21, Job said, “When man is in the tomb, there is no knowledge whatsoever in the death state.” Now he was returning to his own experience and discussing the state of the *living*

dead—those who are dead in trespasses and sins but are not in the grave. While man is still living, his days are full of trouble. In fact, man seems to be born for trouble. “His flesh ... shall have pain, and his soul ... shall mourn.” Young people may feel immortal, but as life goes on, there is deterioration. Even those who are very happy during their lifetime usually have sorrowful experiences, and this is true of both the consecrated and the unconsecrated. The aches and pains of life are a common complaint.

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

Job 15:2 Should a wise man utter vain knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind?

In the second round of responses, Eliphaz was again the first to speak. His words encompass just one chapter, whereas Job’s previous comments covered three chapters. The statements went back and forth between the comforters and Job. Of course at the conclusion of the book, we realize that of the five participants, Job had the most credentials not only before his calamities but also in his reasoning. Nevertheless, God found some fault with Job.

In essence, Eliphaz the Temanite accused Job of being a bag of wind and full of hot air. The consolation that Eliphaz was supposed to be proffering to Job was empty.

Job 15:3 Should he reason with unprofitable talk? or with speeches wherewith he can do no good?

Job’s justification of the purity of his integrity was meaningless to the comforters because they felt the proof was in the pudding. They regarded his trauma, bitter experience, unsightliness, and seeming complaining as evidences of his guilt. Concluding that indeed he must have done something wrong to merit such afflictions, they felt that his utterances were added proof of his guilt. In their minds, he deserved his sufferings, and they wanted to say, “Job, wake up to your situation.” How exasperating for Job! He could have done much better without their “comforting” and wished they would leave.

Comment: Here we get a sense of how uncalled-for the words of Eliphaz were. In Job 42:7, God said to Eliphaz the Temanite, “My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.” The words of Eliphaz were so inappropriate that he was singled out by name.

Reply: As the oldest one in the drama, Eliphaz felt he was in the position to proffer the wisest counsel. Of course, by voicing his opinion, he accumulated greater responsibility and was later singled out for a little severer reprimand than the others. The Book of Job has scarcely been read during the Gospel Age, but it will be highlighted in the Kingdom Age and beyond.

Job 15:4 Yea, thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God.

“Yea, thou castest off fear [reverence, piety].” The comforters felt that Job was very bold in the way he spoke to and about God, for in replying to their reasoning, he sometimes completely ignored them and talked to God, as it were. He would be talking to the comforters, and then he would soliloquize and try to reason with the unseen Lord in the heavens and plead for a response. The three comforters felt that Job’s attitude almost bordered on blasphemy. It is interesting that Job continued to feel he had maintained his integrity, for he knew he really loved and had tried to serve his Maker.

Comment: Where the King James has, “Thou ... restrainest prayer before God,” the NIV says, “You ... hinder devotion to God.” In addition to telling what Job did wrong, Eliphaz was discussing Job’s relationship with God.

Reply: Yes, the NIV is closer to the proper thought. Job claimed he loved God, but Eliphaz felt that his words and behavior—his example—showed the opposite and that he was undermining what should have been the proper behavior.

Job 15:5 For thy mouth uttereth thine iniquity, and thou chooseth the tongue of the crafty.

“Thy mouth uttereth thine iniquity.” Eliphaz was saying that from Job’s words, it was obvious he was at fault. The three felt fully justified in their criticism of Job, and in fact, their criticism became more bitter as time went on. The first time Eliphaz spoke, he was a little more respectful in his opening remarks and arguments because of Job’s former reputation and works, although he did question Job’s motives. However, toward his conclusion, he began to speak more harshly. Now, in this second encounter, Eliphaz was no longer respectful and gentle but uttered scathing remarks. As the three viewed Job’s pitiful state, they could only conclude that he had done something very wrong and that he was stubbornly refusing to confess to them. But in reality, Job was revealing his innermost thinking. One could not be more open than Job—he poured out his feelings, thinking the three friends would help him bear his experience by offering constructive condolence. Instead he was finding out that he could do better without them. The comforters were acting like enemies, not friends.

“Thou chooseth the tongue of the crafty.” The three admitted that Job’s replies to their remarks were quite penetrating, but they viewed Job as having the evil spirit, not themselves.

Job 15:6 Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I: yea, thine own lips testify against thee.

The other two comforters probably nodded their heads in agreement with this statement that Job was condemning himself with his own words.

Job 15:7 Art thou the first man that was born? or wast thou made before the hills?

Job had previously mentioned that the wisdom of the sages of old was more sound and the advice more practical for someone in his situation than that of the three comforters. When Eliphaz asked sarcastically, “Art thou the first man that was born? or wast thou made before the hills?” he was referring to Adam. He was saying, “Job, you assume you have more wisdom than you really have. Anyone who lived before the Flood for, say, 900 years certainly had a tremendous backlog of experience. If you were rightly inclined in your spirit, heart, and reverence, you would be in good standing.” However, because of other circumstances, the opposite was true—men actually became more evil as the years got closer to the Flood.

To a certain extent, this part of the comforters’ reasoning was a proper criticism of Job. In fact, in the thirty-eighth chapter, some of God’s remarks were along the lines of “Where were you, Job, when the earth was made, when the mountains were in the process of formation? Where were you when the earth was set on its foundations?” Job did have some faults, and the Lord wanted to expose them, but at the same time, He made allowance for those faults and commiserated because Job’s integrity was real, and his will and intent were true and perfect. However, even though Job knew he was not perfect, he had to be reminded of the fact.

Job 15:8 Hast thou heard the secret of God? and dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself?

“Hast thou heard the secret of God?” The NIV states the thought more clearly: “Do you listen in on God’s council? Do you limit wisdom to yourself?” Job knew the secret of God in the sense that he was truly the servant of God and had perfect intentions. The Lord had said of Job, “There is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and

escheweth evil” (Job 1:8).

Job 15:9 What knowest thou, that we know not? what understandest thou, which is not in us?

The three comforters had started the confrontation by saying they knew more than Job. Then Job was forced to reply that he knew as much as they did. Now Eliphaz was saying the same thing about Job. The reasoning was going back and forth. Although Eliphaz used different expressions here, his recitation consisted of much the same thoughts that he had used earlier. No fresh counsel was forthcoming to help Job.

Job 15:10 With us are both the grayheaded and very aged men, much elder than thy father.

Verse 10 is enlightening. Piecing together the whole Book of Job shows that two lines of reasoning were used, one of which follows. At this time, Job was 70 years old, and Eliphaz was much older. According to the King James, Eliphaz was saying, “Job, I am even older than your father.” Perhaps that is the proper translation, but some scholars argue that Eliphaz was saying, “I am much older than both of you”; that is, Eliphaz may have been close to 100 years old and was including Bildad as also being older than Job. Or the pronoun “us” could have been an editorial “we.” Zophar was probably a little younger than Job.

Eliphaz was saying, “Job, you claim to voice the wisdom of the ancients, but right in front of you is one who offers you counsel. I am much older and wiser than you. While you say you have experience, what about me?” In back of Eliphaz’s confidence was the fact that Temanites were world-renowned for wisdom. Based on that background plus his age, Eliphaz put himself forward as having great wisdom. This remark put peer pressure on Job to try to buttress his own counsel and remarks and his profession of not being blameworthy, for the three maintained that Job merited criticism, as well as the calamity that afflicted his flesh.

Job 15:11 Are the consolations of God small with thee? is there any secret thing with thee?

Eliphaz was saying, “The counsel we are proffering to you, Job, should be considered as the consolations of God.” The three felt they were reasoning with Job as God would reason. They had started out as friends with proper intentions and motives, and they had even brought goods, knowing that Job was destitute in both health and possessions. Moreover, they had sat silently with him for seven days, fasting and mourning. Eliphaz had started out softly, gently, and diplomatically, but his words ended up to the contrary. God strongly criticized the comforters not for their initial intent but for what subsequently developed, which erased their good intentions. Ezekiel chapter 18 states the principle that all of one’s past goodness is erased in the day of his iniquity. Conversely, if a person repents of his bad past, his desire to reform and make restitution for injuries committed will justify him. In other words, short-term willful sin can erase all long-term goodness of the past, and short-term sincere repentance and reform can erase a long-term evil past. This is God’s philosophy with regard to fallen man’s behavior.

Job 15:12 Why doth thine heart carry thee away? and what do thy eyes wink at,

“Why doth thine heart carry thee away?” The question is self-explanatory and, to a certain extent, true. In giving outlet to his feelings, Job let some irrational words slip from his mouth, but that is understandable. An imperfect person cannot respond perfectly to every experience. Job pictures the experiences of The Christ, particularly the body members, in the Gospel Age.

“What do thy eyes wink at?” Eliphaz was accusing Job of manifesting emotional stress and trauma not only in his words but also in his body language. One translation indicates that Job was crying when he reasoned with the comforters, that tears were coming from his eyes, especially in the second round. That seems to be the proper thought. The comforters felt that

Job's uncontrollable emotions and outward reactions were uncalled for. He was looking for comfort, but comfort never came. Instead they lectured him.

The experiences of Job picture primarily the experiences of the Christian Church for 1,500 years. From the end of the French Revolution up to the present time, the experiences of Christians have been radically different. And the experiences of the early Church when the apostles were on the scene were also different. Early Christians felt the strength of the Savior—as if they were in his hand—and did not have the lows that Job experienced. Job had no energy, he had not eaten properly, he had not washed, he was not garbed with clean clothes, etc. In short, he was in an extreme state, and this poverty condition was the experience of the Christian Church for at least 1,500 years. Roughly speaking, the first 250 years of the Church were quite different and also the last 250 years.

Job's afflictions picture the down experience of the Church during the Dark and Middle Ages, but what happened is very interesting. Even though many Christians lived during this period of time, they sufficiently imbibed the sunshine of God's favor when they first got the Word so that they could withstand the later long experience of deprivation and persecution. Each individual coming into the truth in the Dark Ages was providentially nurtured. Even if in secret, each got the truth with gentle rain and sunshine until he or she grew strong enough, and then came the hard experiences of longer duration.

In the Harvest period, especially in the United States, Christians have been wallowing in sunshine and relative luxury. However, there will come a time of bitter persecution in the near future.

Comment: When Christians were being pressured to recant, as happened to many during the Inquisition, we can imagine the logic and the methods of persuasion that were used.

Reply: The pressure was physical as well as verbal.

Job 15:13 That thou turnest thy spirit against God, and lettest such words go out of thy mouth?

Eliphaz was talking as though he was the wise one. His repetitive comments were really lectures. While talking in a negative philosophical way about mankind in general, he was not speaking pointedly to Job but certainly had him in mind in making multiple suggestions and expounding in grand themes about what he had experienced. Using different words than those here in verse 13, Eliphaz made the same statement again and again. The three comforters considered Job guilty and felt that the words out of his own mouth condemned him.

Job 15:14 What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?

“What is man, that he should be clean?” In repeating what Job had said earlier, “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?” Eliphaz was twisting the words to bolster his condemnation of Job (Job 14:4). He was saying in effect, “How can you justify yourself and maintain your integrity when you are a member of the fallen race and are impure? How can we accept your protestations of innocence when we realize that man is born unclean? When you make rebuttals and responses, how can a clean thing come out of an unclean person like you?”

Neither Job nor the three comforters were aware that Satan was personally being allowed to try Job in a severe manner and to do everything to him except put him to death. From that standpoint, the three were not quite as culpable. Had they known, their comments would have been completely different. Their lack of information and not understanding the philosophy of

the permission of evil and the doctrine of restitution, among other things, were all factors.

Job 15:15 Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.

Comment: Verses 15-17 read as follows in another version: “If God does not trust his holy ones and the heavens are not pure in his sight, how much less will he trust the one who is disgusting and corrupt, the one who drinks wickedness like water? I will tell you, listen to me; I will relate what I have seen.”

Reply: That version is strong. Being much older, Eliphaz spoke in a gentler way, but nevertheless, his manner of speaking was such that his words were hard to rebut. Job was on the receiving end, and the words were very penetrating, no matter how they were stated. Usually, an unfair criticism that cannot be rebutted is keenly felt. Therefore, in effect, Eliphaz was doing exactly what was read in that other version.

Eliphaz related a dream in chapter 4, where he felt that a spirit from the other world had taught him a doctrine. He could not get that doctrine out of his head. Eliphaz said that God does not put trust in His (holy) angels, but that was not true. God does not put trust in the *unholy* angels, who are imprisoned in *tartaroo*. The holy angels passed an excruciating test at the time of the Flood with regard to not only the flesh but also God’s slow execution of judgment, for He waited more than a century before bringing the Flood and wiping away the iniquity (Luke 20:36). God’s slow response was a severe test on the holy angels to see if they had sufficient faith and trust in Him and His character, or moral standard, to do something about the evil. Those angels who did not leave their first estate proved their worthiness. As Emperor of the universe, God has always maintained the power to peremptorily cause the decease of any being who should disobey.

Q: Since the Book of Job was written not too far after the Flood, could some of this information have been passed down by word of mouth?

A: Yes, there would have been some explanation of what had happened. Noah and his family, the eight people who survived the Flood, certainly testified. In fact, the Flood was universally believed or taught. The early settlers in this country found that even the Indians believed in a deluge at one time, their perception being that it was universal. When Noah and his family dispersed to various parts of the globe, they carried the doctrine of the Flood with them. Incidentally, the fact that knowledge of a Flood exists in various parts of the earth is sometimes used as a proof that the Deluge was universal. However, it is not the Flood that was universal but the *story* of what was perceived to be a universal Flood. Not in reality but from the standpoint of Noah and his family, the waters covered the entire surface of the earth. Plain, stark facts and certain Scriptures indicate that the Flood was not universal.

Job 15:16 How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?

“How much more abominable and filthy is man [in comparison to spirit beings], which drinketh iniquity like water?” The implication was that Job drank iniquity like water.

Job 15:17 I will show thee, hear me; and that which I have seen I will declare;

Job 15:18 Which wise men have told from their fathers, and have not hid it:

Job 15:19 Unto whom alone the earth was given, and no stranger passed among them.

Eliphaz was talking with supposed wisdom. All of the comforters felt they were superior to Job in both character and wisdom and thus looked down on him, but the most damaging of the

three was Eliphaz because he was the oldest. His paternalistic concern was now rising to warnings of dire forebodings if Job continued to profess his integrity and to justify himself. He said, “I will show thee, hear me; and that which I have seen I will declare [because of his age, Eliphaz felt he had seen a lot]; which wise men have told from their fathers, and have not hid it [and I am not hiding it from you, Job]: Unto whom alone the earth was given, and no stranger passed among them.” Eliphaz was making a point of his supposed superior wisdom, which, in experiential knowledge, was more ancient than that of Job.

What was Eliphaz implying in verse 19? He came from Teman, a locale in the Middle East on the east side of the Dead Sea in what is now called Saudi Arabia. There is a faint indication here that he was questioning Job’s lineage and whether he and his father were originally from that particular locale or had come in as strangers, even though Job had lived there all his life. (The Scriptures purposely do not go into Job’s lineage because his life is an allegory that has innuendos of other themes, some of which have already been suggested.) Teman was a land noted for wisdom, and Job lived there and had prospered all his life. He had a reputation for wisdom and organizational capabilities, and he was a judge and a counselor. Now Eliphaz was accusing Job of introducing new themes and new thoughts as a stranger. In other words, Eliphaz was searching into Job’s background and implying that he was one of the strangers who had come in and introduced his own wisdom into a place that had the true wisdom. All three comforters were delving into Job’s character and verbally tearing him apart.

Back in the Book of Genesis, when fire came down from heaven and destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, with the Dead Sea swallowing up that whole area, it was thought that the destruction was universal. As a result, the comforters had an attitude of exclusivity, and they felt that the area they occupied, with the exception of Egypt, had started out relatively pure.

Q: In Job 9:24, Job said that the earth had been given into the hand of the wicked. Was Eliphaz counteracting that argument? Not only did he feel superior because he was from Teman, but he was saying in effect, “Direct information was passed down to me from Noah and his sons, to whom the earth was given.”

A: Yes, that was the thought of exclusivity. It was prophesied that Shem would be superior to Ham and Japheth, and that Japheth’s progeny would be superior to that of Ham. Moreover, Ham would be the servant of both, but particularly of Shem. At first, Shem settled in Turkey on the back side of Ararat; later he gradually went down to Egypt. Ham, however, went down to Egypt earlier. In his slow migration, Shem went on the east side of the Jordan River and finally settled in Canaan and then Egypt. The point is that Eliphaz felt superior both in purity of genetic stock and in inheriting the blessing of Shem. Since the pronouncement of the blessing on Noah and then on his sons was distinctly manifested, the comforters viewed strangers as pollutants, and Eliphaz inferred that Job was one of the strangers, particularly his father.

Job 15:20 The wicked man travaileth with pain all his days, and the number of years is hidden to the oppressor.

Comment: Again Eliphaz said that Job’s sufferings were related to his sins.

Reply: Yes, and the three comforters were getting increasingly severe and uncouth in their judgmental attitude toward Job. The situation was becoming very nasty. Eliphaz was saying to Job, “We had heard about your reputation for being just, generous, and wise, but your reputation does not match what we are seeing. Therefore, you must have gotten your property, goods, and wealth by deceit and oppression. Judgment eventually comes down on the head of the wicked, and what we are witnessing of your pitiful situation is proof that your previous reputation was a lie.” Although Job’s experience at the hands of the comforters was excruciating, he got stronger and stronger and even spoke longer, as we will see. In spite of his

sickness and condition, he outlasted the three comforters and finally wore them out. He came to see the emptiness, the shallowness, and the repetitiveness of the same chant of accusations against him, even though the comforters used different words and illustrations.

Comment: As Job's discourses got longer, the comforters' discourses got shorter.

Comment: With the experiences of the Flood rather fresh in the minds of the people of that time period, we can see how human wisdom said, "The wicked perish and the righteous prosper." However, the comforters were very shortsighted to reason that way. Only in the final analysis would that be true, that is, after the permission of evil is over.

Comment: In addition, the incident of the Tower of Babel and the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah had happened previously.

Reply: Yes, the comforters knew that history. The lineage dating back to Adam was passed on to Shem from Noah.

In the eyes of Eliphaz, the "wicked man" was Job. His words were penetrating. Supposedly, a wise person was tactful in his speech, even in the fiercest denunciation. Sometimes, however, the Lord Himself used blunt language in the Scriptures to try to get a point across. In saying, "The wicked man travaileth with pain all his days," Eliphaz meant that Job would have this judgment on him for the remainder of his days—until he was finally put to silence in the tomb.

"The number of years is hidden to the oppressor." The implication is that Job was the oppressor. Eliphaz considered Job's reputation to be nonsense. The three comforters were now beginning to formulate what his sin was. Earlier, they wanted Job to confess, but as time went on, they conjured up what the sin must have been. They concluded that his previous life was a lie, as evidenced by his sufferings. He still had land but not livestock, dwellings, family, goods, or servants. In short, he was poverty-stricken. The three kept emphasizing his present forlorn state. Originally they had brought food to help sustain him and get him back on his feet, but all their previous good intentions were now forgotten. They were becoming more and more judgmental. Eliphaz was saying, "The oppressor is getting what he deserves until he finally dies." He was trying to instill in Job guilt and fear of death and of the hereafter.

Job 15:21 A dreadful sound is in his ears: in prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him.

Eliphaz was now trying to read Job's mind. "In prosperity the destroyer [Satan] shall come upon him." Eliphaz was implying that Job's prosperity was ill-gotten, and now he would reap what he deserved. The three did not know what had happened, but they thought that Job would somehow suffer the same experience as Satan. When we review the Book of Job from the standpoint of the Christian, we will see that parts of the history of the Gospel Age very much show Job's experience.

The following verses reveal what the comforters thought about the grave.

Job 15:22 He believeth not that he shall return out of darkness, and he is waited for of the sword.

Eliphaz was saying that Job did not believe he would return out of darkness. Earlier Job said he would die and not come back again to that area—he would see it no more—but the three did not have as much knowledge as Job. Of course he did not have the understanding that is available in the Harvest period or that the apostles and the early Church had. Considerable light was provided in the two harvests: one at the beginning and one at the end of the age.

Comment: It seems that the common wisdom of the time was an immediate afterlife, whereas Job had summed up an earlier argument by saying, “Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not” (Job 14:1,2). Job believed that there would be a resurrection at an unknown far-off future date, but not immediately.

Reply: The three were trying to use Job’s words to show that he was incriminating himself. They felt the proof of his guilt was what was coming out of his mouth. In today’s language, they were saying, “Job, you are putting your foot in your mouth. Out of your own mouth, you are condemned.” From God’s standpoint, which is the *true* judgment, words do condemn or justify a person, but not in Job’s case. In other words, what was a right principle under proper circumstances was wrongly applied to Job.

“He is waited for of the sword.” Eliphaz did not know when the oppressor would come to execute God’s judgment upon Job. The reference was to a *judgmental* sword.

Job 15:23 He wandereth abroad for bread, saying, Where is it? he knoweth that the day of darkness is ready at his hand.

“He wandereth abroad for bread, saying, Where is it?” Job had land, but he did not have any crops or servants to harvest the crops. He was in want, and the three were thrusting in Job’s face just about every conceivable argument of a condemnatory nature, one after another.

“He knoweth that the day of darkness is ready at his hand.” Job himself thought that he would die soon. Now Eliphaz was trying to read Job’s mind, saying that he was fearful of death. Eliphaz had misread some of Job’s statements to conclude that Job did not know when death would come and was experiencing anxiety. Eliphaz had tried to do the same thing earlier in relating an occult experience he had had. The fear that Eliphaz had experienced momentarily had scarred his memory, and now he was trying to scar Job’s memory even more deeply.

Job 15:24 Trouble and anguish shall make him afraid; they shall prevail against him, as a king ready to the battle.

Eliphaz was implying that trouble and anguish would make Job afraid. “They [the enemy force] shall prevail against him, as a king ready to the battle.” In verse 24, some scholars think the word “battle” should be omitted, and others are puzzled as to its significance. The following suggestion is offered about the phrase “a king ready to the battle,” which Eliphaz used in rebutting Job’s previous remarks.

There are two perspectives here, one from the standpoint of Eliphaz and the other from the standpoint of Job. Of course Eliphaz and the other two comforters were speaking down to Job, giving his words a negative slant. In a parable in the New Testament, Jesus said that in decision making, one should sit down first and count the cost (Luke 14:28-31). “For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?” The Lord encourages one who is contemplating consecration to soberly count the cost—that is, not to rush into the decision too quickly—for on the surface, the battle odds seem too great. Because the forces of the Adversary are overwhelming, the Christian has to exercise considerable faith that with 10,000, as it were, he will be able to overcome the enemy who has 20,000. An example is Joshua and Caleb, who, of the 12 who spied out the land of Canaan, were the only two to give a favorable report. The other ten spies said there were giants in the land

and walls that reached up to heaven, but Joshua and Caleb manifested *faith* and said that because God was with the Israelites, those odds were meaningless. The decision of the nation was to believe the report of the ten and thus not follow the Lord's advice to go in and take over the land. The true Christian has the faith perspective of Joshua and Caleb, whereas the worldly "Christian" views consecration in a more perfunctory manner that does not involve every act of life and a certain degree of responsibility to the Lord. Such individuals do not make a specific covenant or contract to serve the Lord.

Eliphaz was likening Job to a king who goes to battle with an inferior force against one with a superior force. He was trying to instill anxiety and fear from the standpoint that Job had been continuously referring to the integrity of his conscience. Job could not understand that he had done anything to merit his afflictions, yet he had no explanation for them. Eliphaz was trying to get Job to think about the matter and recant from his stubborn self-righteousness. Of course we are extrapolating quite a bit, but Eliphaz seems to have been saying that the numerical forces were superior to Job's sole opposition.

Job 15:25 For he stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty.

Eliphaz was saying that Job, in his stubbornness, was stretching out his hand against God. The three comforters had been trying to wear Job down, but in reality, Job was outwearing them. The three attributed Job's enduring their criticism to a motive of stubbornness—stubbornness to the supposedly solid logic they were offering. They saw Job's opposition as the result of being stiff-necked and of stretching out his hand against their advice, which they considered God's advice. They thought Job was being obstinate in taking time out not only to rebut them but also to soliloquize and have a verbal dialog with God in their presence to ask for some evidence as to the reason for his experiences.

Comment: For verse 25, the NIV gives the thought of defiance: "Because he shakes his fist at God and vaunts himself against the Almighty."

Job 15:26 He runneth upon him, even on his neck, upon the thick bosses of his bucklers:

Job 15:27 Because he covereth his face with his fatness, and maketh collops of fat on his flanks.

Verse 26 is a problem verse. Other translations ascribe the "he" to Job, but to do this, they have to change the prepositions in the Hebrew; that is, in trying to improve the King James translation, they give the slant that Job was running against God. While there is a certain degree of logic to that explanation, the application of Luke 14:28-31, as presented in the discussion of verse 24, seems more fitting. The comforters were saying that God was responding to Job's stiff-neckedness. In other words, the comforters, supposedly at God's behest, were rebutting Job's stubborn remarks and were trying to show the error of his way. They felt that God was running upon Job with his stiff neck and fat "collops."

Comment: According to *Strong's Concordance*, "collops" means obesity.

Reply: Yes. The King James translators felt the Hebrew word signified "a small slice of [Canadian-style] bacon," which is quite thick. Of course Job was now scrawny in appearance, so allegorically speaking, Eliphaz was referring to Job's prior condition, before his affliction, when he had a wonderful reputation for wisdom, riches, and authority. At that time, Job supposedly had a stiff neck and fat collops on his neck and flanks, the obesity being to such a degree that the fat on his neck almost rested on his shoulders. The three comforters felt that God was using them to confront Job for his stubbornness and fatness and for the defense he

was offering.

“He runneth ... upon the thick bosses [a shield] of his bucklers.” The curved front surface of a shield is meant to deflect the enemy’s arrows, spears, and swords. The comforters were likening Job’s stiff neck, fatness, and brazenness to a curved shield. In other words, Job was deflecting all of their arguments, which were intended to make him come to his senses and realize that he must have sinned to suffer his present troubles. They regarded Job’s protestations as an empty defense. What terrible accusations to make against Job, an Ancient Worthy! The comforters were negating Job’s entire previous reputation. They felt that his former prosperity was due to accepting bribes, depriving the poor, and rendering wrong judgments and that all of his property, goods, reputation, etc., were ill-gotten and like fat—blubber—and hence meaningless. They now saw Job in an entirely different light than when they first came with good intentions and supplies.

Job 15:28 And he dwelleth in desolate cities, and in houses which no man inhabiteth, which are ready to become heaps.

Of course the “he” was Job. Eliphaz continued to lecture, saying hypothetically what happens to the wicked. The implication was, “Job, with all the prosperity you previously had, the time for judgment has now come, and the Lord has taken away your fatness.” Job’s children, cattle, servants, property, reputation, and health—everything—were gone, yet he still professed innocence in proportion to the degree of suffering. Neither Job nor the comforters knew that Satan was behind the trials. And now the Adversary was using the comforters, supplying them with worldly wisdom, to add to Job’s suffering and to try to break him down. When the open opposition of calamities was to no avail, the Adversary tried to break Job with reasoning.

Q: Were Job’s experiences recorded as a historical record of the arguments and false reasoning that have been used against the Lord’s people down through the Gospel Age?

A: Yes, Job is definitely an allegorical picture of the experience of The Christ throughout the Gospel Age. Not a type, the book is an allegory in which certain lessons are taught. The enemy of the Church has been the Adversary throughout its history. The Smyrna era was a period of open opposition by the Adversary against the Church particularly through the civil authority, for clerical opposition was still an underground seed at that time. In the Pergamos and Thyatira periods, clerical opposition came to the fore. The Book of Job does not zero in on the seven periods of the Church but is more of a broad-brush explanation. Satan was an open Adversary in the beginning, but he found that the Church just got stronger with that tactic—it consisted of fewer nominal Christians and more true Christians, even though the latter were small in number, relatively speaking. Then the Adversary joined the Church, becoming a friend or an “angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14). And as with Job, Satan used “comforters” to buffet the true Christian. The three comforters represent unconsecrated nominal Christians, who are filled with worldly wisdom and look upon their prosperity and wealth as being the rewards of righteousness. To the contrary, the New Testament teaches that the rewards of righteousness are persecution, for all who “live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12). As a picture of the true Church, Job experienced such persecution. At first, the motive of “comforters” was to reason with the Christian and get him to recant, but as time went on, they got more and more violent, until eventually there came the Inquisition period of the Church with torture. Of course the Book of Job is an allegory and not a type of all the nitty-gritty, but it does correspond to the experiences of the true Church.

Job 15:29 He shall not be rich, neither shall his substance continue, neither shall he prolong the perfection thereof upon the earth.

Job 15:30 He shall not depart out of darkness; the flame shall dry up his branches, and by

the breath of his mouth shall he go away.

Eliphaz was painting a grim picture, for he did not see any return of favor to Job. He was saying, “Job, your current experience is that you shall not depart out of darkness.” He saw nothing but darkness for Job.

“By the breath of his mouth shall he go away”; that is, Job would die. When the last breath leaves, which the Bible refers to as “giving up the spirit,” a person becomes a corpse. At the time of death, one often has a death rattle as he swallows his own spittle. Eliphaz was saying that Job had nothing to look forward to, that all he previously had was gone, and that it was just a matter of time until he expired.

Job 15:31 Let not him that is deceived trust in vanity: for vanity shall be his recompense.

“Vanity” comes from the word “vain.” Eliphaz felt that Job had built all of his hopes on hot air, with nothing of real value or substance. Job had lived his life that way, and he would die that way. Emptiness, the reward of vanity, would be his recompense.

Comment: One translation says, “He should not trust in worthless things and deceive himself because he will get worthless things in return.”

Reply: Yes, the thought is of vain, worthless, and empty things.

Job 15:32 It shall be accomplished before his time, and his branch shall not be green.

Eliphaz was emphasizing Job’s present circumstance. Job’s “branch” would not return to greenness, and his life would be shortened because of his supposed iniquity.

Job 15:33 He shall shake off his unripe grape as the vine, and shall cast off his flower as the olive.

Q: The NIV says, “He shall be like a vine stripped of its unripe grapes, like an olive tree shedding its blossoms.” Is the thought that nothing productive would come forth from the grape vine or the olive tree?

A: Yes. The reference was to Job. Incidentally, how does the grapevine cast off its flower? According to books, when vines in the Middle East shed their blossoms, the effect is like snow; that is, the blossoms are very prolific in proportion to the fruitage of an olive tree. Stated another way, the shedding of the flowers of the vines is disproportionate to the amount of grapes.

Comment: A vine shakes off its blossoms in a storm. Therefore, the point would be that under adversity, the flowers are lost, and that is what happened to Job. Under adversity, he lost all hope for the future.

Reply: Yes, in the spring, certain fruit trees and vines lose their blossoms in a rainstorm. A judgmental or adversarial wind or experience strips the vine of any prosperous fruit.

Job 15:34 For the congregation of hypocrites shall be desolate, and fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery.

How unbelievable! Eliphaz was calling Job a hypocrite and accusing him of accepting bribes.

Job 15:35 They conceive mischief, and bring forth vanity, and their belly prepareth deceit.

“They [the congregation of hypocrites] ... bring forth vanity [or iniquity—KJV margin].” The reasoning Eliphaz used to confront Job was very repetitive.

Comment: Job’s experience was like the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:11, “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.”

Reply: Certainly Job would have been one of the Little Flock if he had lived in the Gospel Age.

“Their belly prepareth deceit.” Now Eliphaz likened Job to being a glutton, saying that Job’s prior reputation was built on corruption, bribery, deceit, and inequity. Despite all the goodness Job had exhibited previously, the three comforters felt that everything he achieved was ill-conceived and ill-gotten. They looked upon his protestations of innocence as false attempts to justify himself. If God had not intervened and blessed Job eventually, he could not have survived the circumstances of his affliction. It was a miracle that Job’s health was restored as well as his property and goods. And he had more children.

Job 16:1 Then Job answered and said,

Job 16:2 I have heard many such things: miserable comforters are ye all.

The three were indeed “miserable comforters.”

Comment: To have those two words together is an oxymoron.

Reply: Yes, what seems to be a conflict is intentional.

Job 16:3 Shall vain words have an end? or what emboldeneth thee that thou answerest?

The first obvious question is, What were the “vain words”? The thought of “vain” is “windy.” Job was replying to Eliphaz, the last comforter to speak, who had said, “Should a wise man utter vain [windy, empty] knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind?” (Job 15:2). Eliphaz considered Job’s remarks to be a bag of wind as far as having any constructive value.

The second obvious question is, What “emboldeneth” the three comforters? Each time Job finished his complaint, one of the comforters was emboldened to reply. In fact, the three replied incessantly. Job thought they should realize his conscience was pure and thus cease with their supposed counsel. In the Old English, the word “answer” meant “speak.” Not only did the comforters continue to prod Job, but also their words got increasingly bitter and thus became more and more distressing to him.

Comment: Verse 3 in the NIV reads, “Will your long-winded speeches never end? What ails you that you keep on arguing?”

Job 16:4 I also could speak as ye do: if your soul were in my soul’s stead, I could heap up words against you, and shake mine head at you.

Comment: The implication is that when one of the comforters spoke, the other two nodded their heads in agreement. And when Job spoke, all three showed disagreement.

Reply: Yes, they gesticulated in some fashion, perhaps by nodding their heads or smirking or using other body language, to indicate they were all in agreement. They all felt that Job was hiding the sin that merited his temporal losses, the death of his children, and the sad physical

condition he was in.

Job 16:5 But I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage your grief.

Comment: Job was saying he would have been a true comforter to them if the circumstances were reversed.

Job was looking for comfort, but as the three continued to speak, he realized it would not be forthcoming from them.

Job 16:6 Though I speak, my grief is not assuaged: and though I forbear, what am I eased?

Though Job continued to voice his grievance, or complaint—that is, his lack of understanding as to why this experience had befallen him—the three offered no comfort or help. And if Job ceased to speak altogether, there would also be no help. However, he continued to try to exonerate himself in the eyes of the comforters and to assure them of his innocence as far as not having committed some grievous sin. Job had nothing to explain or expose of the nature that they implied. Although Job continued to look for some explanation for the permission of evil, he was not getting an answer. For all that he had previously said—for all of his comments, which probably added up to quite a few minutes—he had not received any easement, any measure of relief, from the grief he was experiencing. He just could not understand why God had permitted the evil and had not answered him. Thus he continued his questioning mode.

Job 16:7 But now he hath made me weary: thou hast made desolate all my company.

God remained silent and did not answer Job's prayer, and Job was now weary with his questioning and looking for a response. Neither was a helpful response coming forth from the comforters. It is interesting that Job was getting stronger and was making longer comments as time went on because he wanted the satisfaction of an answer. He did not see Satan in this picture as the one who was causing the problem.

Q: In the last study, the following comment was made: "Most translations give the thought that God made Job weary, but the 'he' refers to Eliphaz and the statements he had just made. With his response, Eliphaz wearied Job, and all three were desolate companions. It would have been better for Job if the three had not attempted to be comforters because they just wearied him." Wouldn't there be a problem in interpreting the pronoun "he" in verse 7 as God, for then it would also be God in verse 9: "God teareth me in his wrath, who hateth me: God gnasheth upon me with his teeth."

A: That is true, but one who is in real grief does not always know where to place the responsibility. Verse 11 reads, "God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked." And still later, the pronoun definitely refers to God. The situation was like one who is in great grief even now. When a Christian prays to God during a severe trial and is looking for an answer because the trial does not seem to make sense, the answer can be a long time in coming. In hindsight after a trial, we can often see why God permitted the circumstance to occur in our life, but while we are undergoing the trial, we cannot understand it. No really serious trial, for instance, "seemeth to be joyous, but grievous" (Heb. 12:11). Some say we should be joyful in every experience. Although that is our desire, the Apostle Paul said it is usually *afterward* that the trial works the peaceable fruits of righteousness, for while we are under the strain and stress of the trial, we are sometimes puzzled.

Job's experiences are somewhat analogous to those of true Christians during the Gospel Age, where severe calamities enter their life. In regard to the pronoun "he" in verse 7, we think Job

was searching as to where to put the responsibility, and in his search, he fluctuated back and forth in his comments. Therefore, the “he” can be either God or the comforters. It was sort of a mixed mode because of the grief, and to calmly make decisions was very difficult while he was in the trauma itself. As a result, some of Job’s wording in looking for an answer is puzzling, and as we proceed, we have to say that the pronoun in some places refers to God. In other cases, we do not know for sure whether the pronoun refers to God or to one of the comforters. Job was soliloquizing out loud and looking for an answer. The point is that it is hard to always give a mathematical, precise explanation.

Q: In verse 7, Job used both “he” and “thou.” Do both pronouns refer to God, to one of the comforters, or to God one time and a comforter the next? Subsequent verses also alternate between “he” and “thou,” as if Job was making a distinction.

A: When a person speaks out loud, it is not always clear whether he is speaking to the person next to him or for the benefit of God above. Job did go back and forth. At times, he made a complaint to God, but in most cases, he was complaining against the comforters. In fact, he started the chapter that way: “Miserable comforters are ye all” (verse 2). God’s people are strong characters, and persistence in desiring an answer is a firm quality the Lord is looking for. The Lord does not want Christians with putty-like consciences and wills. He is looking for a determined people who are in need of, and who themselves realize the necessity for, understanding so that their efforts will be directed in the right channel to please the divine mandate. In listening to Job’s words, we are listening to the groanings and the traumas that true Christians have undergone down through the Gospel Age.

Job 16:8 And thou hast filled me with wrinkles, which is a witness against me: and my leanness rising up in me beareth witness to my face.

For the first part of verse 8, the American Revised has, “And thou has shriveled me up,” which is correct, literally speaking. Job’s leanness—his outward appearance, or the manifestation of his physical disarray and discomfiture—accompanied by moaning and groaning bore witness to the comforters that he had sinned. Of course Job realized the usual view was that Divine Providence had permitted the trouble—and usually for something done wrong—but he knew he had not grievously sinned, so the experience was very puzzling to him. Job’s experience helps us to see how Christians in the Dark Ages, with the paucity of scriptural information available to them, could make their calling and election sure if faithful under their severe trials and persecutions, especially the Inquisition. Their lack of information, coupled with the severity of their trials, showed that in God’s sight, they would be faithful if given the divine nature. Therefore, we must not be high-minded with the extensive knowledge available to us in the Harvest period. In fact, we should wonder that the age did not finish earlier. We will find out later, when Elihu gives his comments, that the Church now, in the present period of great light, receives its persecution from other consecrated individuals rather than from the unconsecrated world, as it did for more than 1,500 years. The persecution that lies ahead during the church-state hour of power will be quite a shocking experience.

Job 16:9 He teareth me in his wrath, who hateth me: he gnasheth upon me with his teeth; mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me.

Here the pronoun “he” was primarily Eliphaz, who had just previously spoken. Initially, the three comforters dispassionately lectured Job about his supposed faults, but now they were animated. Their remarks were accompanied by looks and motions, and a bitterness was creeping into their comments. The “he” will change to “they” and back to “he,” showing the conflict that Job was experiencing, as was mentioned earlier. He was just voicing his complaint and did not know where to put the blame. The real instigator was Satan behind the scenes. It is interesting that in the Garden of Eden, Satan was the instigator, but he hid behind a serpent

and was not seen. He spoke to Eve through the serpent in trying to tempt Adam to sin.

Comment: The NIV translators used “God” instead of “he”: “God assails me and tears me in his anger and gnashes his teeth at me; my opponent fastens on me his piercing eyes.”

Reply: Job’s emotional trauma could not be explained coolly and calmly by any translator or expositor, and the severity of experience that God permits to come on His children is very enlightening because they will get the divine nature if faithful. God cannot take any chances, so any weakness of character needs to be strengthened. The Apostle Paul said that faith, hope, and love are the goal, but love for God is the greatest of the three; it is the objective, the prize at the end of a race. He also told us to strive to have a clear conscience: “a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men” (Acts 24:16). “Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned” (1 Tim. 1:5).

Job 16:10 They have gaped upon me with their mouth; they have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully; they have gathered themselves together against me.

Immediately, we think of Psalm 22 and Isaiah chapter 53 in connection with the Crucifixion. Thus Job represents the true Church plus Jesus, whose ministry preceded the body members. The opening statement of the Book of Job that he was “perfect and upright” in God’s estimation was fitting for Jesus, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners (Heb. 7:26). Job represents the experience of The Christ, Head and body, for other portions of the book explain conditions early in the Gospel Age, in the middle of the age, and eventually even at the end of the age, although not as expressly as other parts of the Old Testament.

Others reproached Jesus, particularly when he was on the Cross. For example, he was taunted, “If you are the Son of God, come down from the Cross, and then we will believe you.” Some even tried to spit on him, even though he was elevated quite high above the ground.

Job 16:11 God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked.

Job 16:12 I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder: he hath also taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for his mark.

In his emotional anguish, Job made statements that he thought would provoke God into responding with an answer to his dilemma. Job’s motivation, his intention, in charging God was not accompanied with bitterness. He was simply trying to express himself in a way that would cause God to respond. He risked divine disfavor by such a method, but he was desperate for an answer.

A “mark” would be a target. The next verse helps to explain the latter half of verse 12.

Job 16:13 His archers compass me round about, he cleaveth my reins asunder, and doth not spare; he poureth out my gall upon the ground.

Job likened himself to a target, which is defenseless. An archer shoots an arrow at a target, and the target has absolutely no defense. “His archers compass me round about.” The Hebrew gives the thought that at first, the arrows did not hit the target but passed by, and the one who was the target was in anguish because eventually an arrow would strike him either in the heart or in the gut. Earlier the arrows whizzed by Job, but now that they were finding the target, Job’s bowels were starting to gush out, figuratively speaking. He was pleading for an answer: “Why does God permit evil to come upon me?” Job could not understand.

Christians in the Dark Ages had little knowledge, but they did have the spirit of the truth. The more-than-overcomers received their little understanding with open, honest hearts and with sincerity of purpose. By comparison, we are almost spoiled rotten today. It is for us to heed the counsel of the Church of Laodicea. We usually associate that warning with the nominal system, but it applies very much to all of God's professed people including us. We have to buy the "gold" with sincerity of purpose. Witnessing and other activities help to strengthen our purpose, and being tenacious has great value as part of our development. Not only are we to believe with the heart, but we must confess with the mouth unto salvation (Rom. 10:10). A study of the Book of Job brings out invaluable principles.

"He poureth out my gall upon the ground." After Job's long experience with the comforters(?), his bowels were starting to gush out and fall on the ground; that is, he was nearing the breaking point. Actually, his pure conscience held him in good stead, and he came through the fiery experience with great honor. No wonder Job is so honored in the Scriptures! It kind of shames us that he did not have the opportunity of being called to the divine nature. We are a spectacle not only to men and angels but also to the remarkable character of some of the Ancient Worthies, who goad us on to win the race.

Job 16:14 He breaketh me with breach upon breach, he runneth upon me like a giant.

The scene changes from a target to a "giant," that is, a warrior in hand-to-hand combat, as in wars of the past. Job was in a battle, and the Christian fights the fight of faith (1 Tim. 6:12). "Onward, Christian soldiers" is the battle cry.

Job 16:15 I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin, and defiled my horn in the dust.

Comment: Verse 15 in the NIV reads, "I have sewed sackcloth over my skin and buried my brow in the dust."

Job's "horn" was his strength, or power. Great painters have pictured Moses with a horn. Women sometimes wore a fancy headdress with a horn as a symbol of prestige, honor, dignity, royalty, and stature. Job previously was respected by his compatriots, having a worldwide reputation for wisdom and justice. He was a strength (a "horn") to those who were weak. A horn on the forehead signified that the wisdom, counsel, and instruction Job gave to the weak, the weary, the poor, etc., would strengthen them by his sheer empathy and ability to be a blessing to them. Now he was being humiliated in the sight of his compatriots, who viewed him in a completely different light when they saw him, for they felt that he must have greatly sinned. Job's "horn" was buried in the ground, and he was greatly embarrassed and humiliated by the experience. He stated all of these things with the intent that God would respond. And later God did respond.

God sometimes delays His response to our experiences for a long time. Severe trials are absolutely necessary, especially for those who are running for the prize of the high calling, but thank God, there is a secondary class, the Great Company! God realizes that not too many will make the Little Flock. To attain the prize of the high calling is a matter of the intent of the heart—purity of intent, purpose, and mind. Works merely manifest what is going on inside. Faith and the will are the important part, rather than emotions only.

"I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin." Job had been in sackcloth and ashes for seven days, as were the comforters. They had come with good intent, but that intent was not a character development of any depth, for they interpreted Job's experiences as God's disfavor. Following the seven days of sackcloth came their interrogation, their inquisition, of Job. He still wore sackcloth because he could not shed the experience. He was not getting a response from God, nor was he receiving comfort and relief from the three supposed friends.

Q: Was the sackcloth literally sewed to Job's skin?

A: It was figuratively sewed to his skin. In other words, Job could not rid himself of this experience. He felt he could shed the sackcloth if God would just give him an explanation. Job had removed his previous garments, and he must have had some food and physical relief, but he was still under the stress of the disease itself.

Job 16:16 My face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death;

If we read the Book of Job with empathy, we will realize that Job was now reduced to tears. He was actually weeping. Sometimes character is crystallized in a weeping experience. That statement may seem to be an anomaly because fire is usually the crystallizing and purifying agent, but Job's weeping was really salving his conscience. While his outward experience was almost unbearable, his conscience was getting stronger and stronger. Verse 20 proves that Job was truly weeping: "Mine eye poureth out tears unto God."

The comforters had been trying to wear Job down, and now they saw him in tears. We would expect them to let up at this point, but to the contrary, their accusations got even bolder.

Job 16:17 Not for any injustice in mine hands: also my prayer is pure.

Job was confessing the integrity of his purpose. He could find nothing he had done that was serious enough to warrant the experience he was having.

Job 16:18 O earth, cover not thou my blood, and let my cry have no place.

We are reminded of the blood of Abel crying out from the ground. Also, the saints under the altar during the fifth seal cried in a loud voice, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:10). Job's experience was really the experience of Jesus and his Church.

Comment: Job was also saying that he did not want the memory of his experiences to be forgotten. His desire was answered, for the Book of Job has been recorded and thus perpetuated.

Reply: Yes, and in Job 19:23,24, he even expressed a desire for a pen to be used for the writing.

Job 16:19 Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high.

Job had faith. His faith and conscience were still intact. Sometimes we misunderstand the words of one another, but the intent in back of those words is the truly meaningful part.

Job 16:20 My friends scorn me: but mine eye poureth out tears unto God.

Job's tears were the result of his pleading to God.

Job 16:21 O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbour!

Job was asking for one to plead for him in the sense of being an advocate. We can be sure that Elihu, who was on hand and listening silently throughout the entire conversation, was beginning to think he was the advocate, the one to be of benefit. Elihu would later say, "I am the one to plead the cause of Job. I will be the advocate on his behalf."

Job 16:22 When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return.

Verse 22 seems to indicate that Job did not believe in a resurrection, but that was not the case. This verse proves that Job, like Abraham, expected a spiritual resurrection, a heavenly city. And the true Church has expected a spiritual resurrection, especially in the Dark Ages. When they were being persecuted unto death, they were not thinking of coming back down here on earth. We know that the Ancient Worthies will get an earthly resurrection, but later they will receive a spiritual resurrection. In other words, Job did not expect to come back to his property there in the land of Uz. He expected a complete change of venue.

Job 17:1 My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me.

“My breath [spirit, Hebrew *ruach*] is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves [that is, grave diggers] are ready for me.” Job felt he would not live much longer.

Job 17:2 Are there not mockers with me? and doth not mine eye continue in their provocation?

The “mockers” were the three comforters. The last part of verse 2, “Doth not mine eye continue in their provocation?” reads as follows in Rotherham: “And on their insults mine eye doth rest.” The three comforters not only verbally abused Job but also used body, facial, and hand motions; that is, accompanying their verbal assaults were manifestations of anger and mockery. When one of the three spoke, the other two showed their sympathy with the spokesman by nodding the head, for example.

Comment: Another translation states the following for verses 1 and 2: “My spirit is broken; my days have been snuffed out; the cemetery is waiting for me. Certainly mockers are around me; my eyes are focused on their opposition.”

Job 17:3 Lay down now, put me in a surety with thee; who is he that will strike hands with me?

Now Job was talking to God, using legal language. Several translators suspect that Job was using legal terms in many of his comments. In fact, scattered here and there among his comments are legalistic terms, and his words have more meaning if they are considered from a legalistic standpoint. The word “please,” which is in the Hebrew, is often omitted, but the thought is, “Please deposit a pledge for me.” Today we would say, “Please post bail [money] for me.” Job wanted someone to post bail for him and to take his side, for both actions would give him some relief and time to collect himself to master the experience in a more patient way.

“Who is he that will strike hands with me?” The striking of hands was a handshake, which sealed a contract. In the early days of this country, a written contract was not needed because the integrity of one’s character was on the line following such a handshake.

Comment: Another translation is, “Please guarantee my bail yourself. Who else will guarantee it with a handshake?”

And this is one of the roles that Job had handled in Uz, in the country where he abode. Among other things, he was a judge.

Comment: Is the concept of “a surety” pointing to Jesus?

Reply: Yes. Job wanted an advocate. Elihu had been silently listening, and when he started to speak later on, he presumed to take that role. He felt the circumstances of his being there and

overhearing the back-and-forth reasoning of Job and the three comforters were providential.

Job 17:4 For thou hast hid their heart from understanding: therefore shalt thou not exalt them.

“For thou [God] hast hid their [the comforters’] heart from understanding.” Here is assurance that in verse 3, Job was looking for God, or someone God would appoint, to post bail for him but certainly not the comforters. In verse 4, Job was saying, “Since God has blinded the eyes of the three comforters, He will not give an ‘amen’ to their criticisms of me.” In fact, the opposite would occur, for the three were storing up condemnation on themselves for their criticisms of Job. The Gospels warn Christians against this attitude of being hypercritical of one another. Judgment should be strictly along the lines of God’s Word and not based solely on emotions.

Q: In antitype, is verse 4 saying that professing Christians who are like the three comforters will not make their calling and election sure because of their attitude toward those who will attain the Little Flock?

A: Yes, or to state the matter another way, consider how Jesus spoke in parables to the public. When the disciples inquired further, he explained the parables. Then the disciples asked, “Why did you not speak plainly to the multitudes?” Jesus replied, “I purposely blinded them lest they hear and consecrate.” Jesus knew that if the multitudes were emotionally swayed into consecration, they did not have sufficient stability of character to make their calling and election sure. Their very destiny would be jeopardized by laying on them a burden they did not have enough faith to overcome. Therefore, because they would have failed and been liable to Second Death, it was in their best interest not to have them see the truth clearly. Jesus deliberately passed them by. Bro. Magnuson said that if we, as bystanders, had witnessed the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah with its abominable sins, we would have seen that the destruction was for the people’s own good, and we would have said, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!” We would have been singing praise to God for the judgment, for He was actually manifesting mercy on their behalf. He does not wish to see anyone perish but desires that as many as possible will get life. It is not His wish to judge the world now—He will do that in the Kingdom Age under different circumstances with another type of calling and a manner of help for their needs that would not be profitable in the Gospel Age because it would undercut faith. Faith is the motivating power behind the gospel Church. Those who are weak in faith are no pleasure to Him at present. In the next age, the requirements will not be as strict, and thus more will be saved than if they had been persuaded in the present life.

Job 17:5 He that speaketh flattery to his friends, even the eyes of his children shall fail.

The word “flattery” is not in the Hebrew. “He who tells against his friends, even his children’s eyes shall be consumed” is the thought. The NIV is good: “If a man denounces his friends for reward, the eyes of his children will fail.”

Although we do not know the extent or the depth of the relationship that existed with the comforters, Job was saying that he had had some rapport with them before his afflictions. In other words, they were friends at one time, as was manifested in their coming from a distance with good intent and gifts to comfort him, but when they saw him, they were shocked by his personal appearance. No doubt they had heard about Job’s loss of goods, property, family, etc., but his appearance changed their original intent to one of opposition.

Job 17:6 He hath made me also a byword of the people; and aforetime I was as a tabret.

Verse 6 is interesting. Later on, we will get a lot of information about Job in his last speech, but here is a first glimpse of something that happened before the comforters’ arrival. During the

time interval between the loss of goods, family, servants, etc., and the coming of the comforters, Job got a lot of flack from the public who were resident in the area. For such calamity to come upon him, the public thought he must have been a hypocrite. Not being more mature in judgment, they were quickly persuaded that Job was at fault.

The three comforters had come from a distance. It had taken time for them not only to hear about Job and the calamities that had come upon him but also to bestir themselves and meet together so that they would arrive at Job's property at the same time with the purpose of trying to ameliorate his situation. This time span must have involved at least two months. With all of his losses plus the public injury and insults, Job was ready to sit down in sackcloth and ashes and personally mourn. The comforters arrived at this psychological moment and joined him for the seven days. The timing was perfect. We can see that what happened to Job was providential and that the Lord foresaw Satan's entering the picture. The movements of all—the Adversary, the comforters, and Job with his own personal contrition—were timed almost like a chessboard so that the drama would be a testimony for future generations to read about and receive lessons from. Job was a real person with real incidents.

The NIV is a good translation for verse 6: "God has made me a byword to everyone, a man in whose face people spit." The word "face" and the thought of spitting are in the literal Hebrew. The KJV translation indicates that Job was not only a byword but also an object of ridicule, for the people made fun of him with song and instrument. The King James wording is in harmony with the experiences Job was having, but the NIV is a better translation.

Job 17:7 Mine eye also is dim by reason of sorrow, and all my members are as a shadow.

Job's eye was dim because of his tears. In chapter 16, he temporarily broke down with tears welling up in his eyes and reddening his face. Chapter 17 is a continuation of the previous chapter. When one cries, his vision becomes blurry for a while.

"All my members are as a shadow." The sufferings took a toll on Job's physical frame. The thought is, "My members—all of them—are as a shadow of what I formerly was." Job had been reduced to a pitiful visible condition.

Job 17:8 Upright men shall be astonished at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite.

This happens today with regard to Israel, for example. Those who have the right slant can see the prejudice, injustice, and meanness of the Palestinians towards the Jews, yet the news media in Europe, the United Nations, and other countries condemn Israel for retaliating against terrorist attacks because of injuries to women and children as bystanders.

Or we can reason another way. Why was God's hatred against the Amalekites so strong for generation after generation after generation—more than for any other of the heathen peoples? When the 2 million Israelites came out of Egypt and were marching toward the Holy Mount, the Amalekites set up an ambush and in a cowardly fashion attacked the weakest at the back of the long train of people. The same tactic is employed by the Palestinians. They make ammunition in refugee camps. They hide in mosques. They produce bombs in hospitals, and soldiers seek sanctuary there. For example, when Ariel Sharon invaded Lebanon many years ago, the terrorists kept their ammunition dump behind a large hospital. The cowardliness, meanness, and sneakiness of the enemy seem to influence the Lord to say that if one has a contention against another, it should be handled openly and honestly, face to face, and, if necessary, in open warfare. Titus 1:12 states that all Cretans are liars; that is, a tendency to lie was inbred in those who lived on the island of Crete at the time this statement was made. From infancy, Palestinian children are taught warfare, shooting, and hatred of the Jews. As a

result, the race is contaminated, and the public, generally speaking, are not capable of rendering proper judgment in some common matters.

Job was saying that the upright would be astonished if they saw the behavior of the comforters—how they were badgering and lecturing him when he was in such a pitiful and distressed state of body and mind. Any decent person witnessing this spectacle would be angry at such hypocrites. The three should have been comforting and advising Job in a rational and proper manner.

In witnessing what was taking place, Elihu had a proper attitude at first. Like the three comforters, he started with good motives, and his appraisal was justified by seeing what the three comforters were doing to Job.

Job 17:9 The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.

Job was referring to himself as “the righteous,” the one with “clean hands.” More accurately, the verse should read, “Yet the righteous shall firmly hold his way; the clean of hands add strength.” While Job’s body was in a sad condition, his conscience was getting stronger and stronger. As Christians grow older, this progress should be their circumstance. 1 Timothy 1:5 shows this principle with regard to conscience: “Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.” The goal of the Christian is to have these three qualities. Unfeigned faith is illustrated by the Scripture “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10). Love out of a pure heart is shown in the text “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity” (1 Cor. 13:13). Love is the objective. Christians are to grow from faith to hope, and then from hope that maketh not ashamed to love out of a pure heart and a clear conscience (Rom. 5:5). When we first consecrate, the Lord gives us mighty powers to overcome the flesh and a lot of opposition, but as we grow as Christians, we find that, to our surprise, a lot more cleaning up has to be done in our life along many lines. Our faults become more and more manifest.

With all of his trials, Job still had a pure conscience. How remarkable! And he maintained his faith, even though it was sorely tried. Because love is so confused with emotionalism today, we need both the Old and the New Testaments to know what true love is and how to develop it.

Job 17:10 But as for you all, do ye return, and come now: for I cannot find one wise man among you.

Comment: Job was saying to the comforters, “But come on, all of you, try again [to give me proper comfort]!” (NIV translation).

Job 17:11 My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart.

All of Job’s previous plans, purposes, and hopes had been shattered. In the days of his former prosperity, he had good ideals and desires, but now, in his present time of calamity, he felt there was no likelihood of their materializing.

Job 17:12 They change the night into day: the light is short because of darkness.

The Hebrew reads, “They [the comforters] set night for day, and light nears the face of darkness.” As the comforters were talking to Job, things were happening even in nature. For instance, the day might have started out with sunshine when the discoursing began. But as the hours passed, not only did the advice of the comforters become darker and gloomier, but also nature indicated a foreboding mode. Stated another way, as the day progressed, the words of

the three got darker and darker, and nature seemed to be giving a similar accompanying refrain. And at the end of all the discoursing back and forth—that is, at the end of the Book of Job—thunder approached before God spoke.

Job 17:13 If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness.

The literal Hebrew is, “So I wait for *sheol* as my home; in darkness I have spread out my bed.” In other words, Job was acquiescing to his suffering experiences. He saw that God had permitted them to happen, and he was becoming reconciled to the fact that he was nearing the end of his life.

Job 17:14 I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister.

Job continued to express acceptance of his situation.

Job 17:15 And where is now my hope? as for my hope, who shall see it?

Job did not expect to return to his former days of health and prosperity.

Job 17:16 They shall go down to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is in the dust.

The literal Hebrew is something like the following: “They shall go down to the bars of *sheol*, when together into the dust will be our descent.” Job was saying that he would go into the tomb sooner than the comforters but that the comforters would also make their abode in the grave. The implication was that for all the “help” the comforters had been giving Job, he did not think their future was too bright either. They would receive some requiting, and all of them would end up in the same place.

The calamities that came on Job—loss of livestock, goods, children, etc.—are enumerated in chapters 1 and 2. Job, who was described as one who feared God and eschewed evil, was renowned in the world of his day for his riches and his reputation. When three of his friends from different parts of the Arabian peninsula heard about his sufferings, they came to comfort him and also brought goods, but as they approached Job’s residence, they saw him in a manner they did not expect. Not only was he covered with disease, but he was in sackcloth and ashes and about to do penance. The three sat beside Job, empathizing with him for seven days. Not a word was spoken until the seven-day period of penance was over. Then a conversation ensued, as recorded, going back and forth between Job and the comforters.

The names of the three comforters were Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. Of the three, Eliphaz the Temanite was the most respected and honored and hence was always the first to respond to Job’s comments. Next in honor was Bildad the Shuhite (or Shiite), followed by Zophar.

The memories of these peoples of the past were remarkable. In addition, they were noted for their keenness of vision and, particularly the Temanites, their wisdom. Incidentally, Bildad, as a Shiite, had an Arabian background and was related to the children of Abraham, who populated the east countries. The children of both Hagar and Keturah migrated in that direction.

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

Job 18:2 How long will it be ere ye make an end of words? mark, and afterwards we will speak.

“How long will it be ere ye make an end of words?” The puzzling factor is the strange use of

the word “ye” (plural). To whom were Bildad’s remarks being addressed? Certainly Bildad was slanting his remarks in the direction of Job, but he was referring to something that had happened. Job had said, “Upright men shall be astonished at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite” (Job 17:8). He had identified himself with others who, having a righteous mode of living and thinking, would concur with him. Now Bildad was summarizing, saying that Job was typical of a class of self-righteous complainers and accusing Job of having this attitude toward his (would-be) comforters.

The literal rendering of the Hebrew is something like, “How long will you lay snares after words?” In colloquial English, Bildad was saying to Job, “How long will you hunt for words in rebuttal to our remarks? How long will you continue to try to break us down with your words? Why are you so stubborn and obstinate towards us, your comforters? We are trying to show you what your true situation is. How long will you resist us by saying that you are innocent?” Both Eliphaz and Bildad, in particular, had remarkable memories (and of course Job also) in answering what was previously said. If we read chapters 16 and 17 and were then questioned on our retention, perhaps those two chapters would be reduced to two paragraphs. Our memories today are undeveloped because we do not engage in philosophical reasoning. Everything with us is short and to the point.

“Mark, and afterwards we will speak.” The Hebrew has the thought, “Consider [that is, stop this nonsense for a moment], and then, afterwards, we will speak in a calmer, more rational, and less emotionally charged fashion.” However, Bildad did not follow his own advice.

Job 18:3 Wherefore are we counted as beasts, and reputed vile in your sight?

Job 18:4 He teareth himself in his anger: shall the earth be forsaken for thee? and shall the rock be removed out of his place?

Comment: Verses 3 and 4 refer back to Job 16:9, where Job had said that Eliphaz was tearing at him in his wrath and treating him almost like a beast.

Reply: Yes, and now Bildad’s argument in verse 3 was, “Why do you regard us as dumb beasts [that is, as animals without feeling or intelligence]?” The word “and” is spurious. Then Bildad continued, referring to Job’s reasoning. “He teareth himself in his anger.” The three thought Job was tearing himself apart by wrong reasoning.

Usually, as Job or one of the comforters spoke, the reference was to what had just been said. Notice Job’s words in Job 16:8,9, “Thou hast filled me with wrinkles, which is a witness against me: and my leanness rising up in me beareth witness to my face. He [Eliphaz] teareth me in his wrath, who hateth me: he gnasheth upon me with his teeth; mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me.” There Job was criticizing the comforters for their attitude toward him. Their wrath was tearing him apart. In other words, Job blamed his enemies, the comforters, for adding to his sufferings. Now, in chapter 18, Bildad was responding to those remarks by saying that Job was his own problem.

Then Bildad asked two questions. The first was, “Shall the earth be forsaken for thee?” The key word is “earth.” Bildad was saying that Job’s own anger was tearing him apart. “Shall the time-honored principles of moral government—that suffering is a consequence and a proof of sin—be forsaken for you, Job, because of your stubborn insistence on your personal integrity? Shall these time-honored principles of earth be abandoned in your attempt to justify yourself?”

Bildad’s next question was really a repeat of the first: “Shall the rock be removed out of his [its] place?” Here the key word is “rock.” In other words, “Shall this time-honored rock foundation [or fundamental] truth be changed to suit your personal righteousness?” Jehovah, Jesus, the

Scriptures, and even the Church are referred to as a “rock.” Therefore, truth can be a “rock” foundation principle. In reasoning more along natural or traditional lines, Bildad was saying that Job’s anguish defied human logic.

Job 18:5 Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine.

Comment: Job said, “My face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death” (Job 16:16). In his despondency, he felt that he could not bear any more. Bildad’s attitude was, “You are having these experiences because of your wickedness, and you deserve to suffer.”

Reply: That is the substance of the message of the three comforters, who continually viewed Job from that slant or perspective. Today we have the benefit of hindsight and also present truth, whereas Job had a relatively limited experience with the principles of divine government, particularly from a moral standpoint. He did not understand the reason for the permission of evil, and the whole Book of Job shows that was his trial. He could not understand why all the calamities had come upon him, and in searching his own heart and conscience, he could not find any serious flaw that would merit such extreme experiences. Like the comforters, he had been brought up with the understanding that the wicked perish because of their sins. Thus he did not realize that his experiences had been permitted to test his faith. Job lived prior to the Law, and later, in the Book of Deuteronomy, God said He would test His people from time to time to prove whether or not they truly loved Him. “And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no[t]” (Deut. 8:2). Job did not have the understanding that sometimes a person is tested to manifest the stability of the moral fiber of his character—to see whether he would question, “Why did this calamity happen to me when I have been loving you, Lord?” Job was a most unusual person whose name, along with that of Noah and Daniel, was singled out as being personally favored of God. Usually such individuals are commended after their decease. Daniel was an exception, for he was called “beloved” while still in the present life (Dan. 9:23; 10:11,19).

The word “shine” obscures the point being made. The statement should read, “The spark of his fire shall not *blaze*.” People in ancient times used flint to start a fire because they did not have matches. They struck flint together to produce sparks with the hope of igniting kindling wood. Bildad classified Job as one of the wicked ones who struck and struck in trying to start a fire, but the effort was useless. The light of the wicked would be put out; it would not be tolerated to persist. In other words, in due time, the wicked would perish.

Job 18:6 The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him.

A better translation would be, “The light shall be dark in his tent, and his lamp shall be snuffed above him.” Job had been declaring his integrity all along, stating that his conscience was clear before God and that God was the source of his hope. Now Bildad was saying that not only was Job wicked and his struggling in vain, but the light would be dark in his tent (his body). Because of wickedness, Job’s fire (endurance) would be cut off, as well as the light from God.

Job 18:7 The steps of his strength shall be straitened, and his own counsel shall cast him down.

Job 18:8 For he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he walketh upon a snare.

Bildad was saying that just as a person who is trying to evade something eventually puts his foot in his mouth, so Job would entangle himself with his own argument. In the final analysis, all of Job’s reasoning would be like a net that would confine, restrain, and entrap him in his

guilt.

Job 18:9 The gin shall take him by the heel, and the robber shall prevail against him.

“The gin shall take him [the wicked—Job by implication] by the heel, and the robber [the gin] shall prevail against him.” A gin involves the bending of a tree. When an animal steps on a gin, a noose tightens around its heel or foot, taking the animal into the air upside down. Another type of trap is a pit. When an animal steps on the covering of the pit, it falls through into a hole.

Job 18:10 The snare is laid for him in the ground, and a trap for him in the way.

According to Bildad, Providence was against Job, causing him to walk into calamities. The reference to different kinds of traps contains various nuances. For example, as a person walks along, a net may drop on him, coming down from above, or a person may fall into a hole, or pit. In any event, it was as if Job were doomed for destruction in one form or another.

Job 18:11 Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall drive him to his feet.

Verse 11 in the Hebrew reads, “Terrors shall make him [Job] afraid on every side, and shall pursue him close on his heels.” The word “terrors” reminds us of something Eliphaz had said earlier, and Bildad was a copycat. Wanting to strike fear into Job, Eliphaz related a dream and then kept dwelling on that theme. Bildad really had nothing new to say but was following the example of Eliphaz in trying to frighten Job.

Job 18:12 His strength shall be hungerbitten, and destruction shall be ready at his side.

The NIV states, “Calamity is hungry for him; disaster is ready for him when he falls [or stumbles].” Eliphaz had said, “He wandereth abroad for bread, saying, Where is it? he knoweth that the day of darkness is ready at his hand” (Job 15:23). Job was destitute. He owned the land and had a house, but his sons and temporal goods were gone. Incidentally, Job may have had grandsons, for the Book of Job hints that he did have some posterity besides his seven deceased sons. Nevertheless, Job had no servants, and his grandsons would not be in a position to support themselves. Job was even reduced to begging for his food; he wandered about and scrounged for food. Subsequent chapters will disclose a little more information about his situation before the comforters arrived.

Job 18:13 It shall devour the strength of his skin: even the firstborn of death shall devour his strength.

“It [the hunger] devours the bars of his skin.” Instead of having abnormal swelling, as many translators believe, Job was probably emaciated. Hunger had a telling effect upon his body, and his ribs protruded.

“Even the firstborn of death shall devour his strength” or in the Hebrew, “Death’s firstborn eats his parts.” The word “devour” or “eat” seems to further indicate loss of flesh and emaciation. Job was still alive, but his condition was symptomatic of being near death. “Death’s firstborn” was greeting him in the sense of beckoning him to come into oblivion. From another slant, Job looked like death itself, and the next step would be the grave.

Job 18:14 His confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to the king of terrors.

Bildad said that Job’s hope would be rooted out of his tent (his body). The body is the vessel of the new creature (2 Cor. 4:7).

“And it shall bring him to the king of terrors.” Bildad was probably not referring to Satan but to the grave, to the death condition. Even though Satan was the leading activist hidden behind the scene, prompting the comforters, God had given him liberty to test Job to the uttermost.

The Flood had occurred about 700 years prior to Job’s present condition, and to all appearances, it seemed that everyone had disappeared in the Flood except Noah and his family. Even Satan and the fallen angels seemed to have perished.

Q: Was Bildad trying to discourage Job, who had earlier said he wanted to be hidden in death until God’s wrath was past? Job was not afraid of death, but Bildad seemed to be trying to instill fear in him.

A: Yes, he pursued the reasoning of Eliphaz.

Job 18:15 **It shall dwell in his tabernacle, because it is none of his: brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation.**

Bildad said that hunger would dwell in Job’s body. At first, the comforters gave speeches about the wicked in Job’s hearing with the attitude “If the shoe fits, wear it.” As the arguments proceeded, however, the comforters departed from their dispassionate lectures about what happens to the wicked as a topic, letting Job draw the inference, and spoke more directly and bluntly to him, for they were convinced that Job had sinned. They were referring to Job and wanted him to know it.

“Brimstone [molten sulfur] shall be scattered upon his habitation.” Sulfur is used not only for exterminating insects but also for purifying purposes. In the sanitization process, it is like adding fire to fire.

Job 18:16 **His roots shall be dried up beneath, and above shall his branch be cut off.**

We are reminded of Jude 12, which describes a Second Death class at the end of the Gospel Age: “trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots.” Here in the Book of Job, the cutting off was from above and below. As Bildad talked, he got so bitter and angry at Job that he began to lose his own reasoning faculties. He would start to say one thing and then, in confusion, utterly contradict himself in the next breath. A good lesson is here for the Christian not to get too emotionally involved if he wants to reason clearly on a subject.

Job 18:17 **His remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no name in the street.**

The remembrance of one whose roots are plucked up from beneath and his branch cut off from above would perish from the earth.

Job 18:18 **He shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world.**

Job 18:19 **He shall neither have son nor nephew among his people, nor any remaining in his dwellings.**

Bildad’s reasoning in verses 18 and 19 was consistent with verse 16, but it changed in verse 20.

Job 18:20 **They that come after him shall be astonished at his day, as they that went before were affrighted.**

First, Bildad stated there would be no more remembrance of Job, and now he contradicted his reasoning by saying that those who came after Job would be astonished in recalling his situation. They would think of him negatively as an example and a warning of what not to do.

Who are “they that went before” Job? Those of the current generation who remembered his former prosperity and had esteemed him, now had an opposite opinion of him because of his present condition. Sodom and Gomorrah are similarly used as an example of what happens to an evil generation

Job 18:21 Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of him that knoweth not God.

Bildad accused Job not only of being wicked but also of not knowing God. His method and attitude provide an insight into the Inquisition that took place in the Dark Ages against God’s people. The Inquisitors tried to break down and discourage the faith, hope, and confidence of true Christians, who were trying to please God. The three comforters had the same inquisitorial attitude. At first, they tried to flatter and befriend Job. Such subtle temptations were used to wean the Christian away from his belief in and allegiance to God. If that method did not work, a more direct and blunt approach was employed, sometimes involving instruments of torture to persuade the Christian to recant. Like the persecutors of the past, the three comforters tried to get Job to admit that he was wrong and that he had sinned. In fact, Jesus said the time would come when persecutors would think they were serving God by their actions (John 16:2). “Comforters” often start out with a false or superficial friendship, but that friendship becomes more and more at enmity as time goes on.

Job 19:1 Then Job answered and said,

Job 19:2 How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words?

Each one who spoke, whether a comforter or Job himself, usually referred to the preceding speaker. Bildad had asked Job, “How long will it be ere ye make an end of words?” (Job 18:2). All of the characters in the Book of Job had remarkable memories. Not only could they retain what the previous speaker had just said, but they usually began with the initial remarks of that speaker, whom they were rebutting.

Job 19:3 These ten times have ye reproached me: ye are not ashamed that ye make yourselves strange to me.

The three were not ashamed to change from friends to enemies. What does the expression “these ten times” mean?

Comment: It was colloquial language meaning “many times” and indicating that the comforters had given Job maximum verbal persecution.

Reply: Yes, the idiomatic expression should not be taken literally. A precedent was the earlier incident where Jacob said to Laban, “Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle: and thou hast changed my wages *ten times*” (Gen. 31:41). As here in Job, “ten times” was not literal.

What is startling in the Book of Job is that there is no reference to the Law. If Job had lived anytime during or after Moses’ day, then certainly, in all of these long discussions, there would have been some allusion to the Law. The very lack of such references is one of several clues that Job lived prior to Moses.

Q: Approximately how long did this entire experience last for Job?

A: The discussion back and forth among Job, the comforters, Elihu, and finally God took about eight hours. The book can be read in a conversational manner and timed. Therefore, the discussions and reasoning—all 42 chapters—all occurred in one day. Of course the calamities took place before the arrival of the comforters, and the seven days of silence are not included. But once the speaking began, the time span was one day. The comforters began to speak early in the morning, and God appeared on the scene toward late afternoon.

Comment: Job could be thankful that the comforters spoke for only one day!

Reply: The mode of talking in the East—the thinking and reasoning—was philosophical, and if we read the printed word about Job with understanding, we are slowed up tremendously. We cannot read it like the New Testament. The people who lived back there in that locale knew what was being said, for the vocabulary and background were familiar to them. Most people today, after reading a chapter or two of Job, are exhausted and go on to something else.

Q: Then what is the time estimate from the start of Job’s calamities through the arrival of the comforters from a distance and up to the restoration of Job’s prosperity and health?

A: It took the comforters quite a while to get to Job. For one thing, because they lived in different areas of Saudi Arabia, they had to contact each other. One was a Shuite, another was a Temanite, and the third was a Naamathite. It may have taken the three a month or longer to prepare and then travel by camel to see Job. A lot happened in that interim period.

Q: Does Job’s life picture the entire Gospel Age?

A: Yes, but the Book of Job is not intended to be chronological. Job’s life is the experience of the Church. The experience of the consecrated during the last 100 years has been an unusual phenomenon. How many airplanes were there 150 years ago? None. How many automobiles? None. Travel was on foot or by camel, donkey, or horse. The entire lifestyle was different, whereas we, as Christians today, have the head of the “current generation” on our shoulders. We look back at history and think of things from our perspective, which is not the standpoint of prior generations. Brethren get a little taste of the past when they go to Africa, Siberia, or India, and they are startled to see the hardships. For example, it sometimes takes hours to walk to meetings, or even days to hitchhike and travel under difficult conditions. In comparison, we are spoiled in our culture. One reason it is hard to find many of the Lord’s jewels today is that we lead too soft a life. At present, most of the trials in the United States are within the brotherhood itself rather than with the world. Of course those who work have trials with the unconsecrated, but most of us who retire or stay at home are spending time with the brethren. However, the Gospel Age will end with barbaric conditions. In fact, our culture is such today that many do not believe the prophecies of coming persecution at the hands of the nominal Church. The chronology and the prophecy of the past are being discredited more and more as the days go by. Hence we are warned to be very wary of what is happening.

Job 19:4 And be it indeed that I have erred, mine error remaineth with myself.

Job was taking the position of the comforters here, and he was not confessing his guilt. He was saying, “Let’s assume that I have erred. If indeed I have erred, my error remains with me.” Job did not know the error, and neither did the comforters.

Job 19:5 If indeed ye will magnify yourselves against me, and plead against me my reproach:

The comforters used Job's appearance, his misery, and the calamities that had come upon him as a wedge to plead that something was wrong with him.

Job 19:6 Know now that God hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me with his net.

In the previous chapter, Bildad mentioned a snare, a trap, and a net, and now Job brought up the subject again. The fact that Job said he knew God had permitted the calamities to come upon him intensifies the thought that he did not see the Adversary in the picture at all. Job knew about the rebellion of the fallen angels, but it appeared that the Flood had cleansed the earth from the demigods through their destruction. In other words, there was no knowledge of the angels being bound in *tartaroo* or of what had happened to Satan. Indeed the preamble to the Book of Job contains the *first mention of Satan in the Bible*. Since Job lived between the Flood and the giving of the Law, he did not have the enlightenment that was in the Law. The very fact Job did not say anything about the Law Covenant indicates that lack of knowledge.

We can certainly understand Job's predicament and why he reasoned that God had permitted his calamity. Moreover, his saying, "God hath overthrown me," should not be alarming because he had no other explanation of the permission of evil. When the Mosaic Law was given, the subject of the permission of evil began to open up, but many centuries passed before things occurred to indicate that Satan had been in the Garden of Eden and that he was to blame for events which took place there with the serpent. The books of Isaiah and Ezekiel furnish information, but they were written a thousand years later. The point is that it was impossible for Job to know the basis for his sufferings. Of course God permitted the trial, but Satan prompted the comforters and caused Job's sickness and loss of servants, children, etc.

Now we are coming to the middle of the Book of Job, where Job would start to reveal some personal information about himself. While the book is 42 chapters long, the last part contains God's comments. Previously Job was reluctant to disclose too much of what he esteemed as his personal integrity—that he felt he had tried to serve God in various ways—but now he would disclose some personal matters.

Job 19:7 Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but there is no judgment.

Job cried aloud to God for help, but there was no answer.

Job 19:8 He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths.

In verse 6, Job said that God had compassed him with a net. Now he said that God had "fenced up" his way with a barrier or blockage.

Job 19:9 He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head.

Job was referring to his former position of honor and esteem as a judge. He was no longer robed in the clothing of nobility, and his stature was bowed with sickness and disease.

Job 19:10 He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone: and mine hope hath he removed like a tree.

"He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone." Feeling that he had lost everything, including prestige, he was saying, "I am spent and exhausted with this experience."

The thoughts of chapter 19 are expressed more in everyday English than previous chapters and thus are easier to understand. Job spoke plainly and bluntly and less in a philosophical tone.

Another way of expressing that Job's hope was "removed like a tree" is to say that his hope was uprooted, that it was gone, roots and all.

Job 19:11 He hath also kindled his wrath against me, and he counteth me unto him as one of his enemies.

The literal rendering is, "His [God's] anger against me glows."

Job 19:12 His troops come together, and raise up their way against me, and encamp round about my tabernacle.

Job felt that God's "troops"—that is, the Sabeans, the Chaldeans, and the calamities that had killed his sons and his servants and had robbed him of livestock—had risen up against him. The marauding bands had appeared suddenly. Job was saying that the calamities were not haphazard because of their rapid multiplicity. He felt their occurrence was no coincidence but a strategy, for as soon as one messenger came and related bad news, another messenger arrived with ill tidings, etc. Job concluded that God must have permitted the calamities, but he could not grasp the reason. We can appreciate Job's predicament. He should not have been talking this way, but he was not getting any answers. He could not be blamed for wanting to know.

Job felt that God's troops had come together against him and were surrounding him on all sides. The comforters were part of those troops, for they added to his misery. As soon as one comforter finished his remarks and Job barely had time to reply, the next comforter assailed him verbally.

Job's experiences should be very instructive to us, for they picture, in a dramatic and heart-searching way, the dilemma of Christians during the Dark Ages, which lasted for more than a thousand years. For a major portion of the Gospel Age, the brethren did not have Bibles. At most, they had a few pages of Scripture. Bibles were not printed until the 1400s, which was much later in the age. Prior to that, Bibles were handwritten. Christians in the Dark Ages could not understand the permission of evil, for they had only a fragment of the knowledge we possess today. The Book of Job is opening up now because in the near future, the true Church will have an experience similar to that of Job. Faithful Christians will feel that God has deserted them in their last hours. If God permitted Job to have this feeling of depression and isolation and of being forsaken, the feet members could have corresponding experiences in spite of all the present truth that is available. When the time of trouble comes on the feet members, they will not have the privilege of fellowship and communion.

Job 19:13 He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me.

We are beginning to get a piecemeal description of all the varied experiences Job had from different quarters. His test was excruciating. No wonder God honored him with the words "my servant" (Job 1:8).

God "hath put my brethren [that is, Job's natural brothers] far from me." And his former friends and acquaintances avoided him. When the Lord's people were excommunicated by the Roman Catholic Church in the Dark Ages, the excommunication was done in degrees. First, they were estranged from those around them. They became marked people. Their families, friends, and business associates refrained from communication lest the same experience befall them. In time, the imprisonment and severe persecution came.

Comment: In verse 10, Job said that God had destroyed him on every side. Now he was enumerating what the destruction consisted of; namely, God's wrath was kindled, His troops

had come, Job's brothers were far from him, and his kinsfolk had failed.

Comment: The thinking back there was somewhat similar to that of nominal Christians today. Trials and calamities were viewed as disfavor from God rather than as the permission of evil.

Job 19:14 My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me.

Job's "kinsfolk"—that is, his more distant relatives such as uncles and nephews—went away, and his close friends forgot him.

Job 19:15 They that dwell in mine house, and my maids, count me for a stranger: I am an alien in their sight.

Even Job's household servants turned away from him, male and female. The servants were actually the "strangers," but instead they counted Job as the "stranger." For one who had enjoyed great prestige and honor before the calamities, this lack of respect was a difficult trial. Job was regarded as even lower than a servant; he was brought down to the dust, as it were.

Job 19:16 I called my servant, and he gave me no answer; I entreated him with my mouth.

The thought is, "I call for my servant, but he gives me no answer, even though I beg him with my mouth [to reply and do what I want]." What insubordination within Job's own house! He had to implore his servants to obey him.

Comment: The reversed circumstance is interesting. The master was now begging the servants instead of the servants begging the master.

Comment: With Job's appearance being so wretched, perhaps the servants feared they would catch his disease.

Reply: Yes, other nuances are involved as well, but disrespect seems to be the bottom line. The servants no longer esteemed Job.

Job 19:17 My breath is strange to my wife, though I entreated for the children's sake of mine own body.

Because of Job's disease, his breath was affected with halitosis. His entreaties to his wife also went unheeded.

Comment: Having lost his sons, Job wanted to start another family. However, he was offensive even to his own wife, so she would not allow him to get close.

Reply: Yes, having lost his sons, Job wanted to have some survivors. However, he was personally offensive to his wife, so she would not permit him to have the effective intimacy needed to produce children.

Comment: For "mine own body," the literal Hebrew means "my [Job's] belly."

Reply: Yes, sometimes in Scripture, a man is spoken of as having a womb in the sense of his belly.

Comment: Other translations give the thought that Job was loathsome to his own brothers rather than to his wife.

Comment: Since Job's brothers (his mother's sons) were mentioned in verse 13, it seems more reasonable to apply verse 17 to his wife's refusal for marital closeness. She opposed Job earlier by telling him to curse God and die (Job 2:9). It is logical that Job would be interested in having children again, and a refusal would seem to fit her attitude.

Job 19:18 Yea, young children despised me; I arose, and they spake against me.

Comment: Children are honest; they say what they feel and see. With Job being in such a deplorable physical condition, we can see that children would point to him and ridicule him.

Reply: Yes, children are naive, and they express themselves openly according to what they see. Job's former posture, demeanor, mannerisms, and wisdom had provoked esteem from young and old alike, but now, in his miserable state, he was viewed in a completely different way.

"I arose." When a respected person stands up, that action should provoke silence among those who are present, but when Job arose in his wretched physical state, the result was even more intense ridicule and criticism.

We are getting an insight into Job's experience when Satan was permitted to afflict him prior to the arrival of the three comforters. Incidentally, Satan is sometimes called Beelzebub, which means "lord of the flies." Flies are normally disorganized, such as when they gather on something that is decaying. However, as "lord of the flies," Satan has the power to control flies and make them fly in unison.

Comment: An incident with Elisha shows how God regards those who ridicule His approved servants. When 42 children mocked Elisha's bald head, two female bears killed them (2 Kings 2:23,24).

Reply: Yes, that is a picture of the Kingdom Age.

Job 19:19 All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me.

Job's "inward friends" were his intimate friends. This experience happened prior to the arrival of the three comforters. Verse 19 thus indicates a time interval of probably at least a month between Job's loss of sons, cattle, etc., in one day and the coming of the comforters.

The following is a summary of some interesting facts about the Book of Job. Job spoke 513 verses, Eliphaz 113 verses, Bildad 49 verses, Zophar 40 verses, Elihu 165 verses, and God 129 verses. The introduction to the book contains approximately 52 verses. In all, the book has 1,061 verses. Since each verse has an average of 20 words, then 1,061 (verses) x 20 (words) would total 21,220 words. If we divide 21,220 words by 8 hours (or 480 minutes), the result is 44.2 words per minute. Most people speak at least 75 words a minute and the newscasters almost 100 words a minute. Therefore, technically speaking, the Book of Job can be read aloud in 8 hours.

Job's intimate friends now detested him, and those he loved had turned against him. During the Inquisition period, God's people had this experience when they were excommunicated. The Roman Catholic Church usually felt that excommunication was sufficient because such individuals were doomed for life. Not being able to get employment, they had to beg and thus depend on the generosity of friends and other noble-minded people for basic necessities. However, the Roman Catholic Church was not satisfied with that type of misery for so-called heretics, so its leaders went further and put such individuals to death. The Inquisition reached its height under Pope Innocent III. The point is that Job's personal experience was the experience of God's people during a long period of the Gospel Age. The last 150 years or so

have been unusual for Christians living in this country, for they have experienced practically no physical persecution. No wonder not many jewels are found, even though, for the most part, a gleaning work is taking place.

Comment: The Homeland Security Act demonstrates how when conditions get uncomfortable in the near future, restrictions and bans will be placed on home Bible study meetings and anything not conventional or orthodox.

Reply: What the Pastor said in the “Man of Sin” chapter in the *Second Volume* is taking place now. Laws are being enacted that will take effect under emergency conditions for the commonweal of the republic. Though intended for good, these same laws will be used later by wrong hands to bring about the persecution of innocent people. The right of due process will be abridged.

Job 19:20 My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.

Bible scholars find Job’s remark about the “skin” of his teeth to be unusual. Since it is true that a membrane, or skin, covers the enamel on our teeth, many marvel that such knowledge was known way back there.

Comment: Some colloquial expressions have their roots in the Bible. A saying is that someone has escaped by the “skin” of his teeth.

Job 19:21 Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me.

Notice Job’s repetition of the clause “Have pity upon me.” Job could not figure out the sudden turn of events. He did not realize that, with God’s permission, Satan was the one touching him, so he concluded, “The hand of God hath touched me.” Job trusted that God had some inexplicable reason for allowing the calamities.

In former days, Job had no doubt held the three friends in high esteem. Now he expected pity from them, but it was not forthcoming.

Comment: Psalm 69:26 harmonizes with what is expressed in verse 21, “For they [the comforters] persecute him [Job] whom thou [God] hast [permitted to be] smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.”

Job 19:22 Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh?

Comment: Seeing Job’s physical sufferings, the comforters should have realized the depth of his trial and internal conflict. They should have had pity for him on an emotional level.

Reply: Yes, they were almost sadistic toward him. They were not satisfied with his “flesh”; that is, they should have been satisfied to see his outward sufferings and not have continued to needle him.

Job 19:23 Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book!

How interesting! Exactly what Job wished—that his words would be written down and printed in a book—did happen. He could not believe the extraordinary experience he was having.

Comment: With all of the comments back and forth between Job and the others taking place in

one day, Elihu would have overheard Job express this desire and then later followed through.

Reply: Yes, the Holy Spirit of God, which operated on holy men of old, seared into Elihu's memory this desire of Job.

Job 19:24 That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!

Comment: Job was looking for a permanent record, not something that would pass away quickly.

Although no particular example comes to mind of a rock or tablet being incised with glyphs, cuneiform, or whatever, we can see that molten lead being poured into letter cavities in a rock would help to preserve the writing, even in granite, by giving extra endurance. Also, the appearance would be startling, for lead looks silvery. Of course Job may have just been talking emotionally rather than literally meaning that his words should be engraved with lead in a rock. At any rate, an enduring record has been preserved in Holy Writ—and without having to be incised in a rock with lead.

Job 19:25 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

This verse is frequently alluded to, but where did the information come from? We can offer one suggestion. Job lived at a time not too distant from the Flood and the additional years that Noah and Shem lived after the Flood. Based on the information in Jude 14 and 15, Enoch prophesied to the pre-Flood generation that a Savior was coming and that he would come with others. Through Noah and Shem, some of the utterances of the Holy Spirit prior to the Deluge were made known to the post-Flood generation.

Comment: Jesus said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day ... and was glad" (John 8:56). Job must have seen that day too.

Tradition speaks of a Book of Enoch, so evidently, his ministry was recorded. Although no reliable Book of Enoch exists today as part of the sacred canon, it is possible that information was passed on in written form, among other ways.

Comment: *Strong's Concordance* says that the Hebrew word for "redeemer" means a kinsman redeemer, that is, Jesus. Boaz, a type of Jesus, was the kinsman redeemer of Ruth, a type of the Gentile Church.

Reply: Yes, that is the thought. Verse 25 is prophetic: "My redeemer ... shall stand at the *latter day* upon the earth."

Job 19:26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

The article is missing before the Hebrew word translated "God." The *El* form can certainly refer to Almighty God, but it can also refer to a judge or a mighty one. As the representative of Jehovah, Jesus will be the mighty God, the Prince of Peace, in the Kingdom Age (Isa. 9:6). And certainly Job will be one of the Ancient Worthies, who will be ministers of the Kingdom down here in the flesh. If we do not consider the word "see" too literally but think of it more in the way Christians now "see" Jesus with the eye of faith, then there is some truth in what Job was saying. With the degree of understanding that was available back there and Job's not having the benefit of Gospel Age enlightenment, he had some views that were not quite as accurate as they might have been.

Comment: The clause “yet in my flesh shall I see God” should be translated “yet apart from [or without] my flesh shall I see God.” In context, the King James wording does not make sense. If Job’s skin were destroyed by worms, he would not be able to see God in that body.

Reply: It is true that other translations change the preposition. However, the wording is not mathematical. A flexibility in the Hebrew allows for the other application, which we know will be the case in the Kingdom, although not in a literalized sense.

Job 19:27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.

“Reins” represent kidneys in the Book of Leviticus, for the kidneys control the heart. As leather reins guide a horse or steer a chariot, so the kidneys are indirectly related to the heart. Diseased kidneys have a subtle adverse influence on the heart. Therefore, the kidneys represent the will or the intent, which is deeper than just the thoughts or the emotions (the heart).

However, when Job said, “Though my reins be consumed within me,” he meant, “Though I be dissolved according to the flesh.” Job was saying, “When I die, worms will destroy me both outwardly and inwardly so that I will be reduced to dust, but I will be raised again from death.” Without question, Job indicated here that he believed in an afterlife, a resurrection.

Comment: The Apostle John wrote, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2). Therefore, even after Jesus’ death and resurrection, it was not known how faithful Christians will appear in the resurrection.

Reply: However, certain Scriptures indicate that spirit beings have eyes, ears, limbs, etc. It is true that we do not know the nature of the body—its glory—or the clothing, spiritually speaking. We do not know the details of the honor and the glory, but we can reasonably assume that if God has eyes, ears, a nose, a mouth, arms, and legs, then we would have them too in the spirit realm if faithful. Nevertheless, having that understanding does not tell us the whole story about being robed with glory and honor. We do think there will be some resemblance to what we were before, in the present life, so that those in the body of Christ, as well as those in the Great Company, will be able to recognize one another.

Comment: The last part of verse 27 in the American Revised reads, “My heart faints within me.” A footnote states, “The last phrase of verse 27 is an explanation something like ‘I am overwhelmed at the thought.’ This great expression of hope marks the turning point in Job’s attitude.”

Reply: That comment is interesting, and it seems to fit the mood of Job’s saying, “I know that my redeemer liveth.”

Job 19:28 But ye should say, Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me?

Job 19:29 Be ye afraid of the sword: for wrath bringeth the punishments of the sword, that ye may know there is a judgment.

Verses 28 and 29 sum up Job’s rebuttal to Bildad. The comforters should have been satisfied to see the affliction Job was enduring. They should have realized that he had enough problems without their causing additional suffering. Their reasoning should have been done in a friendlier fashion. When Elihu spoke later, he at first had the attitude of a friend in trying to

commiserate with, enlighten, and comfort Job and give some reason for his experience. Initially, he did not attack Job and accuse him of wrongdoing like the three comforters.

Comment: Job seems to be saying, “You should examine yourselves.” The three comforters were trying to remove the mote from Job’s eye when they had a beam in their own (Matt. 7:3).

Reply: Verse 29 mentions the “sword” of judgment. Those who criticize others in an improper fashion bring upon themselves a judgment proportionate to the severity of the criticism they render. Thus the three comforters would receive retribution. And Job was saying that retribution would be sure to follow. The three should have feared judgment, for in speaking to Job the way they did, they were bringing responsibility and judgment upon their own character before God.

With Job receiving harassment all day, we would expect him to get weaker and weaker, but instead he became stronger under the affliction. In the next, or third, round of reasoning, we will see his strength increasing and the comforters becoming weaker and weaker because they could only repeat what they had been saying all along. They had no new avenue of rebuke or counsel. The lesson is that a trial of faith strengthens faith. It seems to be an anomaly or a contradiction, but faith can only grow in an atmosphere of doubt. Faith is exercised and strengthened during periods of doubt and dearth.

Zophar’s reply, which is next to come, will show that Job’s words upset him considerably, especially the positiveness of assertion in the closing moments of his argument.

Comment: Rotherham translates the end of verse 29, “Be ye afraid—on your part—of the face of the sword because wrath bringeth the punishments of the sword, to the end ye may know the Almighty.”

Reply: Rotherham’s translation agrees with what has already been expressed. Verse 29 is saying that a person who is unreasonable in his wrath will have to give an account before the seat of justice for any unkind, untrue suspicions uttered audibly against the Lord’s people to their face—and against Job in particular here. Job certainly believed in God and in some sort of retribution or accounting for all of His creatures, either favorable or unfavorable. He believed that improper, unjustified wrath would bring retribution.

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

Job 20:2 Therefore do my thoughts cause me to answer, and for this I make haste.

Zophar, the third comforter, began to speak. The NIV reads, “My troubled thoughts prompt me to answer because I am greatly disturbed.” Zophar was angry. It was as though he could not wait any longer to reply to Job’s criticism in the previous chapter. Perhaps the last verse was what really angered him: “Be ye afraid of the sword: for wrath bringeth the punishments of the sword, that ye may know there is a judgment” (Job 19:29). Of course Job’s rebuttal followed Bildad’s, the second comforter, and really applied to all three comforters, but Zophar seemed to take Job’s remarks personally, as applying particularly to him.

Q: Is it possible that Job had not finished speaking and Zophar interrupted him, not being able to wait any longer in his anger?

A: That is possible because Zophar indicates that he wanted to speak sooner and that he was frustrated by Job’s continuing arguments.

Job 20:3 I have heard the check of my reproach, and the spirit of my understanding causeth

me to answer.

Zophar expressed his impatience to reply as quickly as possible to rebut what Job had just said.

Comment: In taking Job's remarks personally, Zophar may have had a twinge of conscience that caused him to become defensive.

Reply: Yes. Zophar was ruder in his comments than the other two comforters.

Job 20:4 Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth,

Job 20:5 That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment?

Comment: Zophar directed his remarks to Job as "the wicked."

Reply: Yes, Eliphaz and Bildad tried to speak in a more detached or indirect fashion, but Zophar was pointedly clear that Job was the object of his comments.

Job 20:6 Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds;

Verse 6 refers to Job's former state of honor and esteem.

Job 20:7 Yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung: they which have seen him shall say, Where is he?

Zophar used strong, crude language.

Comment: Despite such cruel remarks, Job prayed for the comforters at the end of the book.

Reply: Yes, God said, in effect, to the three comforters at that time, "Before I hear you three, you had better go to Job and ask for his forgiveness. Then you can come to me."

Comment: Apparently, Zophar did not believe in a resurrection.

Reply: We do not know with certainty what Zophar believed. An alternate opinion is that he believed in a resurrection for himself and his compatriots but did not have much hope for Job.

Job 20:8 He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found: yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night.

Zophar was saying that Job would be chased away like a vision of the night and, by implication, be forgotten.

Job 20:9 The eye also which saw him shall see him no more; neither shall his place any more behold him.

Verse 9 reinforces the thought that Job would not be seen anymore; that is, Zophar thought Job would de cease and not have a resurrection.

Job 20:10 His children shall seek to please the poor, and his hands shall restore their goods.

With his seven sons and three daughters having all been slain, Job had no children at this juncture, so what did Zophar mean?

Comment: The definition in *Strong's Concordance* of "please the poor" is "a primitive root; to be pleased with; specifically to satisfy a debt." The NIV translates verse 10, "His children must make amends to the poor; his own hands must give back his wealth." Zophar was saying that Job had defrauded the poor to get his wealth, and now his children needed to make amends.

Reply: What Job had supposedly defrauded others would be demanded of his posterity. The NIV is a clearer rendering.

Q: Would the "children" have to be Job's?

A: That part is puzzling because Job had no children at this time.

Q: Could the reference be just to younger ones who had respected and admired Job, and not necessarily to natural progeny?

A: Job's experience, or calamity, was regarded by some as a divine judgment and revelation of his true character in obtaining wealth through fraud, deceit, robbery, and other types of underhandedness. Yes, the word "children" can be thought of in a broad sense rather than as Job's natural offspring.

Comment: Even though Zophar was the most abrupt of the three and plainly applied his remarks to Job, he was still trying to maintain Eastern decorum by not saying bluntly, "Job, you are a hypocrite."

Reply: Yes, in suddenly realizing the coarseness and the rudeness of his replies, Zophar tried to back off and assume a superior detached mode of speaking and to show he was a wise person.

Job 20:11 His bones are full of the sin of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust.

If, in verse 10, Zophar was trying to back off from his prior rough talk, he could not refrain very long from being emotional. Verse 11 and succeeding verses directly applied to Job, even if his name was not used. Zophar said that Job was the product of his early youth and training and that his wickedness was the outgrowth of what had been in him genetically or environmentally. Wickedness was inherent in him, even when he had honor and authority.

Zophar felt Job's career was like a bad dream that would soon perish, and people would forget him. If, by any chance, reference was made to his former life, it would not be with respect.

Job 20:12 Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, though he hide it under his tongue;

While Zophar's comments, either previously or currently, are not helpful to the new creature, they do show what can happen if individuals go astray as new creatures.

Comment: All this happened because Job was sick.

Reply: Yes, some comforters!

Job 20:13 Though he spare it, and forsake it not; but keep it still within his mouth:

Job 20:14 Yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him.

Zophar's words could not be any stronger. There could not be friendlier enemies! A saying is,

“With friends like that, who needs enemies?”

Zophar was saying that although Job used better language, in back of his talk, he was a very wicked man—as bad as Satan. Zophar was describing one type of the Second Death class but applying his words to the wrong person.

Job 20:15 He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again: God shall cast them out of his belly.

Zophar spoke so bluntly that his words are self-explanatory. The NIV says, “He will spit out the riches he swallowed; God will make his stomach vomit them up.” According to Zophar, Job’s fraudulent behavior and oppression of others had enriched him and made him wealthy.

From a natural standpoint, Zophar, with his harsher and ruder manner of speaking and his baser instincts, is illustrative of those who are sadistic toward others. To get life, this class of humanity must entirely rid themselves of this characteristic. There are incorrigible people in the world today whose characters are so hardened that even when they are given an opportunity in the Kingdom Age, they will not get life. It is dangerous to sow that type of disposition in the present life. Nevertheless, those with a sadistic disposition who have never heard of Christ are guaranteed an awakening from the tomb. Everyone who has ever lived must know about Jesus Christ at some time or other. Even though not Spirit-begotten, Judas had the opportunity in the present life to hear Jesus and witness his behavior and miracles. Therefore, he is guilty of Second Death, having proved himself incorrigible when he betrayed Jesus, and he will not be awakened from the tomb.

Job 20:16 He shall suck the poison of asps: the viper’s tongue shall slay him.

Zophar’s words continued to be strong.

Job 20:17 He shall not see the rivers, the floods, the brooks of honey and butter.

According to Zophar, Job would not see the Promised Land in the sense that there was no hope for him. Of course Job lived before the Law was given with the invitation to go to the Promised Land, but the fallen human race as a whole, since its inception, has thought of a paradisiac condition or situation beyond the grave, hoping against hope that such a condition does exist.

Job 20:18 That which he laboured for shall he restore, and shall not swallow it down: according to his substance shall the restitution be, and he shall not rejoice therein.

Zophar did not apply these words to Job personally, for he had just said that Job would not be on the scene once he died. And Zophar did not hold out a hope that Job would be resurrected or awakened out of death. Job’s words indicated he was getting stronger and stronger, so he was thinking less and less about his demise as time went on. However, the three comforters tenaciously held to the thought that Job’s future would be bleak, Zophar being the worst in saying that God would make Job vomit up the riches from his belly.

Job 20:19 Because he hath oppressed and hath forsaken the poor; because he hath violently taken away an house which he builded not;

There may be something behind this verse about Job’s own house of which we are not aware. Evidently, his house was rather impressive and imposing. Zophar was tainting Job’s possession of that structure, which he did not build but somehow acquired, by implying that it came about through subterfuge. Verse 19 is a continuation of the theme or accusation that everything Job

had (goods, reputation, fame, etc.) was ill-gotten. It would have been difficult for Job to keep his sanity amidst all these accusations and to not reply improperly or overstate himself through emotion, as Zophar was doing.

Job 20:20 Surely he shall not feel quietness in his belly, he shall not save of that which he desired.

Job 20:21 There shall none of his meat be left; therefore shall no man look for his goods.

Job 20:22 In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits: every hand of the wicked shall come upon him.

It is not profitable to think too much on Zophar's foul language, but it does reveal how much Job suffered in the experience.

Comment: Some of Zophar's words were quoted by David in the Psalms, so the principles, *when accurately applied*, are true.

Reply: That is also true of certain statements made by the other two comforters, but Job was innocent. He protested that he had not committed the sins they ascribed to him. All three were saying, "What you have sown you are now reaping." However, Job did not sow what they implied. In the foreword to the Book of Job, God commended him as being righteous, just, and honest. As far as *intent* was concerned, Job was perfect. God is looking for us to develop a character with pure intentions in spite of what is in the mind. The mind and the will are two different things.

Job 20:23 When he is about to fill his belly, God shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him, and shall rain it upon him while he is eating.

Job 20:24 He shall flee from the iron weapon, and the bow of steel shall strike him through.

Job 20:25 It is drawn, and cometh out of the body; yea, the glittering sword cometh out of his gall: terrors are upon him.

Job 20:26 All darkness shall be hid in his secret places: a fire not blown shall consume him; it shall go ill with him that is left in his tabernacle.

Job 20:27 The heaven shall reveal his iniquity; and the earth shall rise up against him.

Job 20:28 The increase of his house shall depart, and his goods shall flow away in the day of his wrath.

Job 20:29 This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed unto him by God.

Verses 23-29 are plain statements.

Q: What is the thought of "a fire not blown" in verse 26?

A: Zophar was saying that the fire within Job—that is, the inherent evil and wickedness—would consume him. The expression shows how wicked Job was in Zophar's sight.

Comment: Zophar was talking graphically about different ways of dying.

Reply: In antitype, we think particularly of the deaths of Hus and Jerome. Hus was not only burned alive but dressed to look like Satan, with all kinds of curses attached to him. Relatively little has been recorded about his death and the language used in connection with his martyrdom, but everything possible was done to impress upon Hus how wicked he was—more so than with the other Reformers, as far as we know.

Succeeding chapters, especially from chapter 23 on, provide more and more enlightenment about Job's character. The details are impressive.

Job 21:1 But Job answered and said,

Job 21:2 Hear diligently my speech, and let this be your consolations.

In other words, "Listen carefully to what I have to say, and let this be your comfort." There may be a tinge of sarcasm here.

Comment: Job started his rebuttal with strength.

Q: Is the thought in the NIV accurate for verse 2? "Listen carefully to my words; let this be the consolation you give me."

A: We cannot give a definitive reply. It would seem that the meaning could be either way.

Comment: Because of the sarcasm in verse 3, "mock on," it seems reasonable that verse 2 also contains sarcasm.

Job 21:3 Suffer me that I may speak; and after that I have spoken, mock on.

Job 21:4 As for me, is my complaint to man? and if it were so, why should not my spirit be troubled?

Job's complaint was not to man, for he was seeking an answer from God. Job said, "If my complaint were to man, then I would be troubled," but why? Job would be troubled because the three supposed friends were not providing comfort and they were adding to his suffering.

Q: Wouldn't Job's spirit have been troubled regardless of whether his complaint was to man or to God?

A: However, God had the answer, which Job wanted to hear. In other words, God could reply but was apparently withholding the particular information Job was seeking. With man—with the three comforters—the situation was hopeless, for they had nothing to offer.

Job 21:5 Mark me, and be astonished, and lay your hand upon your mouth.

Comment: Job was saying, "Look at my condition." His words and appearance should have evoked sympathy and made the three comforters feel ashamed for having accused him of wrongdoing.

Job was using extreme sarcasm with the comforters: "Face toward me, and put your hand over your mouth." The more vulgar expression would be, "Shut up!" Incidentally, this chapter is almost entirely devoid of Job's complaining of his physical or mental affliction. He was waxing stronger and stronger and was more or less in an attack mode now, taking the offensive in talking to the comforters and giving them a tongue-lashing.

Job 21:6 Even when I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold on my flesh.

The Hebrew word translated “trembling” can be rendered “shuddering,” the thought being, “When I think of my condition, I am dismayed, and shuddering seizes my flesh.”

Job 21:7 Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?

In soliloquizing for the benefit of his comforters, Job was now starting to differ entirely with their reasoning that his sufferings were the result of sin or disobedience. He changed the direction of their reasoning, turning it 180 degrees to a different slant. “Let us look at conditions as they really exist in the world. The wicked live long and relatively healthy, happy lives. Instead of dying because of their iniquity, they reach old age and seem to prosper in everything they do. They even get seated in positions of power and influence.” As he continued this line of reasoning, the three could not really bring up an argument to offset this new approach. Job would pursue this reasoning, detail by detail, to impress it upon them.

Job 21:8 Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes.

“Their seed” would be “their children,” that is, the children of the wicked. How does the last half of verse 8, “and their offspring before their eyes,” relate to the first half? When children are young and more sensitive in conscience, they can see that some of the things a wicked parent does are not upright. However, when children see that the parent prospers and apparently does not incur any penalty, the lesson is drawn that perhaps they should do the same. Hence they are usually influenced by the example of others, especially those in the family, and they practice what they see.

“Their seed is established in their sight with them.” If a wicked person does something wrong and does not get immediate retribution, he thinks, “Maybe I should do something else that is wrong.” In beholding the prosperity of the wicked, parents follow that example, and children follow the example of the parents. Then the next generation follows the wickedness of the children, and the cycle continues from one generation to another. This principle is summed up in Malachi 3:15, “And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.” In fact, the Prophet Malachi summed up the history of the Old Testament with this observation. Although the wicked seem to prosper, their iniquity will eventually catch up with them. God will carry out His warning.

Comment: God said that He would “by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation” (Exod. 34:7).

Reply: That principle is not usually seen, even though it is true, as stated by God. Retribution is generally not perceived immediately, but it certainly exists. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7). Sometimes the reaping is in the present life but not always. What does not occur now, will happen in the Kingdom Age. “Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after” (1 Tim. 5:24).

Job 21:9 Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them.

Generally speaking, the households of the wicked are safe and prosperous, and no special dangers are incurred. However, there have been notable examples down through history of individuals who suffered startling retribution.

“Neither is the rod of God upon them”; that is, God’s rod of discipline and retribution is not discernible. Job was saying, “When we look around, the principle enunciated by you, my supposed comforters, that I am suffering because of some secret sin does not hold true. What about those who openly sin and receive no special punishment?” Job gave a strong rebuttal to the comforters.

Job 21:10 Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf.

The livestock possessions of the wicked prospered. Their bulls were fertile, engendering many calves, and their cows not only became pregnant immediately but bore healthy, living calves without difficulty. Instead of being terror-stricken and mournful about his sufferings, Job now talked from a position of strength, giving a lecture to the three comforters.

Job 21:11 They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance.

Job 21:12 They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ.

Even the progeny of the wicked prospered—and so much so that they seemed to have a “flock.” Their children were healthy and danced joyfully. Moreover, they played musical instruments of various skill levels and rejoiced. In other words, not only did the wicked bring forth children with ease, but those children were happy as they danced, sang, and played musical instruments. In silence, the three comforters were no doubt biting their lips, for Job’s reasoning was offsetting their previous arguments about the reason for his afflictions.

Comment: Job was going to great lengths to show that the three comforters misunderstood the reason for his calamities.

Job 21:13 They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave.

The wicked lived prosperous lives and then often died peacefully without suffering lingering and/or especially painful illnesses. Even if they experienced some pain, they died quickly.

Job 21:14 Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.

Job’s sarcasm was slanted toward the comforters as he pointed to the irony that existed in the world situation. It was bad enough that the wicked sinned openly, but they also declared with their mouths that they were not interested in God’s ways.

Job 21:15 What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?

To all appearances, atheists openly defy God and seem to get away with their words and actions. In some cases, they have twinges of conscience, but they usually override those twinges, searing their consciences further. Others have such hardened consciences that there is no response. The point is that the wicked seem to be rewarded in the present life for their ill-gotten prosperity. Not only is there no evidence of retribution, but if they do not believe in a future life, they think death ends the entire situation. Atheists know the difference between right and wrong, but if they are not convinced of punishment to come sooner or later, they tend to follow the erroneous philosophy “Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die.”

The word “Almighty” is the Hebrew *El Shaddai*. How ironic that, according to the slant Job was using, the Almighty One was not uttering even a peep! The wicked do not see the Almighty as being almighty but see Him instead as more or less impotent and not using that power. Not

only are atheists inclined to that line of reasoning but also agnostics and infidels, who reason that God is too busy elsewhere to be concerned about creatures down here. Thus those of these categories are more apt to lead reprobate lives.

“What profit should we have, if we pray unto him?”; that is, “What profit is there if we pray unto Him and He does not answer or inform us of judgment?”

Job 21:16 Lo, their good is not in their hand: the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

In the first half of verse 16, Job was saying, “Lo, the good of the wicked is nonexistent in their walk in life.” The second half of the verse refers to Job’s own thinking; namely, the “counsel”—that is, the teaching and the example—of the wicked was repulsive to him.

Q: Can the beginning of verse 16 be rephrased as a question: “Behold, is not their prosperity in their hand?”

A: Yes, it can be a question with the latter part as Job’s reply. The question format seems to fit in with the next verse, which is sort of a rhetorical question.

Job 21:17 How oft is the candle of the wicked put out! and how oft cometh their destruction upon them! God distributeth sorrows in his anger.

“How often is the life of the wicked snuffed out rather abruptly? How often does destruction come upon them?” The implication was, “Not very often.” Instead the wicked seemed to prosper in their life and then die a peaceful death.

“How often does God, in His anger, distribute sorrows upon the wicked?” Relatively speaking and in broad-brush thinking, we do not see retribution being focused upon the wicked in any special manner at the present time. In fact, the righteous and the wicked seem to die without any discrimination being made. Job was inferring that many of the wicked die a rather peaceful death, and many of the righteous suffer a painful death.

Job 21:18 They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away.

Comment: The NIV states verse 18 in question form, as did a rendering in an earlier study: “How often are they [the wicked] like straw before the wind, like stubble blown in the desert away from God’s presence and like chaff that the wind carries away?” Again the implication was, “Not very often.”

Reply: Whether verse 18 is a question or a statement, the same principle applies.

The wicked are “as chaff that the storm carrieth [stealeth—see KJV margin for the Hebrew] away.” With wheat and alfalfa, the wind seems to gobble up the fine chaff and make it disappear right in front of a person viewing the field.

Job 21:19 God layeth up his iniquity for his children: he rewardeth him, and he shall know it.

Job was now changing his logic, slanting his argument in the direction of retribution. However, his explanation would not conflict with what he had just been saying.

We are not accustomed to thinking that God lays up iniquity for His children because in reading the Scriptures, we almost always think of God’s children in a favorable sense—that they are His children because they are pleasing Him. But in this chapter, Job used the term to

refer to God's wicked children, who came on the scene after the Fall. Because God created man, we can say that all of the human race have been born under His providence, and they are not necessarily good or bad unless the context makes the distinction. In one or two instances, the Apostle Paul reasoned like Job here in chapter 21, referring to God's wicked children, but that is not the norm. The emphasis is that "*he* [the wicked one] shall know it."

Job 21:20 His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty.

Disobedient, wicked children "shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty."

The literal Hebrew reads, "God stores up for his sons their iniquity; he repays, and he knows it. He shall see with his eyes his ruin, and he shall drink of the Almighty's wrath." In principle, the King James is saying the same thing but in a more archaic manner.

Job 21:21 For what pleasure hath he in his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst?

Verse 21 expresses the thought in a common saying about dying; namely, "You can't take it with you." All the prosperity and show of wealth of the wicked will cease to be their possession when they are cut off in death.

Why did Job use the expression, or Hebraism, "number of his months"? In Job 14:1, he said, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble." The statement is true but not necessarily with regard to the wicked. Even if a man lives to be 120 years old in the present life, that length of time is but a drop in the bucket compared to what is in store for mankind when people can live for eternity. In other words, the present life is very short, relatively speaking.

Job 21:22 Shall any teach God knowledge? seeing he judgeth those that are high.

Job was saying, "Shall anyone teach God knowledge, since He judges those who are in high positions or who are exalted in one form or another?"

Job 21:23 One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet.

The King James margin has, "One dieth in the strength of his perfection." In verses 23-25, Job contrasted two individuals in different circumstances who die.

Job 21:24 His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow.

The King James margin has, "His milk pails are full of milk." Some translations have, "His sides are full of milk," meaning that, as a whole, the wealthy are fat; they are plump with wealth. Job was saying that the wicked apparently die in full strength, wholly secure. There is a great difference between moist bones and dry bones.

Job 21:25 And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure.

In contrast to the wealthy person, another individual dies with a bitter soul.

Job 21:26 They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them.

The two opposites, one living in wealth and pleasure and the other living in bitterness and distress, will have the same experience in death. They will lie down in death in the dust, and worms will cover them.

Job 21:27 Behold, I know your thoughts, and the devices which ye wrongfully imagine against me.

Job 21:28 For ye say, Where is the house of the prince? and where are the dwelling places of the wicked?

The “prince” was Job, and the “house” or “dwelling places” were his household—his children, servants, goods, and property. Where were they? The comforters had been saying, “Job, you were formerly a prince, renowned for wealth, wisdom, and kindness, but where is your household now, the dwelling places of the wicked?”

Job 21:29 Have ye not asked them that go by the way? and do ye not know their tokens,

Job 21:30 That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.

The literal Hebrew is, “Have you not asked those who go along the highway? Do you not recognize their signs, that the wicked [one] is reserved for the day of wrath?” This was a form of sarcasm by Job with regard to the previous reasoning of the three comforters, who said that the wicked can be discerned when they are punished with ill health or judgment. Job was saying that their arguments were not as logical as they thought. The comforters may have had a reputation for wisdom, but Job said, “Ask any man in the street, and he will tell you what I am telling you. It is common knowledge that the wicked, relatively speaking, seem to prosper in the present life. Can you not read the signs as you go along the street?” In summing up, Job said that when all was said and done, the comforters’ argument was not very powerful, and even the man in the street could see that it was not pertinent to Job’s situation.

Q: Was Job also implying that a day of judgment is coming? He had said, “I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth” (Job 19:25).

A: Yes, many people instinctively feel that some kind of judgment awaits a person at death. There may be varied ideas of the nature of that judgment, but generally speaking, the thought is international that the way one lives in the present life will receive judgment after death. And Job included that thought here—that some form of judgment or wrath awaits the wicked.

Job pictures the experiences of, particularly, the Church down through the Gospel Age. Not only does he represent the Church class and their experience at the hands of those who are nominally their friends, but down through the age, most of the consecrated have not known that it was God’s design for the Church to be developed by false accusations and persecutions. The Gospel Age has been set aside to call out a Church class that has been tried and proven.

Job 21:31 Who shall declare his way to his face? and who shall repay him what he hath done?

Verse 31 can be rephrased as a statement, which seems to better fit the concept of judgment waiting beyond the grave that will be made known to the individual. The thought is, “His way shall be declared to his face, and he shall be repaid for what he has done.”

Job 21:32 Yet shall he be brought to the grave, and shall remain in the tomb.

Job 21:33 The clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him, and every man shall draw after him, as there are innumerable before him.

Job was reverting back to his previous reasoning about a good individual and a wicked

individual. When a person dies, he is usually buried in a pleasant plot with lush grass. Today the grass in a cemetery is mowed and manicured, and shrubbery and even sweet clover are present. Job was telling the story of mankind. Both the wicked and the good die and are buried in a cemetery, a sleeping ground, as it were. Innumerable people had already died. Then along came the two individuals Job was referring to—one wicked and one good—and they were buried in a pleasant, peaceful, quiet place that was reserved for the dead.

Job 21:34 How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing in your answers there remaineth falsehood?

For the last half of verse 34, the NIV reads, “Nothing is left of your answers but falsehood!” Job was saying that the arguments of the three comforters not only did not ring true but were empty and did not even sound logical. In other words, while the comforters’ initial motive was to help and comfort Job, their argument did the opposite in the final analysis. Instead of comforting Job, they tried to find fault and get him to reveal some supposed secret sin or wrongdoing. Their motive changed from wanting to help to one of anger and distress because Job would not admit wrongdoing.

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

Job 22:2 Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself?

Eliphaz began his third round of criticism with a question and a statement rather than one long question: “Can a man be useful [of benefit] to God? He that is wise can be useful [beneficial] to himself [through self-criticism or self-analysis].” The word “as,” supplied by the translators, should be omitted.

Job 22:3 Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?

Job had been protesting his innocence all along.

Comment: Verse 3 shows Eliphaz’s lack of understanding because God does take pleasure in the righteous.

Reply: Yes, Eliphaz was garbling his own reasoning and using sarcasm.

Job 22:4 Will he reprove thee for fear of thee? will he enter with thee into judgment?

Comment: The NIV reads, “Is it for your piety that he rebukes you and brings charges against you?” The comforters were still faulting Job for claiming no wrongdoing.

Reply: Yes, “fear” can mean reverence. The thought is, “Will God reprove you for your reverence [piety]?”

Job 22:5 Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite?

What a terrible accusation! Up to this point, Eliphaz used inference and questions, but now he openly accused in anger. We are reminded of Zophar’s previous coarse, rude remarks. It is interesting to see how quickly their attitude and motives could change. Apparently, Eliphaz had good intentions originally, for he started his questioning in a relatively delicate manner. In his second round, he got stronger, and now he was out of control emotionally. Of the three comforters, Eliphaz was given more respect for wisdom and leadership, but just as his

intentions changed, so can ours if we are not careful. Motives, intentions, purposes, principles, and standards can deteriorate if we do not guard our hearts with all diligence. “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Prov. 4:23).

Job 22:6 For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing.

Job 22:7 Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry.

Job 22:8 But as for the mighty man, he had the earth; and the honourable man dwelt in it.

Job 22:9 Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken.

How startling these verses are! The words of Eliphaz were all assumptions, but he stated them as if they were facts; that is, he fabricated the entire scenario. Imagine how Job felt having these charges laid before him when he was already sick and afflicted!

The “mighty man” of verse 8 was a reference to Job. Previously he had a great reputation, being renowned, established, and respected. For verses 7 and 8, the NIV reads, “You gave no water to the weary and you withheld food from the hungry, though you were a powerful man, owning land—an honored man, living on it.”

Job 22:10 Therefore snares are round about thee, and sudden fear troubleth thee;

Comment: Eliphaz was saying that Job’s guilty conscience was troubling him.

Reply: Eliphaz used this same line of reasoning earlier when Job confessed to the comforters that in addition to his physical sufferings, he was having nightmares and disturbing dreams. Eliphaz attributed the dreams to a guilty conscience.

In saying to Job, “Therefore snares are round about thee,” Eliphaz meant, “Your past misdeeds have been accumulating, and now, finally, they have burst forth into view for all to see how guilty you are.”

Job 22:11 Or darkness, that thou canst not see; and abundance of waters cover thee.

Comment: We are reminded of Jesus’ statement in Matthew 6:23, “If therefore the light that is in thee be[come] darkness, how great is that darkness!” Of course Jesus was referring to one who was unfaithful, whereas Eliphaz misapplied the words, saying Job was so overwhelmed by his experience that he could not think straight.

Job 22:12 Is not God in the height of heaven? and behold the height of the stars, how high they are!

Job 22:13 And thou sayest, How doth God know? can he judge through the dark cloud?

Comment: Eliphaz was saying, “Do you think God does not see what is happening just because He is in the heights of heaven?”

Reply: Yes, and of course Job had said he wanted to know the reason for his sufferings, but he was having difficulty getting a response from God. We sing a hymn about not wanting an earthborn cloud to come between us and the Lord. Some brethren have seasons when they

sense their prayers are not getting through for one reason or another. Eliphaz was saying, “Job, there is a reason why you are not having the communication you so earnestly desire.”

Comment: David wrote, “Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me” (Psa. 69:1,2).

Reply: The principle is the same, for David was misunderstood like Job. Brethren may have a similar experience, desiring a closer walk with the Lord, whatever the case might be.

Job 22:14 Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not; and he walketh in the circuit of heaven.

Eliphaz had just said, “Can a man be profitable unto God...? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous?” (Job 22:2,3). With such statements and questions, Eliphaz was bordering on infidelism. An infidel believes in God but thinks God is so great that He is not interested in His subjects. The reasoning of Eliphaz was beginning to get muddled and contradictory. He was employing all kinds of tactics to make Job cringe and confess to wrongdoing. By using stronger language, he was no longer being the diplomat but would speak what was, in his estimation, the blunt truth.

Q: Was the anger of Eliphaz getting more and more out of control? It seemed to be increasing, as manifested by his words.

A: Yes. He had lost the reserve he would normally have as a reputed wise man from Teman. He was exasperated by Job’s continually professing to know of nothing that would merit his sufferings. Job felt his calamities were not commensurate with the type of life he had previously led and honestly pursued. Later Job told in more detail why he felt he was innocent.

Job 22:15 Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden?

Job 22:16 Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood:

Comment: Eliphaz reverted back to the theme that the wicked get punished in the present life.

Comment: He was talking about conditions prior to the Flood.

Reply: Yes, both comments are pertinent. Eliphaz was saying that the wicked suffer like Job and that God’s righteous indignation was manifested when the Flood purged the human race.

Job 22:17 Which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them?

Eliphaz was replying to a previous remark by Job: “Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?” (Job 21:14,15). Here is an example of the remarkable memory cultivated by people of old, although of course in some instances, memory was miraculously preserved for recording in Holy Writ. Nevertheless, people of old were trained to remember. In contrast, our recall is usually poor. Each of the comforters referred to what Job had previously said and extracted particular points to emphasize.

In short, Eliphaz was turning the remarks back on Job. He was saying, “Job, you are convicted by your own words about the wicked and their attitude.”

Job 22:18 Yet he filled their houses with good things: but the counsel of the wicked is far

from me.

Eliphaz continued to refer to Job's previous words: "Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them [the wicked]" (Job 21:9). In one statement, Eliphaz had said that Job would have to eat his own words, and now he contradicted himself again. In other words, Eliphaz was flustered and was losing his balance.

Job 22:19 The righteous see it, and are glad: and the innocent laugh them to scorn.

Job 22:20 Whereas our substance is not cut down, but the remnant of them the fire consumeth.

Eliphaz referred to himself and the other two comforters as "the righteous ... and the innocent" who laugh the wicked to scorn. The situation is analogous to the Pharisee who said of the publican, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican" (Luke 18:11). The Pharisee claimed he was righteous, and so did the comforters.

Comment: The NIV supports the reasoning presented: "... so I [Eliphaz] stand aloof from the counsel of the wicked. The righteous see their ruin and rejoice; the innocent mock them, saying, Surely our foes are destroyed, and fire devours their wealth" (Job 22:18-20).

Eliphaz was saying, "We three comforters are not in the situation of the wicked whose substance is cut down. Job, if the shoe fits, put it on. You are the one having the experience, and the reason for your affliction and discomfiture is obvious to us. The sins of your past have caught up with you, and you are reaping the fruits of your previous labors. We can so testify, for look at our prosperity. Your situation, Job, is the lot of the wicked."

Q: How did "the innocent laugh them to scorn"?

A: Some laughed Jesus to scorn while he was hanging on the Cross. The term refers to the height of sarcasm, and sarcasm brought to a peak was a more powerful way of penetrating the one they wanted to hurt.

Job 22:21 Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee.

Now Eliphaz started to give what he considered to be constructive advice: "Job, come to your senses. If you acquaint yourself with God and become at peace by this change of demeanor, good shall thereby come to you."

Job 22:22 Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart.

Eliphaz told Job to accept instructions from God's counsel and lay up God's words in his heart.

Job 22:23 If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles.

Comment: Eliphaz was saying that if Job repented and returned to God, his previous riches and former estate would be returned to him.

According to the Hebrew, the word "tabernacles" can be either singular or plural. The thought is that wherever Job would dwell, iniquity was to be far from him.

Job 22:24 Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks.

Job 22:25 Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver.

If Job repented, acknowledged his wrong, changed his behavior, and obeyed the instruction of the Creator, he would end up better off than previously, for he would be storing up treasure.

Comment: Starting with verse 23, the NIV reads, “If you remove wickedness far from your tent and assign your nuggets to the dust, your gold of Ophir to the rocks in the ravines, then the Almighty will be your gold, the choicest silver for you.” Eliphaz was implying that Job’s riches were ill-gotten, so if he disposed of them and returned to God, he would be back in favor with even greater riches.

Reply: The NIV seems to have the superior thought. The gold of the Almighty would be better than the gold of Ophir; that is, Job would be better off than previously.

Job 22:26 For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God.

Job 22:27 Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows.

Eliphaz was saying that because Job was far from God to start with, his prayers were not heard. However, if Job would draw near to the Almighty, his prayers would be heard, and his vows, instead of being mere professions, would be realities. If Job would hear and obey God’s instruction and word, he would fulfill his commitments.

Comment: Eliphaz was telling Job in verse 23, “If you will just return to the Almighty, all of your troubles will be over.” The feet members will have this experience at the very end of the age. The nominal Christian world will wrongly accuse them particularly along the lines of the Trinity. God knows the hearts of all who will be involved at that time.

Reply: Job is a picture of The Christ down through the Gospel Age, and ultimately the feet members will have this experience. However, at the end of the Book of Job, the tables were reversed, and God vindicated Job, turning the very arguments of the comforters against them.

Comment: Eliphaz began this round of criticism with nastiness to break down and crush Job. Now he used another method of crushing by seemingly acting so noble, but all the while he implied that Job had grievously sinned.

Reply: Eliphaz lost his cool for a moment but was now reverting to his earlier method of proffering criticism.

Job 22:28 Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee: and the light shall shine upon thy ways.

If Job followed the advice of Eliphaz and returned to the Almighty by confessing, humbling himself, and obeying God’s instruction, then his statements would match his heart condition and have a true ring.

Job 22:29 When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up; and he shall save the humble person.

In other words, “Job, by contrition on your part and with this experience under your belt, you will be a better person in the future, for you will be able to comfort the poor and the needy. Having had this experience in your own life, you can give wise counsel.” But the reasoning of Eliphaz was predicated upon Job’s having supposedly sinned. While certain statements of Eliphaz were true, they were mixed with much error.

Job 22:30 He shall deliver the island of the innocent: and it is delivered by the pureness of thine hands.

The word “not” is in the Hebrew. Eliphaz was saying, “You are not innocent, Job. If God forgives you by your change of heart and attitude and your submission to Him, you will then be able to instruct those who are also in need of help, not being innocent. If you obey the counsel I am giving you and take it to heart, you will then be able to assist others.” At the same time, Eliphaz was boosting himself.

Job 23:1 Then Job answered and said,

Job 23:2 Even today is my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning.

Comment: If all of these conversational rounds transpired in the same day, as has been suggested, it is interesting that chapter 23 starts out as if Job was not even paying attention to what Eliphaz had just said. Job had heard enough from the three comforters, and he was gaining strength.

Reply: The reasoning will come to a natural conclusion shortly because the three will keep quiet out of exhaustion. Meanwhile, Job was getting stronger all the time. “Even today” may imply that a break for temporal refreshment occurred between chapters 22 and 23, that is, before the remaining part of the Book of Job took place on that same day.

“Stroke” is rendered “hand” in the King James margin. Job was putting a heavy hand on his groaning from what, in reality, he was experiencing. He was having difficulty controlling his remarks and keeping them in check lest they be expressed in a stronger way. The three comforters thought Job was complaining, but Job was saying, “I am exercising all my strength to minimize my groaning. My afflictions are much more severe than my utterances would indicate.”

Comment: Great pain can be beyond explanation; it can be more extreme than what words would convey.

Comment: A translation called God’s Word renders verses 2-4 as follows: “My complaint is bitter again today; I try hard to control my sighing. If only I knew where I could find God, I would go where he lives. I would present my case to him. I would have a mouthful of arguments.”

Job 23:3 Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!

Job used barrister language as in a legal case. In trying multiple methods to get God to explain the reasons for his sufferings, Job expressed the desire to go closer to the Judge (God). Today we have the advantage of hindsight because we know the outcome of Job’s experiences. We were also given insight at the beginning of the book to realize that God was permitting these calamities in order to prove to Satan the integrity of Job. Without this information, we would wonder, as Job did, why God was silent. Job knew his own personal integrity and what he had done for the Lord. He knew he was an obedient, praying man who, all his life, had tried to live according to divine principles.

Job 23:4 I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.

Again we think of a lawyer and a trial setting. Job's case was a matter of guilt or innocence. Being on trial before the three comforters, he was trying to plead his own integrity. He felt that his sufferings were not proportional to the life he previously led. As we proceed, we will see what a truly marvelous character he was. In fact, his life is exemplary to us as Christians.

Job 23:5 I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me.

Job felt God had a reason for permitting the suffering experiences, but what was it? Since he had made vows to God and, to all intents and purposes in searching his heart, could not see where he had violated his commitments, he could not fathom why he was being afflicted. Under this excruciating experience and emotional stress, it was hard for Job to speak in an orderly fashion and to plead his cause with a cool, dispassionate argument. Although he got a little out of hand here and there, his intent and will were perfect. He had the integrity of a truly righteous man.

Job 23:6 Will he plead against me with his great power? No; but he would put strength in me.

Job 23:7 There the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered for ever from my judge.

Behind all his sufferings, Job trusted that God had a reason, even though he could not fathom that reason. Job desperately wanted information, and God did grant that request, as we will see toward the end of the book. For God to give a discourse that lasted for several chapters—and not just for several verses—was most unusual. When we consider the Bible as a whole, only in the Book of Job did God speak at length, and we are privileged to listen to those words of the Almighty. In antitype, God was confiding valuable information to the Christian Church.

Comment: In the God's Word translation, verse 6 reads, "Would he sue me and hide behind great legal maneuvers? No, he certainly would press charges against me."

Reply: Yes, and the implication is, "If that were the case."

Comment: The NIV has the opposite thought for the end of the verse: "No, he would not press charges against me."

Reply: Both versions are really saying the same thing if the reasoning is properly understood. Job was desperately trying all kinds of maneuvers to get Almighty God to hearken and reply.

Comment: Verse 6 in the King James seems to have a different slant. Knowing the power of God, Job was saying that if God should grant him the opportunity to plead his cause, he would also be given the strength to face his Maker. Otherwise, Job would be no match.

Reply: If God granted Job his request and spoke to him, the answer would be positive, and Job could rest. He would be delivered from the experience in knowing the reason for it. If Job understood why God had allowed the experience to come upon him, he would be satisfied. He knew that God was superior in understanding, so if God felt Job should have the experience, so be it—but Job wanted to know the reason.

With all of his complaints, Job inherently felt that God was more just and more loving, but he

could not understand the reason for his experiences. He felt the answer required a superior mind, and Job was almost teasing God to respond to his request for a hearing. Job was not saying God would remove the experience, but if God would give him the reason, he would be satisfied, for his Maker knew what He was doing. Job's experience was difficult not just because of the physical and mental affliction but also because of his not knowing the reason for it.

Comment: For verses 6 and 7, the American Revised reads, "Would he contend with me by the greatness of his power? No, surely he would pay attention to me. There the upright would reason with him and I would be delivered forever from my judge."

Reply: Job expected to be delivered not from his pain but from the judgment. He could see that the righteous suffer, and he was willing to suffer with them, but the bottom line was that he wanted to know the reason why. He saw the wicked prosper and the righteous seemingly not prosper, but he had faith that there was a reason and that somehow the situation would be reversed. Of course the reason, which Job could not fathom, was the temporary permission of evil.

Comment: As verse 10 shows, Job could see the glorious outcome: "I shall come forth as gold."

Reply: Job knew his integrity, and he was trying desperately to have his case recognized.

Job 23:8 Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him:

Job 23:9 On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him:

Job 23:10 But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

Job gave credit to God when everything seemed to discredit Him. He would not give up his vows because of the experience he was having.

Comment: The Tanach and the NIV use east, west, north, and south instead of forward, backward, on the left hand, and on the right hand.

Reply: The Hebrew reasoning is oriented to the different points of the compass, and Job was saying this inferentially. However, in his personal trauma and experience, he was thinking more of forward, backward, on the left, and on the right.

Comment: Job's experiences picture those of martyrs in the Middle Ages who died for their faith. At the time, they wondered why and also where God was, but they will know in the future, as all will know.

Reply: At this end of the age, we are mightily blessed with hindsight, whereas the bulk of Christians down through the age did not have this benefit. Paul saw the matter clearly, and so did John in the Book of Revelation, but Christians did not have the whole Bible for many centuries. Having only fragments of Scriptures, they were faithful with the little understanding they had. Not being required to have the knowledge that is available today, they were tried severely on principle. In fact, that is one reason why it is taking so long to complete the Little Flock. In spite of all the knowledge we have today, principles are being forgotten. We are more apt to be thinking of the mind than of the spirit. Even with this knowledge, the ratio of the Little Flock is disproportionate. Generally speaking, the Gospel Age can be divided into three periods: (1) the first two stages of the Church, (2) the Harvest, and (3) the in-between period covering more than a thousand years.

Verse 10 is self-explanatory. When we study the final discourse of Job, we will see why he said he would come forth as gold.

Job 23:11 My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined.

Comment: Because Job's foot held God's steps, because Job kept God's way and did not decline, he would be vindicated and come forth as gold.

Reply: Yes. When we find out all the details of what Job did in his life, we will stand in awe of him. Some of his comments will make us ask, "Am I doing what Job did?" His vows were very circumspect, and this verse is one tidbit of information. Job was explaining that he had been faithful to his personal vows in the past, and he was professing his innocence. Very early in the book, we got a little clue or insight when he said he prayed daily for his family, especially at times of festivities, that they would not go astray.

Comment: A cross-reference is James 1:12, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

Reply: Of course the "crown of life" in the Gospel Age is the divine nature, but back in Job's day, that was not the case as far as we know. When we consider some of the Ancient Worthies, we are in awe of their faithfulness. For instance, from the standpoint of both knowledge and principle, the only Christian we could compare Moses to would be the Apostle Paul.

Comment: Perhaps in the final analysis, after the Kingdom, the Ancient Worthies will get the divine nature.

Reply: We have felt in the past that in spite of pictures in the Old Testament showing the gateway to the east being closed forever to the high calling, perhaps the thought is that no one will ever get the divine nature in other creations of the universe. With the human family on planet Earth, there is the possibility that Moses and Job will get the divine nature—but much later than just at the end of the Kingdom Age. Of course, these thoughts are speculation.

Job 23:12 Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

Comment: Job was replying to the words Eliphaz used in chapter 22 to admonish him: "Receive, I pray thee, the law from his [God's] mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart.... Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks" (Job 22:22,24). Job used the word "gold" to put the proper perspective on his integrity (Job 23:10).

Reply: Yes, with their retentive memories, the three comforters and Job kept referring back to words previously uttered. Their memories were marvelously developed through necessity. As the saying goes, "Necessity is the mother of invention."

Job 23:13 But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.

Verse 13 should be considered in a positive way. "God has one frame of thinking, and who can turn him? What His soul desires, that He does." Job was saying God had a reason for what He was doing, even though it was not understood. Whatever He purposes is fulfilled; whatever goes out of His mouth does not return to Him void (Isa. 55:8-11). As the heavens are higher than the earth, so God's thoughts are higher than man's thoughts. Nevertheless, Job still

wanted to know the reason for his affliction.

Incidentally, when God said that His thoughts are as high as the heavens above the earth, He was referring not to *earth's* sun and moon but to the *universal* stars. Infidels feel that God is so majestic and elevated in His thinking that He does not give a second thought to anyone down here. Because He is on such a high plane, they think He is remote and not that concerned.

Job 23:14 For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him.

Job 23:15 Therefore am I troubled at his presence: when I consider, I am afraid of him.

Verse 14 is true. God does what He wants, and so be it! As the Creator, He does things in His own way. In verse 15, Job was expressing reverential awe. For instance, the greatness of Jehovah is shown in the heavens, which are mind-boggling.

Job 23:16 For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me:

Comment: God made Job's heart "faint" according to the NIV, and Rotherham uses "timid."

Comment: *Strong's Concordance* defines the word as "to soften," which is a nice thought, for experiences do soften our hearts.

Reply: The thought of "soften" in the King James is also appropriate and true of the Christian experience. Real persecutions faithfully endured have a mellowing or softening effect in one sense and a crystallizing, hardening, and steeling effect in another sense; that is, the same experience, rightly received, has a dual effect. All of the thoughts are good: faint, timid, soft, tender, and weak in our own estimation.

Job 23:17 Because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither hath he covered the darkness from my face.

Comment: The American Revised reads, "And the Almighty has dismayed me, but I am not silenced by the darkness, nor the deep gloom which covers me."

Reply: Job was saying, "I am not dismayed because of the darkness, nor because thick darkness covers my face."

When Jesus cried out on the Cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" the crucifixion experience led to the rupturing of his heart, but just before that happened, he gave a shout of victory with a strong voice: "It is finished!" Job felt he had been faithful in spite of all that had happened, even though he could not give a rational explanation, especially to the comforters. He did not have an explicit answer, but he was saying, "Nevertheless, at heart, I will be vindicated somehow and somewhere."

Job 24:1 Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days?

Subsequent verses tell why Job made this plea in verse 1. The King James Version carries the correct thought, but the language and grammar of the year 1611 are quite unfamiliar to most of us. The NIV, which is clearer, reads, "Why does the Almighty not set times for judgment? Why must those who know him look in vain for such days?"

Although Job did not understand the permission of evil, he knew it existed. Now he wanted to

know why God had not set some boundary or time limit for the evil to be stopped. Similarly, Daniel wanted to know times and seasons regarding the future, and God answered his plea in part. Job had the same disposition but was not afforded the information because it was not yet the due time for the permission of evil to be thoroughly understood. Relatively speaking, that lack of understanding continued right on through the Old Testament, and even the last book, Malachi, talks about how the wicked flourished. However, by that time, it was known that there would be a future happy ending. The New Testament tells that men of old, as well as the holy angels, earnestly desired to know times and seasons, but they had to wait because the information was not due until the Gospel Age. Jesus brought to light not only life and immortality but also answers to many of these questions. And the Apostle Paul was permitted to expound on the permission of evil and the times and seasons in considerable depth.

Incidentally, Malachi is an interesting book. Because the time of the writing cannot be located specifically, the book is mysterious. Usually the origin is considered to be shortly after Nehemiah, but it could be later, just four centuries before the First Advent.

From verse 2 on, we will see why Job was so discomfited with conditions that existed in the world's society. Instead of focusing on his own situation and problems—his dreams, sickness, and pitiful condition—Job was now thinking about the world and particularly the unjust circumstances. Thus we can see that he was getting stronger as time went on. Eventually the comforters would realize that there was no more use in trying to change Job's mind. From their perspective, they thought he was too obstinate in his thinking.

Job 24:2 Some remove the landmarks; they violently take away flocks, and feed thereof.

“For landmarks,” the NIV has “boundary stones.” The stones that marked property lines were illegally moved. In addition, the wicked rustled livestock.

Comment: Job's flocks were stolen by the Sabeans; thus he was describing his own experience.

Job 24:3 They drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow's ox for a pledge.

The wicked took advantage of both the orphan and the widow. In what way did they take away the widow's ox for a pledge?

Comment: Immediate payment was demanded of widows for any debts that remained, even to the point of forcing them to give up their only source of livelihood or food. The Roman Catholic Church has been guilty of this evil practice in the past, as testified in the book *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome*.

Reply: The wicked did not care about the widow who was left destitute.

Job 24:4 They turn the needy out of the way: the poor of the earth hide themselves together.

Verse 4 continues the same theme. The wicked thrust the needy from the path. Beggars, who were so destitute that they had to resort to utmost humiliation just to get food, were brushed aside without consideration by those who had means, goods, and a surplus.

Q: With regard to the clause “The poor of the earth hide themselves together,” did the poor hide themselves because of the cruelty of the wicked?

A: Yes. Possibly the poor sought refuge by dwelling in caves, bringing their meager possessions with them. Not only were the poor liable to servitude, but what little they had was plundered.

Job 24:5 Behold, as wild asses in the desert, go they forth to their work; rising betimes for a prey: the wilderness yieldeth food for them and for their children.

Because of their acts, the wicked could be likened to wild asses. For example, they were uncontrolled and lawless, they did not obey boundaries or rules, and they foraged for food wherever they found it. The poor suffered loss because they had no means of prohibiting the unrighteous from foraging in their fields.

It is helpful, as already mentioned, to also view some of these verses from the standpoint of the poor. The poor had to labor and scrounge for food for their children, whereas the wicked plundered to feed their children.

The unrighteous, likened to wild asses, not only plundered the poor but also ate the grain before it reached maturity. Literal wild asses were content to eat the stalks prematurely, thus ruining the crops. In the vineyard, the conduct of the wicked was similar in that they destroyed the vines.

Comment: The NIV considers many of these verses from the standpoint of the poor. Verses 5-7 read, "Like wild donkeys in the desert, the poor go about their labor of foraging food; the wasteland provides food for their children. They gather fodder in the fields and glean in the vineyards of the wicked. Lacking clothes, they spend the night naked; they have nothing to cover themselves in the cold."

Reply: The NIV continues along that line, but the original Hebrew does not give that thought, so the verses can be rendered from the standpoint of what the wicked are doing. The NIV gives the objective slant, and the King James has the subjective slant. Both are beneficial in conveying lessons, one from the standpoint of the effects upon the poor and the other from the standpoint of despoiling the poor. In other words, Job wondered why God was not telling when He would stop the deeds of the wicked. Job was observing the permission of evil in society and knew that God would not tolerate these conditions forever, but when would it end? Also, in speaking audibly, Job was trying to get God to answer him, but the Almighty was silent throughout the entire book until near the end.

Job 24:6 They reap every one his corn in the field: and they gather the vintage of the wicked.

Verses 6-10 can be taken both ways: from the standpoint of either the wicked or the poor. However, the perspective of the effect on the poor seems preferable.

Although Job could not understand the *reason* for the permission of evil, he felt evil was *permitted* and not sanctioned. For one thing, he did not know that God was developing godly classes: the Ancient Worthies in Old Testament times and the Church in the Gospel Age. All need to be tried and proven. And he did not know that the permission of evil is an object lesson for all posterity generated in the limitless future throughout the universe. Other creations on other planets will look back to the history of the permission of evil on earth. As a result, they will not want to be tempted with the unknown quantity as Eve was. When she saw the wise serpent eat of the forbidden fruit and not get punished, she thought the fruit was desirable. That temptation will not exist beyond the Kingdom Age.

Comment: The verses seem to alternate: verse 6 being the poor, verse 7 the wicked, verse 8 the poor, and verses 9 and 10 the wicked.

Reply: When we read the English, the perspective seems to switch but not in the Hebrew. In

any event, it is profitable to see that in the permission of evil, the poor suffer and the wicked seem to prosper. Both slants can be taken. In English, the order is usually subject, verb, and object, but with foreign languages, the progression is often different. King James translators tried to literalize the original Hebrew as far as possible, whereas modern versions take liberties in giving their own slant. Sometimes the liberties are beneficial and sometimes not.

Job 24:7 They cause the naked to lodge without clothing, that they have no covering in the cold.

The wicked caused the poor to lodge without clothing in the cold.

Job 24:8 They are wet with the showers of the mountains, and embrace the rock for want of a shelter.

Without adequate clothing, the poor were wet. Even though verse 8 tells about what the poor were suffering, Job's slant was that God has allowed the wicked to suffer with no end in sight. It was a cause-and-effect situation, but Job was most disturbed about the causal part.

Job 24:9 They pluck the fatherless from the breast, and take a pledge of the poor.

In wanting to make sure a debt was paid, the wealthy repossessed, or took away, whatever the poor had—goods or money. They took the most prized possession and did not give it back until the debt, usually of a lesser value, was paid. The wicked did not lose!

Comment: The wealthy are within their legal rights to repossess to satisfy a debt, but repossession is not in harmony with the spirit of mercy. Thus a person can legally do something and still be wicked.

Q: With the point about plucking the fatherless from the breast and taking a pledge from the poor, could the pledge be a child? The wicked sometimes took a child, a prized possession, as a pledge because the poor had nothing—they had no clothing, shelter, or animals.

A: Yes, that could very well be, as the NIV states.

Job 24:10 They cause him to go naked without clothing, and they take away the sheaf from the hungry;

Comment: Chapter 24 began with the question “Why does the Almighty not set times for judgment?” Then various oppressive conditions were mentioned. James 5:1-5 tells of the dispensational judgment coming upon the wealthy in the near future: “Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.”

Job 24:11 Which make oil within their walls, and tread their winepresses, and suffer thirst.

Comment: The poor were doing the laborious or servile work, yet they thirsted because they were not adequately compensated.

Reply: The wicked employed the poor but did not reward them with water and food.

However, like some of the earlier verses, verse 11 can be given both slants. This philosophical treatise can be spun in different ways, as long as the principles Job was espousing are not violated.

Comment: Job was still trying to refute the comforters' comments about his supposed wickedness. He was trying to show that God did not necessarily punish the wicked.

Reply: Job might have been hinting about the comforters' own prosperity. Earlier one of them had said, "Look at us. We are at ease. We are not suffering like you, Job. God rewards the righteous." In one case, the comforters contrasted themselves with Job's condition. From that standpoint, the whole scenario of chapters 23 and 24 may have been not only Job's observation of the world at large but also a reflection on the comforters, who had initially come with their goodies to help Job.

Comment: Job was pointing out, "What did the poor do to merit such suffering? You comforters are implying that I did something evil to receive such affliction, but your reasoning does not square with what is happening all around you. Otherwise, the rich, with their plenty, would be righteous, and the poor would be receiving punishment for their evil ways."

Comment: Jesus said, "For ye have the poor always with you [that is, until the Kingdom]" (Matt. 26:11). His words help us understand what Job was trying to say. There were the poor in his day, and there are the poor in our day.

Reply: When the human race is tried and proven in the Kingdom, the poor will benefit more than the wealthy because, like Mary Magdalene, they will be so thankful for what they receive. In being denied a crumb of favor for a period of time, the importunate widow appreciated its receipt more than if it had been given instantaneously.

Comment: Psalm 73:11-14 is pertinent. "And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High? Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning." The permission of evil was not understood.

Job 24:12 Men groan from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded crieth out: yet God layeth not folly to them.

The first part of verse 12 is difficult to understand: "Men groan from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded crieth out." The intent seems to be that men groan from out of the slum, the poverty area of the city. This interpretation would fit the theme of chapter 24, which has been telling the cause and effect of the rich, the wicked, the proud, etc., with their money, wealth, and pleasure, upon the deprived majority of the people, the poor masses.

Job 24:13 They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof.

Verse 13 and following verses center on the workings of the wicked, characterizing their traits.

Job 24:14 The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief.

Some versions state that the murderer arises when the day (or daylight) is gone, whereas in the King James, the murderer arises with the light and does his work in daylight hours. The King James seems to be correct. Modern translators are influenced by what happens in today's

society with its different types of conveniences. For example, people who go to bars and discos at nighttime can identify their victims with flashlights and electric lighting, and most crimes take place in the evening. However, that was not true in olden times and in rural societies.

The wicked one “in the night is as a thief.” In both ancient and modern times, a thief does his work at night. Not wanting his presence known, he works in the dark.

Comment: Micah 2:1 reads, “Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand.”

Job 24:15 The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me: and disguiseth his face.

“Twilight” is dusk, evening.

Job 24:16 In the dark they dig through houses, which they had marked for themselves in the daytime: they know not the light.

Comment: Job seems to be intertwining the word “light” between light of conscience and physical light.

Reply: Yes, that is an interesting observation. Those who are philosophical have that frame of mind or interplay.

Comment: Verse 16 reads as follows in the NIV: “In the dark men break into houses, but by day they shut themselves in; they want nothing to do with the light.”

These verses describe people who are habitually wicked—those who are wicked by nature and practice—and not a person who commits one particular deed. The wicked premeditate and plan what they will do. Houses back there were generally made of mud bricks, so they were relatively easy to enter.

Job 24:17 For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death: if one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death.

Comment: With the wicked, the reverse is true. Normally, the shadow is darkness, but to the wicked, light is the shadow because it exposes them.

Reply: Yes, with the wicked, darkness hates the light, but with the upright, light hates the darkness.

Comment: The RSV reads, “For deep darkness is morning to all of them; for they are friends with the terrors of deep darkness.”

Q: Was Job still mentioning wickedness to show the three comforters that it was not being punished?

A: Yes, but verses 18-24 will be a radical change.

Job 24:18 He is swift as the waters; their portion is cursed in the earth: he beholdeth not the way of the vineyards.

Some translations use the pronoun “they” instead of “he” in verse 18. There are two types of difficulties in understanding this verse: the way it is expressed and the change in viewpoint. The

Revised Standard captures the thought by adding the words “You say.” In other words, “You [three comforters] say, ‘The wicked are like flotsam [or foam] that is swiftly carried away on the surface of the waters; their portion of land is cursed, so that no treader goes into their vineyards.’”

In verse 18, Job was starting to answer the line of reasoning which said that the wicked are judged in the present life. According to the comforters, the wicked are carried away swiftly by the current and punished because God is angry with them.

Earlier Bildad had said, “While yet in flower and not cut down, they [the wicked] wither before any other plant. Such are the paths of all who forget God; the hope of the godless man shall perish. His confidence breaks in sunder, and his trust is [as] a spider’s web” (Job 8:12-14 RSV). In other words, the judgment, destiny, and punishment of the wicked happened quickly. While the wicked were seemingly flowering (prospering), God’s judgment came suddenly upon them and was quite apparent. But Job’s reasoning was exactly the opposite—he contended that the wicked prospered. They seemed to have a long life of relative ease and did not die a horrible death. God did not seem to be inflicting any obvious judgment on them.

But now, starting with verse 18, Job used the argument of the three comforters. He gave the thought that the judgment of the wicked is quick. How would Job have indicated that these statements were not his personal thinking but the thinking of the comforters? One way would be to gesticulate, such as shaking the head or pointing a finger or the palm of the hand toward the comforters to convey the thought, “This is what *you* say.” The content supports the rendering of the RSV and certain other translations in that Job was mimicking the comforters and using sarcasm. He summed up the thinking of all three comforters in verses 18-24.

Job 24:19 Drought and heat consume the snow waters: so doth the grave those which have sinned.

The word translated “grave” is the Hebrew *sheol*. When the snow waters from Mount Hermon (or wherever) come in contact with the desert heat or drought conditions, they are summarily dissolved from snow to water. A swiftness of change was being shown here, and Job continued this theme. In fact, the Hebrew word rendered “consume” means to “snatch away.” In other words, “As heat and drought snatch away the melted snow, so *sheol* does the same to those who have sinned.” To repeat: this expression was not Job’s normal thinking.

Job 24:20 The womb shall forget him; the worm shall feed sweetly on him; he shall be no more remembered; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree.

While the womb forgets the wicked, the worm feasts on them. They are no more remembered, for wickedness is broken like a tree limb that is *suddenly* snapped asunder in a windstorm, or as snow is snatched away through *sudden* melting. The course of the wicked leads to eventual destruction. Job continued to present the reasoning of the comforters.

Job had been prospering, and suddenly one calamity occurred after another until he was bereft of all his goods, property, and children. In addition, sickness and physical suffering afflicted him. So pitiful was his state when the comforters arrived that they assumed he would die shortly. They felt their line of reasoning that Job must have sinned was logical, and his condition was their proof. In their estimation, sudden judgment had come after years of prosperity and prominence. They accused Job of being a crook, of not showing sympathy to the poor, of oppressing widows, etc., and seemingly getting away with the sins until God’s judgment suddenly came upon him. The three comforters were trying to justify their criticism, which seemed to be logical but did not harmonize with the facts of society, as Job tried to show. They reasoned that judgment was swift on the wicked, and therefore, judgment was a

proof of Job's wrongdoing.

Job 24:21 He evil entreateth the barren that beareth not: and doeth not good to the widow.

The wicked preyed on the barren, childless woman and the widow. Sudden judgment is not as apparent here, but one *suddenly* became a widow when her husband died.

Job 24:22 He draweth also the mighty with his power: he riseth up, and no man is sure of life.

Job was still giving the thinking of the comforters. They reasoned that God drew the mighty with His power, and when He rose up, no man could feel secure. Trembling, the individual awaited God's response. Of course all of this thinking was a reflection on Job, for the comforters felt he was guilty in spite of his continual protestations of innocence and integrity. He maintained that his heart intent and behavior were upright, but the comforters said, "Job, your sufferings contradict what you are telling us." The drawing (dragging) and the rising up showed a *suddenness* of movement.

Job 24:23 Though it be given him to be in safety, whereon he resteth; yet his eyes are upon their ways.

Though God might let the wicked rest in a feeling of security, His eyes were on their ways. The wicked would not get away with their evil.

Job 24:24 They are exalted for a little while, but are gone and brought low; they are taken out of the way as all other, and cut off as the tops of the ears of corn.

The wicked were exalted for a little while (a few years in Job's case) and then *suddenly* vanished, being brought low in death. They were gone like heads, or kernels, of grain that were cut off with a scythe or sickle. "Corn" refers to seed or to grain developed from the seed.

With this verse, Job ended his mimicking of the comforters' arguments. He was trying to show that their reasoning did not harmonize with reality. The wicked were not judged suddenly. Words of the Prophet Malachi contradict the arguments of the comforters in regard to sudden judgment: "And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered" (Mal. 3:15).

Job 24:25 And if it be not so now, who will make me a liar, and make my speech nothing worth?

In verse 25, Job summed up what he had been saying from verse 18 on: "Prove me wrong."

Comment: The NIV reads, "If this is not so, who can prove me false and reduce my words to nothing?" If the comforters' line of reasoning was not true, who could prove Job false and reduce his words to nothing?

Reply: Yes, who could reduce Job's previous line of reasoning? He was puzzled by the fact that many of the wicked seemed to live normal lives in spite of their evil deeds. After a life of ease with no special judgment of God against them, they sometimes even died in a rather comfortable manner. The comforters had used opposite reasoning, so Job was saying, "Prove me false if what I previously said does not make sense." Except for a short comment yet to come from Bildad, the comforters realized at this point that it was hopeless to continue their rebuttals to Job's reasoning.

As a review of chapter 24, verses 2-4 talk about the wicked. In verses 5-8, the subject matter is the poor. Verses 9 and 10 pertain to the wicked. Verses 11 and 12 refer to the poor. Then verses 13-16, plus verse 17 when properly revised, pertain to what the wicked were doing. From verse 18 on, there is a change of venue, the exception being verse 22. The wicked were swiftly carried away, snatched away, broken as a tree limb, showed no kindness to the widow whose husband suddenly died, were dragged away, and were cut off like heads of grain. Back-and-forth countermanding and opposing views were presented, but Job was the speaker throughout the entire chapter.

Comment: The same principle is shown by the rain falling on both the righteous and the unrighteous, and the same sun shines on both.

Reply: Yes, that is true when we view society.

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

Job 25:2 Dominion and fear are with him, he maketh peace in his high places.

Bildad began to speak again, saying, "Dominion and fear are with him [God]." In what sense does God make "peace in his high places"?

Comment: The NIV reads, "He establishes order in the heights of heaven."

Reply: That is the better thought because of verse 3 about God's "armies," which are called the "host" of heaven (Isa. 40:26).

Job 25:3 Is there any number of his armies? and upon whom doth not his light arise?

Comment: Bildad was implying that God's armies, the host of heaven, are numberless, yet God has names for all of the stars. Thus the heavens are finite from His standpoint but infinite from our perspective.

Reply: God's light, observation, and brilliance are awesome in their envelopment, and light is usually considered to be knowledge, understanding, awareness, etc. Nothing is hidden from, or escapes, His sight.

Job 25:4 How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?

Comment: Bildad was criticizing Job's attitude, saying that he could not be clean or justified before God.

"How can he be clean that is born of a woman?" From one standpoint, this thought is false, for Jesus was born of a woman, but from the standpoint of the human race, the statement is true.

Comment: Up to that time, no clean individual had been born of a woman.

Reply: Yes. Only one who came from an extraterrestrial source could be clean when born of a woman. Actually, Jesus' life was transferred, being reduced to a subatomic size, and not begotten in Mary's womb. When his life as the Logos was changed to that of a man in Mary's womb, there was no cessation of life, and of course her womb supplied food and nutrients until he was born.

Q: Is the thought that Jesus was not one of Mary's own eggs fertilized by the Holy Spirit?

A: That is correct, for his life was transferred in a change from spirit to human nature. Putting a camel through the eye of a needle would be somewhat the same principle.

Another aspect is that spirit beings can control a person. For example, a legion of fallen angels inhabited the demoniac up in the country of the Gadarenes (Luke 8:26-39). It was as if the fallen spirits put an electronic chip into his soul because those who were in his body were still in chains of darkness up above in *tartaroo*. They controlled the individual by a transmitter or remote control, as it were. And the fallen angels have other unusual powers because they can control the brain of a person they have a connection with. In summary, Jesus' birth in Mary was peculiarly singular, for the inhabiting of man by the fallen angels is along another line.

In the miniaturizing of Jesus from the Logos to Mary's womb, two miracles were performed. One miracle was the actual reduction in size. The other was that while the transfer was taking place—that is, at the same time—there was a change of nature from spirit to human.

Job 25:5 Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight.

Q: Was Bildad referring to the fact that the moon is reflected light?

A: That would be an indirect part of Bildad's reasoning. God has the capability to change things according to His wish. He can cloud the moon or let it shine. He can dim the stars or let them shine. Atmospheric conditions can interfere with the normal shining of both the moon and the stars. Such natural phenomena are under God's control at all times. The sun, moon, and stars are His servants.

Bildad's reasoning sounded like that of Eliphaz in one of his discourses. In running out of arguments for negating the claims and rebutting the reasoning of Job, the three comforters were becoming repetitive. The repetition happened also with Elihu, who spoke subsequently. He started out on a high plane of thinking but ended up with the same reasoning that the three comforters had used, although he did not get as nasty.

Job 25:6 How much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, which is a worm?

Comment: Verse 6 sounds like Jesus' words on the Cross (Psa. 22:6).

Reply: Having a perfect memory and recall, Jesus felt for a moment this experience that Bildad described; that is, Bildad's words flashed through Jesus' mind. Jesus had to be a curse and experience the nakedness, the exposure, and the shame of Adam. The Pastor emphasized the perfection of Jesus as the corresponding price for Adam, but a part of the price in paying the penalty that was upon the human race was to experience the curse because justice must have its eternal demand. For the curse to be removed from Adam and put on Jesus, it had to remain on him as a human being forever; that is, the price could not be paid and then taken back. Because justice had to be *eternally satisfied*, Jesus' humanity had to be sacrificed in both ways—as a perfect man and as a curse.

Jesus not only bore the *iniquity* of us all but gave *life* rights—a seemingly strange combination because of opposite meanings. Another Hebrew word with regard to an offering is similar in principle. *Cherem* means either “accursed” or “devoted” depending on context; it has a terrible meaning from one standpoint and a most holy meaning from another standpoint. “But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the *accursed* [*cherem*] thing: for Achan ... took of the *accursed* [*cherem*] thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel” (Josh. 7:1). “Notwithstanding no *devoted* thing [*cherem*], that a man shall devote unto the LORD of all that he hath, both of man and beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or

redeemed: every *devoted* thing [*cherem*] is most holy unto the LORD” (Lev. 27:28). In the first citation, the devoted thing was accursed.

The word “worm” is used twice in verse 6, and in each case, a different Hebrew word is used. Some translations use “maggot” for the first instance (Hebrew *rimmah*), and the second mention is more analogous to a worm as we know it.

Comment: The second Hebrew word is *tolaath*. That same Hebrew word is used in the Twenty-second Psalm, where Jesus’ words were prophetically recorded: “But I am a worm, and no man.” The blood of that type of worm was used to make a scarlet dye, and of course scarlet represents the Ransom.

Comment: The Hebrew Lexicon provides the following explanation of this kind of worm under the word *towlā*. “When the female of the scarlet worm species was ready to give birth to her young, she would attach her body to the trunk of a tree, fixing herself so firmly and permanently that she would never leave again. The eggs deposited beneath her body were thus protected until the larvae were hatched and able to enter their own life cycle. As the mother died, the crimson fluid stained her body and the surrounding wood. From the dead bodies of such female scarlet worms, the commercial scarlet dyes of antiquity were extracted. What a picture this gives of Christ dying on the tree, shedding his precious blood that he might bring many sons unto glory!”

Reply: That is a good comment. The word *towlā* is also *tolaath*, phonetically pronounced a different way in the Hebrew.

Job 26:1 But Job answered and said,

Job 26:2 How hast thou helped him that is without power? how savest thou the arm that hath no strength?

Comment: Job began to reply to Bildad with sarcasm, referring to himself. With all the noble-sounding thoughts, what help had the three comforters really given him?

Reply: The arguments of the three comforters were to no avail. They did not strengthen Job in his need for comfort.

Job 26:3 How hast thou counselled him that hath no wisdom? and how hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?

Job’s sarcastic humor was quite penetrating as he talked particularly to Bildad about the previous comments. When all the remarks of the comforters are analyzed and summed up, as personified by the spokesman Bildad, Job asked sarcastically, “How hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?” Job was saying that the three had a paucity of profitable instruction and that they did not face up to, and could not accept, the reality that he felt he was innocent.

The Adversary was in back of the three comforters. Since God gave Satan permission to try Job, wouldn’t he influence the three individuals with his wrong spirit to try to undercut Job? Thus a Satanic bent of mind was underlying the worldly wisdom espoused by the three.

Job 26:4 To whom hast thou uttered words? and whose spirit came from thee?

Comment: The NIV reads, “Who has helped you utter these words? And whose spirit spoke from your mouth?” The implication was the Adversary.

Reply: Yes, Satan was behind the three comforters. In the beginning, the contest was between God and Satan, as it were. God asked, “Did you behold my servant, Job, and how he has served me so faithfully?” Satan’s attitude was, “Look what you have given him: land, goods, influence, honor, etc. Just remove these things from him.” Then Satan said, “Skin for skin,” and the Lord said, “All right, you can take his skin but not his life.” The Adversary then inflicted sickness and discomfiture on Job. Next Satan tried to disturb Job inwardly through the counsel of the three comforters, who originally came with good intentions but were not of the caliber of Job. While they might have been wise in many other ways, having savvy, their reverence for God did not compare with that of Job.

Job 26:5 Dead things are formed from under the waters, and the inhabitants thereof.

Verse 5 is a reminder of Genesis 1:20 with regard to the Creative Days: “And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life.” This text suggests that, to start with, the lower forms of life could have evolved up to a certain point. The thought is, “Let the waters bring forth living organisms” in the lower subatomic up to the molecular level, but then a point in time came when there was a dividing line almost like the coast of a sea. When that line was crossed, the process changed from evolving life to creation. The next verse, Genesis 1:21, states, “And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind.” In other words, the waters first brought forth not created but moving creatures, and after that came created creatures.

“[What seemed to be] Dead things are formed from under the waters.” If living flesh decays, some of it turns into worms, but where do the worms come from? And eventually the worms change into dust. Thus death is a *reversal* process, but when the process is reversed and brought forward, coming *from* death, it comes from nothing to something. God has designed things that, of themselves, can spring into life without being specially created. And they can also reverse. We came from dust, and we return to dust. This two-way process, which is designed into nature, can be reversed either way if God so desires. God formed Adam from dirt—from an inanimate substance. Therefore, from dead things, life springs into moving things, but creation is distinctly different. At this time, we will not go into deeper scientific details, but the marvelous depth of thinking in the Scriptures will startle scientists in the future.

Comment: In an earlier Job study, another translation was used for this verse: “The shades below tremble, the waters and their inhabitants.”

Reply: “Dead things,” or “shades,” is the Hebrew word *rephaim*. The dark shades are an interesting but complex topic that would require time to explain on another occasion.

Comment: The NIV garbled this verse: “The dead are in deep anguish, those beneath the waters and all that live in them.” This translation gives the thought that the dead are conscious.

Reply: There is a play on words here, just as with the Hebrew word *cherem*, with two completely different meanings or perspectives.

Job 26:6 Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.

Sheol is naked before God. This ability or attribute of God is usually called omniscience. He is all-seeing; nothing can be hidden from Him. Earlier Bildad said, “Upon whom doth not his light arise?” (Job 25:3).

Job 26:7 He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.

“He [God] stretcheth out the north over the empty place” is a reference to God’s throne, which is separate from the universe. We have used the analogy of a living-room carpet to represent the physical universe as we know it. The most we can see is within the warp and woof of the carpet. We see the galaxies, but we cannot see beyond or above them. The real heaven of heavens is the highest heaven, being above all.

Comment: This expression in verse 7 is similar to Isaiah 40:22, “It is he [God] that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.”

Reply: The Prophet Isaiah was outstanding. He provided insights into God that the other major prophets do not touch upon. The “tent” is for man, for the heavens cannot contain God (1 Kings 8:27). He is separate from and above the heavens. We try to reason with our *little* minds, which are marvelous, nevertheless, for we can worship the Creator and think and reason and meditate upon principles. In fact, we can reason and think on the same level as the angels. The only problem is that we are limited to the earth. Man down here was created in the image of God but is confined to flesh, whereas spirit beings are in the spirit realm and have more longevity and a much greater range of observation. However, we can reason on principles just like the angels. We are like grasshoppers in size, or microbes, in comparison to God, who sits upon the sphere of the earth—and is actually *much larger!* It is marvelous that we can worship God and think about Him and meditate upon Him for so many hours of the day.

Incidentally, with all the planets in our solar system, which revolve around the sun, there is a difference between magnetic north and true north. True north points in the direction of Pleiades. God does not dwell in Pleiades, but if we could be on a train of light that penetrated through that constellation, He would be located immediately above it. Pleiades in the north is the *direction* of God’s throne, which is above the heavens, as indicated by other Scriptures.

Comment: God “hangeth the earth upon nothing” is one of the Scriptures used to prove that the Bible is the Word of God. Many ancient civilizations taught that the earth sits on a turtle, an elephant, or something else. Not until fairly recent history did scientists find out that the earth hangs on nothing. Job would have gotten this information from the Creator.

Reply: At most, it was thought that the earth was a flat circle instead of a sphere. It is interesting that mankind, with their marvelous minds, can walk by things day after day and not really observe them. Some people live and die with that lack of appreciation. However, by looking into the sky, we can get some understanding. For example, there are times when the moon is suggestive of a spherical shape. When atmospheric conditions are ideal, the moon has a little bit of a three-dimensional look. This appearance indicates that man should have realized long, long ago that the earth is not flat but is like that which is seen in the heavens. Man can be dull of comprehension, but once his understanding is opened—once the suggestion is made—he is brilliant. True, the Bible has been telling man for thousands of years that the earth is a sphere, but only relatively lately have science and Christians begun to see that fact.

Comment: Psalm 104:1-5 uses a similar expression: “Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind: Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire: Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever.”

Reply: Marginal references for the Book of Job quote the Psalms prolifically. However, instead of Job quoting the Psalms, it was David who quoted from the Book of Job. David was familiar with that book. When he lay on his back in the fields as a shepherd and studied the heavens, he

enlarged upon this pioneering thought and gave us even more information pertaining to the majesty of God. Still later the Prophet Isaiah gave us additional information. Thus they built upon each other's understanding. When the Bible is revealed in the Kingdom Age by exact interpretation, it will startle mankind. However, they will not really wake up until the Kingdom Age ends. In the ages beyond the Kingdom, this marvelous experience will be joyously appreciated.

The axes of the planets in our solar system are all slanted a little off-kilter from vertical. The axes point toward true north, whereas magnetic north is slightly different. By observing the heavens and the sun and the moon, Job concluded that planet Earth hangs upon nothing and is suspended in space. God "stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing."

Job 26:8 He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them.

Job was describing a wondrous phenomenon that many recognize today. These verses about the wonders and the glory of the heavens do not have to be spiritualized because Job was talking about natural phenomena that are observable by all mankind.

Comment: The NIV reads, "He wraps up the waters in his clouds, yet the clouds do not burst under their weight."

Job likened the waters to being wrapped up in skins (clouds), which do not let down a drop of water unless God wills rain to come. Water from the oceans ascends into the clouds—a phenomenon that can be seen on occasion. To repeat, instead of rain coming down from above, waters can ascend into the clouds. When rain falls, the water flows into rivers, rivers empty into oceans, and the water is sucked up into the clouds and transported to the continents, or land surfaces, to provide moisture in an unending cycle. Water is a standard of weight (for example, a five-gallon jug of water is heavy), but that type of weight ascends into clouds. Sometimes rain comes down gently; at other times, it descends as a flood, as God wills.

Job 26:9 He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it.

Comment: According to the NIV, "He [God] covers the face of the full moon, spreading his clouds over it."

Reply: Again natural phenomena are being discussed.

Job 26:10 He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end.

Comment: The NIV reads, "He marks out the horizon on the face of the waters for a boundary between light and darkness."

If we remember correctly, the literal Hebrew has the thought that God arches the waters with bounds, and perhaps that is why the NIV indicates a relationship to the horizon. If we were in a boat, looking out on a seemingly endless body of water, we would see a distinct boundary on the horizon. Of course the magnetism of the earth itself, let alone the moon, has an influence on ocean tides, but the gravity of the earth holds the water in a curved arc so that it does not spill over but remains firm with a clear mark of demarcation. The sun shines, making day, but when the sun sinks below the distant horizon, nightfall begins with everything becoming dark. When the sun arises again on the east in the morning, the darkness becomes light, or day. Therefore, on one horizon, daylight turns into darkness, and on the opposite horizon, darkness turns into light, making a demarcation between day and night. In other words, day and night have distinct endings and beginnings. Even though there is a twilight in the evening and a

morning light before the sun arises, night and day have a beginning and an ending—a distinctness and a demarcation.

Comment: It is remarkable that Job made these observations.

Reply: Job was far above average in contemplating and observing the phenomena in nature. Generally, as Christians, we appreciate nature with a little more recognition than perhaps the average person who is not Spirit-begotten. Even when scientists and astronomers marvel at the heavens, they usually do not praise God and attribute the wonders to Him.

Comment: Despite all of his sickness and woes, Job uttered gem thoughts.

Reply: In the beginning of his woes, Job was weak, but as time went on, he got stronger and stronger. In fact, he had just started his longest speech, which embraces six chapters. Later Elihu would speak equally as long.

Job 26:11 The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at his reproof.

God's "reproof" is thunder, the trembling of the heavens. Sometimes violent claps of thunder shake the earth, but it seems as if they are shaking both heaven and earth. The NIV reads, "The pillars of the heavens quake, aghast at his rebuke." Job used a metaphor to say that the trembling of the pillars of heaven was beyond understanding. He emphasized the thunder, saying that the sound seemed to be in the sky—the heavens quaked. In metaphor, the heavens quake from the very ferocity of the thunder.

Q: What specifically are the "pillars of heaven"?

A: The pillars are imaginary. Egyptian and Babylonian mythology taught that the heavens were an arc and that they rested on invisible mountains at either end. Pictures on temple walls show the goddess Neith in an arc over the earth. In the symbolic vision of Isaiah 6:4, the "posts of the door moved [quaked] at the voice" of God. However, here in verse 11, Job was referring to natural phenomena.

Job 26:12 He divideth the sea with his power, and by his understanding he smiteth through the proud.

"Divideth" (Hebrew *raga*) is one of a couple dozen Hebrew words that have two diametrically opposite meanings. The English equivalent for *raga* is "rage" or something that is "violent," "rupturing," or "dividing," but the same word has an opposite meaning of "quieting." Not only can God divide the sea with His power, as in the Exodus, but also He can put His hand down and quiet the sea, as the latter part of verse 12 seems to indicate: "and by his understanding he smiteth through the proud." Although it is possible Job was *prophetically* referring to the Exodus, the context indicates a continuation of natural phenomena. The Hebrew word translated "proud" is *rahab*, which can be a noun, a verb, the name of a person, the country Egypt, or "proud," "pride," or "strength." In the sense of natural phenomena, verse 12 is saying that God quiets the sea with His power, flattening the proud waves. Thus with His *same* power, God can either rupture or quiet the sea in an awesome fashion. For example, when Jesus stilled the angry waves on the Sea of Galilee by rebuking the wind, an awesome silence, or quietness, occurred. Also, in the Red Sea crossing under Moses, there was much commotion, but when the Israelites had safely crossed and turned around, Pharaoh and his host were buried underneath the water, which then had an awesome stillness.

Comment: When Jesus stilled the waves on the Sea of Galilee, the disciples responded, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!" (Matt. 8:27). Jesus' ability to

quiet the waves made a great impression on the natural men back there. They were startled by his control over nature.

Reply: Yes, and in that case, Jesus *had* the power, whereas Job was *describing* God's power.

For the thoughts in verse 12, Job drew on two momentous events in the Book of Genesis. One was the Flood, and the other was described in Genesis 1:7, "And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so." The "firmament" is the expanse of the air, or atmosphere, that existed in the pre-Noachic era. At that time, a circle of water was above the earth, waters were on the earth below, and the atmosphere was between the two. The collapse of the water ring caused the Flood in Noah's day. The tremendous power of the Creator is manifested from time to time, instilling reverential awe in those of His children who are observant.

At the time of the Flood, there was a raging period of not just rain but a *deluge* of rain and the opening of ocean beds below—a most violent period and an unsettled circumstance that continued for 150 days. And there followed a second 150-day period of abating, or stilling, the waters. God can stir up the sea or make it calm.

Comment: Psalm 89:9 expresses God's power with the sea: "Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them."

Job 26:13 By his spirit he garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent.

The word "spirit" is the Hebrew *ruach*, meaning "wind" or "breath." "By his breath [wind] the heavens became fair" is the thought of the NIV—and probably the preferred thought. A storm condition can be followed by the calmest, most peaceful and serene situation according to God's will.

Comment: On a magnificent scale, God just issued a command, and these wonders were created. It is something like what was said of the Caesars of old: "So let it be written; so let it be done."

Reply: The King James gives a little different slant, as already stated, where in regard to creation, God made statements with His mouth, and it was accomplished. God spoke during the Creative Days, and it was done in an awesome fulfillment requiring, in the final analysis, 7,000 years for each Day.

Comment: "His hand hath formed the crooked serpent." The Companion Bible has a notation that this portion of verse 13 refers to the constellation of the serpent.

Reply: Yes, the King James rendering pertains to that constellation in the heavens. By His spirit, God "garnished the heavens," that is, the expanse of the heavens with their beauty and constellations. If the King James is correct for this verse, it indicates that the zodiac pictures the plan of God. We avoid studying too deeply along those lines because of the danger of astrology or of carrying the study of astronomy too far into the unknown, but the plan of God is in the stars.

Q: At the end of the book, God asked Job, "Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook?" (Job 41:1). Both "leviathan" and "serpent" can mean "dragon," that is, Satan. Therefore, did the Lord later reply to the comment Job made here in verse 13?

A: Yes, God was listening intently to this interchange between Job and the three comforters and Elihu—and so was Satan, who was trying insidiously to break down Job's resolve or claims

of perfect intentions in his worship of God. Not only was this a drama that we are now studying as spectators, but also God was listening to the whole conversation back and forth. Then, later, He reviewed a lot of what Job had said but with a much greater depth of grandeur.

Job 26:14 Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?

Comment: All that Job had said was just the tip of the iceberg of God's power.

Reply: Some translations say, "These are the outskirts of his power: this is but the whispering of God." What are just "whispers" of God's power seem like thunders to us.

Job 27:1 Moreover Job continued his parable, and said,

The King James Version uses the word "parable" at the beginning of both this chapter and chapter 29. The content of this chapter does not sound like a parable in the ordinary sense of the word, for a parable was usually a story told by Jesus using characters and symbolisms that had a spiritual connotation and taught deep, important truths. However, the latter part of this chapter does carry a deeper significance and exalted theme.

Job 27:2 As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul;

We prefer to soften the first part of the verse: "As God liveth, who hath denied me judgment; and the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul [that is, by not explaining the significance of the sudden malady that came upon him]." The disease and boils that covered Job's body, the loss of his children and flocks, etc., did not seem to be commensurate with the lifestyle he had been living. Of course Job did not understand the reason or philosophy for the permission of evil.

Job 27:3 All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils;

Job 27:4 My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.

The word "spirit," the Hebrew *ruach*, means both "breath" and "spirit." In verse 3, "breath" and "spirit" are really synonymous, so the two words were used to avoid repetition.

Comment: For verses 3 and 4, the God's Word translation says, "As long as there is one breath left in me, and God's breath fills my nostrils, my lips will not say anything wrong."

Reply: That translation is more accurate. As long as Job had breath in him, his lips would not utter perverse words or words of deception.

Comment: Early in the book, when the calamities came on Job, his wife had said, "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die" (Job 2:9). He had replied, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh." Now, after the comforters had barraged him with empty words and accused him of sinning against God, he still had the same attitude—he would not speak against God.

Reply: Of course Job did not know that Satan was tempting him and that the spirit powers were observing his behavior when the affliction came upon him, but he maintained his integrity. We will find out eventually how deep Job's commitment to God was, what vows he had made to His Creator. Job intended to be faithful to them, and he knew in his heart that his intent to serve God was true. He was not a hypocrite.

Job 27:5 God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me.

Job was saying, “God forbid that I should justify you by admitting that I have sinned.”

Comment: The NIV reads, “I will never admit you are in the right; till I die, I will not deny my integrity.”

Reply: Job was addressing his comforters. Those who beheld his situation thought his affliction was punishment for some secret sin or sinful behavior pattern. They felt his troubles were God’s means of revealing the wickedness to others, but that was not the case because Job had tried to serve God with perfection of intent.

God looks at our intent, our will. The mind and the heart sometimes waver, but our intent can be perfect. The robe of Christ’s righteousness covers the new creature, the new spiritual life that is contained in an earthen vessel (2 Cor. 4:7).

The Apostle Paul strove to attain to a condition where he would have purity of intent and a conscience void of offense toward God and toward man (Acts 24:16). A Christian’s conscience needs to be educated and instructed from the Word of God, so that he will know God’s standards and follow them. Although Job was a literal personage in the Old Testament, he portrayed in a metaphorical sense the behavior of a Christian in the Gospel Age, particularly during the Dark Ages, a period of time when there was a paucity of scriptural information. The entire Bible was not printed as a book until the late 1400s. Before that, copies were handwritten, and many people had only a few verses or a Gospel at their disposal. Nevertheless, what they read was so good that they made a commitment to serve God, which gave them hope of a future life.

Comment: Paul expressed the same type of attitude that Job had: “Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day” (Acts 23:1).

Job 27:6 My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.

Job 27:7 Let mine enemy be as the wicked, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous.

“Let mine enemy [the comforters and any others] be as the wicked.” Job was making a wall of separation, the principle being that friendship with the world is enmity with God (James 4:4). Worldly wisdom and behavior, even when “good,” may not be what the Lord is looking for. Many ministers promise the congregation—and claim the Bible thus teaches—that a Christian will become wealthy, have good health, receive recognition, etc. However, we do not serve God for the rewards He gives us in the present life. We are laying up treasures in heaven, which are to be received in the next life. To put the emphasis on rewards in the here and now and not in the by and by is a perversion of the gospel, for the Scriptures say, “If we suffer with Christ, we will reign with him” (2 Tim. 2:12 paraphrase). We should pay more attention to the particulars of the Word than to the advice of those who may not be in harmony with that Word. Today it is getting more and more difficult for many to follow the Word because Satan gives some goodies to those who disobey the gospel. Satan is very much alive and active!

Job 27:8 For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?

Comment: Jesus said, “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his

own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26).

Comment: Job was saying, "It is important for me to speak the truth, for if I were a hypocrite, then I would have to answer the Lord."

Reply: Yes, Job could have gained the friendship of his comforters by being a hypocrite and saying he had sinned. The comforters had come with the sincere intent of helping Job, but when they arrived from three distant destinations and saw his condition, they were shocked and began to change their thinking about his situation.

Job 27:9 Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?

Job believed in his own integrity, but if, in order to gain friendship, fellowship, and recognition from the world (the comforters), he became a hypocrite and said he must have done something wrong, he would be compromising his integrity. This type of test is very difficult for the Christian, so we must be wary not to let friendship bias our judgment in serving God no matter who the individual is—husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, etc. We serve *God*, who is above all. In our walk in life, God is first, self and family are next, then comes the brotherhood, and the world is last. We must never compromise the principles in Holy Writ.

Of course all are imperfect, and we thank God for the robe of Christ's righteousness to cover our sins. However, we can set our wills. The problem is the distinction between willing and wishing, the latter being the easier of the two. "Will" is real intent and determination, whereas wishful thinking is ephemeral.

Comment: Paul gave strong admonitions to set our wills for the Lord: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (1 Cor. 16:13).

Reply: Yes, the value of the Book of Job is seeing that God caused the life of Job to be recorded as a help to the Christian Church. The Old Testament was written "for our admonition, [especially] upon whom the ends of the world [age] are come" (1 Cor. 10:11). Just as Jesus lived at the end time of the Jewish Age, so we live at the end time of the Gospel Age.

Comment: Knowing that Job did not take the advice of his comforters and thus go against God, we are reminded of John 9:31, "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth."

Reply: Again we see the parallelism of the experiences of Job and those of the Christian. Job, Moses, and others of the Ancient Worthies were born too early for the hope of the divine nature, but who knows what their eventual reward will be way down the stream of time? In the Gospel Age, there is a new calling with a New Creation. Earlier Adam was a new creation. As the first being created down here on this insignificant planet, he was made in the likeness of a spirit being but was miniaturized in flesh. The creation of such a being was a startling revelation to the spirit realm. And then God made Eve—another wonderful creation—who was a very beautiful woman. The female gender was unknown among spirit beings, for they are all *sons* (male) of God. Then came the New Creation that was at the top of the list when Jesus brought to light life and immortality. What could be higher than the hope of being with God and in His intimate family on the highest plane of existence?

Job 27:10 Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?

Job 27:11 I will teach you by the hand of God: that which is with the Almighty will I not conceal.

Job 27:12 Behold, all ye yourselves have seen it; why then are ye thus altogether vain?

Comment: The NIV reads, “You have all seen this yourselves. Why then this meaningless talk?”

The three were vain, useless comforters in the final analysis. Although they tried to use different arguments to rebut Job’s attestation of his innocence, they were united in feeling that he was harboring secret sin. Let us digress for a moment and suppose that we were living in Israel at the time of the First Advent. Along comes a personage we have heard about who is described as Jesus of Nazareth and who professes to be the Son of God. Having heard of his performance of many, many miracles, we now hear him, but *how* do we hear him? What is our disposition of heart? What is our mood frame? Do we come to find fault, or do we come to be honestly enlightened, to be impartial, and to see if there is any truth in the reports? Consider the heart condition of many of the scribes and Pharisees. They saw a young man, only 30 years of age when he began his ministry, with no record of any schooling to be a priest, a Pharisee, or otherwise. In their eyes, he was only a carpenter, whereas they were doctors of the spiritual Law. Because they considered Jesus to be an impostor who was proclaiming untruths, they ascribed a malicious intent to every good deed he performed. In fact, they accused him of using the power of Beelzebub, the prince of demons, to do his miracles. The point is that our attitude of heart has a lot to do with how we view others. A wrong condition of heart can cause us to misconstrue the behavior of those whose motives are pure. That was the case with Job. The comforters did not see the real Job, which the remaining chapters in the book will make manifest, for he subsequently disclosed details about his personal life. This revelation silenced them.

Job 27:13 This is the portion of a wicked man with God, and the heritage of oppressors, which they shall receive of the Almighty.

Job seemed to be hinting that in pursuing their interrogation of him, and in their change of behavior so that they now looked upon him with askance and questioned his protestations of innocence, the three comforters were following a course that, if not checked, would bring retribution. Job’s conscience did not trouble him, and he had not committed the sin they were accusing him of. If they continued to insist on his guilt, they would reap problems not only upon themselves but also on their siblings and those associated with them.

Comment: A progression is shown in the Book of Job. Initially, after losing everything, Job wanted to die. When his supposed close friends came and stayed with him in silence for seven days, he must have felt some relief was coming. However, that relief changed to shock when the three started accusing him of wrongdoing. As he grew stronger, his emotions turned to anger and righteous indignation. He felt they were hypocrites.

Reply: Earlier Job was sick unto death, as it were, and depressed. He suffered from terrible dreams and could not get peace of mind. But as time went on, he got stronger and stronger, and the comforters, after using all of their arguments, eventually saw that it was useless to rebut him any further. Job’s strengthening was an anomaly of nature. For instance, Christians who were violently persecuted in the Dark Ages but maintained their integrity became crystallized in their strength, faith, and character; that is, the danger and the persecution strengthened them. Faith is exercised in an atmosphere, or arena, of doubt. When doubt arises and faith rebuts that doubt, faith grows stronger. It is like exercising to exhaustion, which eventually makes stronger muscles. The same seems to be true, spiritually speaking, with the Christian. Therefore, as a result of the comforters’ besieging him with all kinds of arguments, advice, and admonition, Job got stronger and stronger in spite of his physical weakness.

Comment: Martin Luther said, “Here I stand. I can do none else.”

Reply: Yes, that is how he summed up his arguments before a church council. He stood firm when his integrity was being challenged. Satan tries everything possible to get us to forsake the narrow way in one way or another. If we are babes, he dangles a little bauble before us. If we are mature, he may try intellectual challenges and pursuits that will divert us from walking in the footsteps of Jesus.

Comment: The NIV shows a paragraph break for verse 13, which seems to fit a comment from an earlier study. Verse 13 ties in with subsequent verses. Job was saying that his faith was such that in spite of all evidence to the contrary, not only his integrity but also the integrity of God *must requite the evil*. If it is not requited in the present life, the implication is that it will be requited in the future.

Reply: Yes, the anomaly is that when there is opposition to the flesh, the Christian grows spiritually; his reasoning becomes more and more spiritual. The Christian lives for the next life. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10).

Comment: When asked to bow down to the golden image on the plain of Dura, the three Hebrew children said, “Be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up” (Dan. 3:18).

Reply: If God had not intervened, the experience would have cost the three Hebrews their earthly existence, but when King Nebuchadnezzar looked, there appeared in the fiery furnace a fourth individual, one like the Son of God. He saw “four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, ... [with] no hurt,” whereas three men had been thrown in bound (Dan. 3:25). When people of faith stand up like that, even the public is emboldened and strengthened. The public becomes aware of the nobility of principle that is being made manifest.

Job 27:14 **If his children be multiplied, it is for the sword: and his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread.**

The progeny are left behind when wicked parents de cease and go into the grave. According to the Mosaic Law, the sins of the parents are visited on the children.

Job 27:15 **Those that remain of him shall be buried in death: and his widows shall not weep.**

The survivors of the wicked will be buried in death, the principle being that the iniquity of the parents is visited upon the children. And the widows of the wicked will not weep.

Job 27:16 **Though he heap up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay;**

Job 27:17 **He may prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver.**

Q: Why does the account sound as if Job was talking more about the Millennial Kingdom than the time period he was living in?

A: Job was in a very depressed state earlier when he was being interrogated by the comforters, but as time went on, he got stronger through his endurance of the ordeal. And his faith grew as a result of the experience. Just as an athlete’s muscles grow strong with exercise, so the resistance of the comforters actually resulted in Job’s becoming stronger, and their arguments were no match for his counter replies. While, generally speaking, the wicked are not punished in the present life, justice will certainly prevail ultimately. Nevertheless, although the wicked ones who gather the wealth usually seem to have a better life than others, sometimes when they die—even in the present age—others can see that the sins of the parents fall on the

children, and the justice element enters in. However, the main point here is that Job's faith was reaching out, and he was speaking of the future, not the present age.

Q: The NIV reads as follows for the second half of verse 16: "and clothes like piles of clay." Rotherham has, "Like a pile he shall prepare clothing." Is the thought that the wicked amass an abundance of wealth and riches in both silver and goods?

A: Yes. Just as we neatly fold up and stack laundry that has been washed and dried, so the rich accumulate wealth through investments and enterprises. They seem to be successful as they store up more and more wealth, but when they die, they cannot take their wealth with them.

Comment: It seems as if Job, through discoursing with the comforters, not only was getting stronger but also was thinking on some subjects he had previously considered in depth. Through this process, he was beginning to understand the permission of evil.

Reply: He was beginning to understand the principle but not the particulars. Subconsciously, his experience of suffering became a revelation to him, for it exposed the thinking of other people, especially that of his comforters. Job may have had a previous familiarity or rapport of some kind with the comforters, but as the experience was drawn out, their real worth was exposed. At the same time, he might have subconsciously felt that his experience was helping him to see more deeply into the superficiality of mankind as a whole and that perhaps this was one reason for the permission of evil. Moreover, through his very endurance of the sufferings, he subconsciously realized that he was getting stronger, and he could thus sense more of a reason for the permission of evil.

Comment: Jesus learned obedience by the things that he suffered, even unto death on the Cross. Because of his experiences, he became a sympathetic High Priest, who is touched by the feeling of our infirmities. In other words, to actually go through an experience brings another dimension of understanding, learning, and growth.

Reply: The Book of Job is a deep study in character development.

As a result of his afflictions, Job could reason that God must in some way, sooner or later, requite the injustice. With regard to the permission of evil, when God renders His judgment for good or for ill upon any individual or any people, it reveals His understanding of the situation and His justice. This exposure in others is necessary in order to see the justice of God's decision making, among other things.

The continuity in verses 16 and 17 is like a miniature story. Though the wicked heap up riches, the wealth will be inherited by the righteous, as stated in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5). The temporary permission of evil and God's patience in allowing it bring out His wisdom in choosing this technique on planet Earth, for after the close of the Millennium, it will never be permitted again. Compared to eternity, the permission of evil takes only a small fraction of time. Never again will it be necessary, anywhere in the universe, for God to tolerate the permission of evil so that others can understand it, because the experience with evil on planet Earth has been thoroughly recorded not only in the Bible but also on film as events actually happened. Every idle word, not only of the consecrated but also of the unconsecrated, is being recorded, although there is a degree of censorship under divine wisdom as to which parts are most profitable to reveal.

Job 27:18 He buildeth his house as a moth, and as a booth that the keeper maketh.

Comment: The wicked build their houses as the cocoon of a moth, the thought being that the structures are temporary. They spend time and money building luxurious homes, but what are

they in the final analysis? They will pass away.

Reply: The second half of verse 18 bears out this thought. A common practice in ancient times was for laborers in the harvest to hastily erect a booth as a temporary shelter to provide shade from sun or protection from wind. As time went on, inclement weather eventually caused the shelter to fall apart. Such is the lot of the wicked. While they may seem to prosper and be secure, their condition is actually very temporary. Part of a hymn goes, “Change and decay in all around I see.” These words are true of both animate and inanimate realms, and especially in the long term with regard to the wicked. The cutting off of the wicked will be traumatically accomplished in due time.

Comment: Jesus emphasized that point when he said, “Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal” (Matt. 6:20).

Job 27:19 **The rich man shall lie down, but he shall not be gathered: he openeth his eyes, and he is not.**

Comment: The RSV has, “He goes to bed rich, but will do so no more; he opens his eyes, and his wealth is gone.”

Comment: The Old Testament used the word “gathered” when some of the patriarchs and others died and were buried (Gen. 25:8).

The abruptness of verse 19 suggests that the wicked will be judged abruptly. That is not the case in the present life except in the coming Time of Trouble. During the permission of evil, the wicked seem to have lives of relative contentment and ease, but in the Kingdom Age, mankind will come forth from the grave with no accumulation of goods and, therefore, will have to start all over again. The formerly wealthy will come forth without possessions. The poor, who had nothing in the present life, will have a fresh start, which to them will be emancipation. They will have hope, whereas most of the rich will not want to start all over again. Rich and poor will come forth alike from the grave. Those who have done more evil, medium evil, or less evil will all be “babes,” even if they are adults physically.

Comment: “Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low” is the principle (Isa. 40:4).

“He openeth his eyes, and he is not [as he used to be with regard to his goods and his wealth].” The wicked will come forth stripped of all possessions that they had before.

Job 27:20 **Terrors take hold on him as waters, a tempest stealeth him away in the night.**

The same theme continues. Terrors take hold of the wicked like a flood. A “tempest” would be an east wind or a whirlwind that separates the wicked from his wealth, prosperity, popularity, etc., but in a notorious way.

Comment: Ezekiel 7:18 reads in the NIV, “They will put on sackcloth and be clothed with terror. Their faces will be covered with shame and their heads will be shaved.”

Reply: Prophetic group fulfillments occurred in 606 BC when Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed, later at the time of Hadrian, in the French Revolution, etc., but there is also a prophetic application still to come. Retribution comes in waves. The prosperity of the wicked is ephemeral and temporary. Whenever judgment occurs—whether during a retribution period in the present life or in the Kingdom Age—it occurs abruptly. Right then and there, the wicked

lose everything.

Comment: Jesus said, “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matt. 16:26).

Reply: Death for the wicked is final and abrupt when it occurs, but from another standpoint, the wicked will awake from death to the abrupt reality that they do not have any wealth. The sensation will occur one way or the other to the wicked—whether in this life or during the Kingdom. They will have to start all over.

Comment: In connection with terrors overtaking the wicked as a flood, 1 Timothy 6:17 says, “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.” Job was speaking of individuals who trust in their riches. When the riches are removed, terror comes in.

Reply: That would be a current application, which sometimes occurs. If the removal of wealth does not occur in the present life, it will take place when the wicked are resuscitated from the tomb. Of course Paul in the New Testament was giving an admonition more to the consecrated who trust in wealth. Both the individuals and their accumulation of goods are temporary.

Job 27:21 The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth: and as a storm hurleth him out of his place.

“The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth.” Again the account gives the thought of a tempest, or a whirlwind. And again a radical change is shown for the wicked. God has been very patient in allowing the permission of evil, but conditions will change when the Kingdom is inaugurated.

Job 27:22 For God shall cast upon him, and not spare: he would fain flee out of his hand.

Job 27:23 Men shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place.

Verse 22 is saying that when retribution occurs, no pity will be shown. When the judgment is rendered either in the present life or in the Kingdom Age, it will be final and abrupt as far as separating the wicked from their wealth.

Job 28:1 Surely there is a vein for the silver, and a place for gold where they refine it.

Verse 1 is a proper chapter break for a change of subject matter on Job’s part. He was now beginning to draw lessons from a miner, who digs in the earth.

Comment: Earlier one of the comforters would have jumped in to rebut Job’s reply, but now the three were remaining silent.

Reply: Job was starting to lecture the comforters. After all the browbeating they had given him, he was getting stronger and stronger, and in a slow and methodical way, step by step, he was building up a powerful argument. He began to explain about the “parable” he had alluded to (Job 27:1). He was switching from being the one interrogated to being the interrogator. In this change, Job used parables, although a different type than we are accustomed to.

Comment: He would now manifest his superior knowledge. His thinking was far beyond the imaginations of the comforters.

Job wanted to teach the comforters a lesson through the illustration of a miner who was

searching for silver and gold in the earth. In mining, a lot of dirt is dug at first, but when silver or gold is found in a vein or stratum (parallel, jagged, or more vertical), the miner knows where to concentrate his energies. This procedure is also true of the search for diamonds. A search is made for a lode, or vein, that is a chimney pipe of “blue soil” in the earth. If the funnel is followed down into the earth, diamonds are eventually found. Tons of earth must be removed to find diamonds in blue soil, but nevertheless, the miner is rewarded. Diligently searching for mineral riches in the earth is a marvelous illustration of the truth seeker’s search for wisdom, as will be seen. Step by step, Job was leading up to that lesson. He was trying to teach the comforters a principle—a fact they should have known—as a proof to contradict some of their prior reasoning.

Job 28:2 Iron is taken out of the earth, and brass is molten out of the stone.

Q: Chapter 27 talked about the heaping up of silver. Was Job showing now, in chapter 28, that for the wicked who accumulated wealth and were proud of their possessions, their wealth was really nothing, for silver, gold, iron, and brass (copper) all come out of the earth and are thus from the wealth of the Lord?

A: Yes, for Job himself had had such riches. Figuratively speaking, he was the richest man in that region, but he did not put his trust in the riches. Job was giving a lesson for the comforters, who had come as philosophers to comfort and teach him. First, they were solicitous, but then they became malicious.

Comment: First, Job spoke of silver and gold, and now he introduced iron and brass. These same elements were in the image of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in the second chapter of Daniel: gold, silver, iron, and brass.

Reply: Yes, various lessons can be drawn from the principles inculcated here. The component parts of the image were refined or worked by man to bring them to a state of purity and perfection of quality so that the image was awesome, whereas *God* makes the gold of the divine nature out of a common, ordinary stone. Of course the lesson is that we should be submissive to divine providences and not rely upon current possessions.

Job 28:3 He setteth an end to darkness, and searcheth out all perfection: the stones of darkness, and the shadow of death.

Miners will go to extremes of sacrifice to acquire mineral wealth. They use industry, and they have purpose, even denying themselves the pleasures of outdoor life and sunshine to go down perhaps a mile into the mire, muck, darkness, deep, and gloom of the earth in their search. Those who obtain wealth in this way and carefully lay it up are sometimes rewarded with exceeding temporal gain, which they later feel is their security. Job was discussing a philosophical topic that would lead to a much higher lesson. The question is, What is the intent of the miner? Depending upon his thinking and/or ulterior motive, the miner figuratively or spiritually can be profitable or unprofitable.

Comment: The NIV reads, “Man puts an end to the darkness; he searches the farthest recesses for ore in the blackest darkness.”

Job 28:4 The flood breaketh out from the inhabitant; even the waters forgotten of the foot: they are dried up, they are gone away from men.

Comment: The NIV continues, “Far from where people dwell he cuts a shaft, in places forgotten by the foot of man; far from men he dangles and sways.” For the most part, it takes great effort and going into the belly of the earth to obtain these minerals.

Reply: Miners will deprive themselves of the normal amenities of life in their desire to find mineral wealth. When they dug in the past, prior to mechanized devices, they went to great lengths, using wooden ladders, mirrors, ropes, etc. Job's comments show that he had considerable on-hand knowledge of mining methods. Incidentally, he was apparently familiar with the Egyptian technique, and most Egyptian mining was done in Sinai in search of the Eilat stone and other minerals. What the Egyptians learned from the mining process was helpful in their subsequent making of tombs, where they had to go extensively into the earth to hide the sarcophagus of a Pharaoh or other noble from tomb robbers. Various places in the Book of Job provide vague hints that Job was familiar with Egypt, even though he resided in the land of Uz.

Job 28:5 As for the earth, out of it cometh bread: and under it is turned up as it were fire.

The surface of the earth is tilled for grain, and underneath, unbeknownst to mankind, is the molten core of the earth. Evidence that the core is like a fireball is the molten lava that comes out of the bowels of the earth in a violent earthquake.

Job 28:6 The stones of it are the place of sapphires: and it hath dust of gold.

Most jewels come from igneous (fiery) matter. Many precious stones are found in quartz, and some are in gold ore or nuggets, but they previously were deposited in a molten substance. When that substance cooled, crystallized jewels were found embedded in it.

Comment: According to *Strong's Concordance*, "sapphire" is lapis lazuli.

Reply: Lapis lazuli, called Eilat stone, which is found especially in Egypt and Sinai, is not sapphire but more of a silicon dioxide with a coloring that is evenly dispersed in the matter. The Book of Job contains hints that Job either went to or was familiar with Egypt, and there was a plenitude of gold in Nubia in Upper Egypt.

Buried underneath the soil of the earth in different places are precious stones of one kind or another. If it were not for earthquakes and ruptures of the earth in past times that caused these stones to come to the surface, man would not know where to dig to find them.

Job 28:7 There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen:

Verses 7 and 8 are poetically expressed, particularly in the Hebrew. The vulture and the eagle fly high in the air. Hunger affects eyesight, and the eagle is notorious for its keen eyesight, which has been developed by a voracious appetite. Most remarkably, the eagle can see its prey more than 30 miles away. Verse 7 is saying, in effect, that in spite of the eagle's reputation for keen eyesight, it cannot see the precious materials buried in the earth. Incidentally, a vulture is sometimes confused with an eagle, but there are differences.

Notice that there is a "path." Verse 1 of this same chapter said there is a "vein." This play on words will become significant later on in Job's reasoning. Once a vein in the earth is exposed, the miner digs down deep. Meanwhile, the fowl and the vulture have a path in the sky but are unaware that the hidden treasure of precious stones is buried below.

Job 28:8 The lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it.

The lion may pass over a deposit of precious stones but not knowingly. Lions, among other animals, have a keen sense of smell. By sniffing the air, they can detect a deer, goat, etc., at a considerable distance. However, an animal with its ability to smell is unaware of what is beneath the earth, as are fowl with their keenness of vision. Job's reasoning may seem

prolonged and repetitive, but the ancients philosophically reasoned this way in past times and drew lessons from their observations. The three comforters would be quite aware that Job was leading to a conclusion, yet to come.

Job 28:9 He putteth forth his hand upon the rock; he overturneth the mountains by the roots.

Job 28:10 He cutteth out rivers among the rocks; and his eye seeth every precious thing.

Job 28:11 He bindeth the floods from overflowing; and the thing that is hid bringeth he forth to light.

The pronoun “he” refers to God. It is true that a miner cuts into the rock, but verse 10 is a clue that the reference is to Jehovah: “his eye seeth every precious thing.” God has, as it were, X-ray eyes. Jesus is also pictured as having this characteristic (Rev. 1:14). When Jesus looks at each of us, he can read our thoughts, and the Father’s perception is even keener. While God discerns the mineral deposits in the earth, He will foster an earthquake in a special place to reveal to man the existence of these hidden materials. God will figuratively turn the mountain upside down to expose some of these veins, as though He wants man to become aware that below the dirt and the mire of earth’s mantle are hidden treasures. The comforters, who were listening to Job’s lecture, were beginning to sense what he was driving at.

Q: Wouldn’t the pronoun “he” in verse 9 be the same as the “he” of verse 3?

A: Both man and God do these things. Job was saying to the comforters, “Are we not all aware that underneath the surface of the earth, in special areas, are veins where special ore is found—iron, gold, sapphires, etc.” The materials are found by man, but *God* reveals them to man.

Q: Since verse 12 starts with the word “*but*,” it seems like a contrasting thought. Would the way the NIV translates verses 9-12 be an alternate interpretation? “Man’s hand assaults the flinty rock and lays bare the roots of the mountains. He tunnels through the rock; his eyes see all its treasures. He searches the sources of the rivers and brings hidden things to light. But where can wisdom be found? Where does understanding dwell?”

A: We agree with that translation, but God providentially reveals to man the existence of these deposits that are hidden in the earth. After the providential exposure, man spends time, energy, and effort, even to the point of extreme discomfiture, to exploit the rich deposits to find the precious jewels. *God* laid down these deposits originally. Just as man does not come from monkeys because *God* designed humans as sentient, reasoning beings, so *He* has prepared everything for man’s benefit, whether above or below the ground.

The thought is a little deeper than what the NIV is expressing. Job will show that while the reasoning of the three comforters was astute, beneath their reasoning was a deeper truth, of which they were not properly aware. We are going into the philosophy, or thinking, *behind* Job’s reasoning. It is true that man does these things, but *God* assists man. Starting with verse 12, Job will open up the arena of thought he had in mind when introducing the subject matter in the first place.

Job 28:12 But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?

Job was saying that wisdom is also hidden, just like the precious treasures beneath the surface of the earth. Just as the eagle with its natural eye and the lion with its natural sense of smell are not aware, so man is not aware unless God, in His providence, pioneers a discovery. Man then exploits the discovery, using all kinds of energy and effort to obtain the precious things that are under the surface of the earth. But wisdom is not something tangible that can be touched. Job

was now exploring a wonderful type of reasoning by asking, “Where is wisdom?” The natural man cannot really understand the deep things of God because they are *spiritually* discerned. One must have natural faith to start with, and when natural faith is pursued, it can become, by God’s providence, a spiritual faith instructed by the Heavenly Father.

Comment: James 3:17,18 reads, “The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.”

Reply: James is the only New Testament writer who mentioned Job in a particular fashion. “Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy” (James 5:11). James was familiar with the Book of Job, as proven by certain statements in his epistle.

Comment: Proverbs 2:3-5 talks about seeking wisdom: “Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.”

Reply: Yes, Job was leading to this point. When man, with his natural reasoning, happens to discover underground treasures, he exerts every effort to exploit them, but he does not search out spiritual things because of a lack of interest and hunger for things of the next life. Most people are concerned with the here and now—daily bread, daily living, etc. But when those who wonder about the next life and who hunger and thirst for righteousness begin to seriously think along these lines, isn’t the Heavenly Father more apt to reveal His truth to such individuals? It is interesting that in the beginning of this chapter, the first verse starts with the word “Surely”: “*Surely* there is a vein...” Such veins exist, and they are exploited by man when it is seen that they lead to valuable deposits. It is like the end of the rainbow, as it were, but these are *natural* rewards, rewards for the *present* life. One of the greatest deceptions in the Christian Church today is expecting to be rewarded in the current life. Leaders who promote this type of thinking take Christianity and say, “If you believe in God, you can become healthy, wealthy, wise, and influential in the present life.” To the contrary, the Christian is to lay up treasures in *heaven*, for the *next* life, at the expense of the current life.

So Job was saying, “Consider these miners, who stay away from home in God-forsaken areas of the earth, far away from their families, digging holes and undergoing all kinds of discomfiture in search of earthly treasures. They are not at all interested in the Creator. They do not question, ‘Why did God make us? What is our destiny?’ They do not pray, ‘Lord, reveal to us what your plan and purpose are.’ They do not hunger in that direction.”

Job was pointing out to the comforters that their reasoning was along natural lines. For many, many chapters, Job himself had been confused, but now he was beginning to see, to a certain extent, that maybe God had a reason for permitting all of his suffering experiences. He was even beginning to see that these shortcomings were revealed in the three comforters, who came to do him good. The testings and trials were starting to expose things that otherwise would not have been known. The trials pertained to mundane, earthly things. How much better are the heavenly, the spiritual, things! When Job asked, “Where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?” that was an abrupt change from what he had been saying. Job’s new level of thinking is exciting, for God is revealing to us, from the narration, the better things of life. The eyes of the Lord roam to and fro throughout the earth looking for people like Job, who are hungering and thirsting after Him. Those are the individuals God is interested in during the present life. In the Kingdom Age, God will deal with mankind, but He is looking for the Job class at the present time.

Comment: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Rom. 11:33).

What is exciting, too, is that the Psalmist David read the Book of Job. There is no question he read it because he used so much of Job’s reasoning, which occurred much earlier than David’s time. In Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, Solomon made statements that were almost direct quotes from Job, who was the predecessor. Thus we begin to see why Job was, at his time in history, the greatest man in the earth. He lived shortly before Moses. When Moses came on the scene, he became the greatest (the meekest) man in the earth. When we read Deuteronomy, we are astounded at Moses’ depth of understanding and his nobility of character.

Comment: Proverbs 3:13 is a parallel text, showing that wisdom is gained from understanding: “Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.”

Job 28:13 Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living.

Job 28:14 The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me.

Job 28:15 It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.

Job 28:16 It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire.

The gist of verses 13-16 is that wisdom cannot be purchased. It is intangible but extremely valuable. Job was beginning to go a little deeper in his reasoning. First, he said that wisdom cannot be bought; then he asked the question “How can I get wisdom?” (verse 20). If wisdom is an invaluable asset that God has at His disposal, the interested party would logically ask how it can be obtained. Job will eventually get to that answer.

Job said that man does not know the price of wisdom, for it is not found in the land of the living (the marketplace). He then became poetic: “The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me.” Verse 14 is sandwiched in between the subject matter, the train of thought that wisdom cannot be bought. It cannot be gotten for either gold or silver, nor can its price be weighed. The price of wisdom is so astronomical that it cannot be purchased.

Verse 16 mentions the “gold of Ophir,” which is an interesting subject for another occasion. There is a history behind the word “Ophir”—its location, the golden wedge of Ophir, etc.

Comment: The Prophet Isaiah wrote prophetically, “I [God] will make a man[‘s life] more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir” (Isa. 13:12). The Lord has every single person in mind, and all are valuable to him. The gold of Ophir represents that life.

Comment: Along a similar vein is the Scripture “Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints” (Psa. 116:15).

Reply: When people commit their lives to serve God, when they bend their knees to the Savior in recognition that they are sinners and he is their Redeemer, when they realize their sins can be forgiven if they commit themselves to serve Jesus, how wonderful it is! The Christian life starts with the death of the will—being determined to do God’s will and the will of Jesus, God’s Son, the channel through whom there is communication with the Heavenly Father—but there is also literal death, which is even more precious because it means one has made his or her calling and election sure. How happy the Lord is when He sees someone finish the course in a way that is reserved for the very faithful, the more-than-overcomers! Thank God that, in addition, He has made provision for overcomers as well, although on a lower scale.

Comment: Psalm 45:9 mentions that the Queen, the Bride, the Little Flock, will stand before God, being clothed in the gold of Ophir.

Job 28:17 The gold and the crystal cannot equal it: and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold.

Job 28:18 No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies.

Job 28:19 The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold.

Verses 17-19 are repetitive. The price of gold and crystal cannot equal wisdom. No barter or exchange of a material nature can be made in order to procure wisdom. Wisdom is not designed to be purchased with jewels of gold, coral, or pearls. The price of wisdom is above rubies. Job was saying that wisdom has to be obtained in another fashion.

Since the climax, or end, of this segment of thinking that wisdom cannot be bought is verse 19, which says that the topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal wisdom, this stone must have been international in reputation. The gold of Ophir and the topaz of Ethiopia were considered the top of the list. We do not know the historical significance of the term “topaz of Ethiopia.” We are inclined to think the term refers to the quality of topaz that was found in Ethiopia, although it may be speaking of a particular gem.

Comment: With all the wealth that was before him, King Solomon asked for wisdom.

Reply: Yes, and he was rewarded with wisdom initially. His subsequent actions were rather pathetic, but we are thankful that Solomon wrote what he did in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes as a form of repentance.

Q: With regard to the expression “topaz of Ethiopia,” the NIV has “topaz of Cush.” Does the geographic name refer to Africa or to Armenia up near Mount Ararat?

A: It could refer to a region nearer Armenia. After the Flood, Cush stayed up there in the north for a while and then migrated southward to Africa. Therefore, the topaz could have come from a location in Armenia or in India, which anciently was known as the land of Cush. And India does have some very precious stones.

Verses 1-19 were an introduction to what Job really had in mind. Verse 20 starts the conclusion of his reasoning, the substantive matter he was leading up to.

Job 28:20 Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?

Job was using imaginative language. In preceding verses, he mentioned that the fowl of the air, which are known for keen eyesight, cannot perceive the place where wisdom is found. Neither can the animals on the ground, no matter how keen their sense of smell. However, Job did not use the word “wisdom” at first. Rather, he used an allegory of men who mine for silver, gold, or jewels deep beneath the surface of the earth. Neither the fowl of the air nor the animals on the ground are aware of what is going on beneath the surface of the earth. Just as they cannot perceive the miners deep in the ground, so sight, taste, smell, money, etc., cannot purchase, detect, or obtain wisdom. Wisdom is hidden from the eyesight of the natural man.

Job could have started his reasoning with verse 20—“Whence then cometh wisdom?”—but instead he gave an elaborate, tactful introduction. Similarly in witnessing, we should use tact.

For example, the Apostle Paul first spoke of all the statues that were around and then said he saw a statue “To the Unknown God.” This introduction paved the way for the witness he wanted to give. “I wanted to speak to you about this Unknown God, and I perceive that you are overreligious,” etc. Job was using somewhat the same method. Now he was getting to the kernel of the thinking he wanted to transmit to the comforters.

Q: It is remarkable that Job could be so articulate while undergoing such extreme calamities. To what extent was the Holy Spirit moving him to utter such elevated thinking and reasoning?

A: The implication is that Job was familiar with mining and thus already had the knowledge expressed. (Incidentally, mining was taking place at this time in the land of Uz.) Consider the natural man. For instance, Benjamin Franklin had a tremendous amount of knowledge. He was curious about everything he saw in nature and was even involved with some inventions. Thomas Jefferson is another example of one who was prone to be godly back in those times. Therefore, even from a natural standpoint, Job was showing the depth of his experience. From the natural, he would derive deep lessons and reasoning.

“Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?” What Job was really talking about was wisdom and understanding.

Comment: With the back-and-forth conversations with the comforters taking place in one day, the Holy Spirit would have to be moving Job.

Reply: Yes, and Job kept getting stronger as he went along. He started out (understandably) pathetically, bemoaning all his suffering, but as the day went on, he wore out the comforters instead of vice versa. He was enlightened and strengthened by his experiences, for faith, if possessed and exercised, grows strong in a climate of doubt.

Job 28:21 Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air.

Job 28:22 Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.

Job asked, “What is the source of wisdom? Where is it located, seeing it is hidden from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air? Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.” Job was using imaginative parabolic expressions.

Job 28:23 God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof.

With verse 23, Job abruptly changed from reasoning along natural lines to the search for wisdom in another sphere or environment, which subsequent verses explain.

Where is wisdom? God understands the way of wisdom and knows where it is. The comforters would have had to agree that God is the source of wisdom. Then Job gave another long explanation, talking about God and His capabilities, before going to the next step of development about wisdom. The eagle has keen eyesight and the lion has a keen sense of smell, but God also has keenness of eyesight and perception. The comforters were now forced to see the logic that Job was using. They were impressed that he had not only a reputation for wealth and for judgment in moral matters but also experience in temporal matters. But now Job was saying, “Neither I nor you have wisdom, so let us look above, to the source whence it can be found. God is that source.” The comforters would have had to admit that Job’s statement was true. Now Job would talk about God’s capability.

Job 28:24 For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven;

The fowl look down upon the earth, but they are limited. They do not have X-ray eyes like God, who sees everything under the heaven and, by implication, under the earth. Job was becoming the instructor of the three comforters rather than the other way around. As has been said, God's Holy Spirit strengthened Job and gave him clarity of mind and reasoning to speak wholesome words that, in effect, silenced the comforters.

Comment: Multiple Scriptures confirm the thought that God sees everything under the heavens. For example, "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Prov. 15:3). "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (2 Chron. 16:9). "The eyes of the LORD ... run to and fro through the whole earth" (Zech. 4:10).

Job's experience was somewhat our experience in life when we first began to reason more soberly concerning where we came from and where we are going. Through God's mercy and kindness, our search was rewarded when we hungered and thirsted for something substantive.

Job 28:25 To make the weight for the winds; and he weigheth the waters by measure.

God gave weight to the winds. Of course by observation, we perceive that the wind has weight. We cannot see the wind, but we can see its power and the destruction it causes. Thus that which is invisible can do visible things that indirectly betray its properties.

God also weighs waters. Water is used as the standard of weight. Specific gravity is predicated upon a certain volume of water and its weight, and every other substance is measured against water, being either below zero (the weight of water) or above zero. Job was comparing emptiness with substance, wind (air) with water.

The comforters, who had a reputation for wisdom, could grasp these thoughts. Especially those from Teman were noted for wisdom, but Job's wisdom was superior to that of the natural man. God is the possessor of such wisdom, so one must look to God and ask *Him* for wisdom—which was part of the answer.

Job 28:26 When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder:

With regard to rain, if we could pour water on a cloud, the water would go right through the cloud and descend to the earth, but God can siphon the water from the ocean into a cloud as if the water is going into a container. Then He transports the cloud over to land and empties rain onto mountains. From there, the water runs into rivers, and finally it returns to the ocean. Job was showing that we should not depend on our own human reasoning but should look to God as the source of all wisdom. When we make a commitment to submerge our wills and thinking into God's mind and will, He rewards us; that is, when we look to Him for counsel, He instructs us with spiritual insight so that we are able to see things that cannot be perceived by natural sight or smell.

God "made ... a way for the lightning of the thunder." From our perspective, lightning is seen before the thunder is heard. Thunder shows God's power.

Job 28:27 Then did he see it, and declare it; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out.

Job continued to use parabolic language. God certainly sees wisdom, for He possesses it. He also declares wisdom. For example, "the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork" (Psalm 19:1). Moreover, God prepares wisdom and searches it out. We see the lightning, but the thunderous clap strikes awe in our hearts in its manifestation of

God's capabilities and power.

Job 28:28 And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

Verse 28 is more the climax of Job's reasoning.

Comment: Solomon made the same statement: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13).

Reply: Yes, the theme is the same, although stated in different words. Incidentally, Solomon and David were greatly blessed, and they were familiar with Job's reasoning. We hear about the patience of Job but not the wisdom of Job, yet he was an extremely wise person. Many Proverbs and parts of Ecclesiastes, as well as some of the Psalms, show that Solomon and David were familiar with the Book of Job. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, but the end of wisdom is understanding and obedience. In other words, the end of wisdom is *our* part. God is the source of wisdom, but to *hearken* to His commandments and instructions is real understanding, not just mental perception. Jesus said it is more blessed not only to hear and believe the Word but also to obey it.

Comment: The Apostle James said, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering" (James 1:5,6).

Reply: James was also familiar with Job, the two kernel thoughts being patience and how to obtain wisdom.

Comment: Proverbs 9:10 reads, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding."

Comment: As brought out in an earlier Proverbs study and stated in the King James margin, "The [reverential] fear of the LORD is the *principal part* of wisdom," rather than the "beginning" of wisdom.

Reply: Yes, the fear of Jehovah and the departure from evil are true understanding.

Comment: Job went through the chapter showing the wisdom of God, but in verses 26 and 27, he declared the *power* of God so that man would understand how little he is when the conclusion was drawn that the fear of the Lord is wisdom.

Reply: Yes, Job's counsel is remarkable, and because of faithfulness to the vows he made to God earlier in his life, he was rewarded in both material goods and the ability to give counsel to others. The comforters came to Job with a superior attitude of wanting to *give him* counsel rather than to receive counsel *from him* along the lines of their needs. Now, in spite of Job's physical calamities, he was speaking with great wisdom. The Christian has the same experience. There are testimonies in Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* about Christians who made astounding statements when given liberty to speak a few words prior to their execution. A minority of those who came to witness the executions as a sadistic form of pleasure marveled at, and later testified about, the superior power and bravery of these ordinary people in undergoing such severe tests. What they witnessed led to conversions.

Man looks everywhere for wisdom but the right place. That is why we, as Christians, must confine our study to God's Word and the parameters He sets. Even though we have consecrated and received scriptural knowledge, we must not be sidetracked into other avenues

in an exploration for knowledge. Some have strayed into universal salvation, for example.

Job 29:1 Moreover Job continued his parable, and said,

The same statement was made at the beginning of chapter 27. Although Job used a different style than our Lord in New Testament times, it is correct to call these chapters a parable.

Job 29:2 Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me;

Now begins a radical change from the previous chapter. Job was changing the subject to himself and his previous life and experience.

Q: How much time passed from the start of Job's afflictions until the comforters arrived?

A: We suggested that a few months had elapsed, as stated here. With the exception of Job's physical sufferings and disease, the comforters had heard about his afflictions (the loss of his property, children, and goods). From different locations, the three arranged to get together and collectively bring provisions to Job and comfort him. Of course these preparations took time, but it is reasonable to suppose that when the comforters arrived, they were surprised to see Job's pitiful physical condition. With empathy, they sat down with him in silence and fasted for seven days. The ensuing back-and-forth dialogue took place in one day.

Job 29:3 When his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness;

We have to put ourselves back in Job's day. By comparison, by living in today's present world and society and having the truth, we are almost spoiled rotten, as it were. So much has been given to us, yet there is little relative proportionate appreciation. Prior to electricity, there were no flashlights. One who walked outside at night needed a kerosene lantern or a candle for illumination. To put ourselves in the analogy, we would be standing outside at night, and someone would come up to us with a candle and shine it on our face and head. This is what God does to us, figuratively speaking. When He puts the candle to our face and head, we become cognizant of an omniscient presence. God takes the candle and walks slowly before us, as it were. We do not see Him, but spiritually speaking, we see the candle shining on the path we are to tread. God is invisible, but the light shines on our path. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18). The candle is increasing both naturally and spiritually upon our path, and now, at the end of the age, we have what is almost like apostolic light shining on our path in a brilliant way.

The Book of Job is dramatic. Job's words were somewhat poetic. He was saying, "When God's candle shined upon my head, and when by His light, I walked through the darkness down here below...." Job attributed his superiority over others to God's wonderful manifestation of favor of judgment abilities, giving him wisdom so that he could counsel others. Job was blessed both materially and spiritually. The thought of the candle on the head and light upon the path of darkness is marvelous, especially if we put ourselves emotionally back in Job's day. Now Job would give his testimony.

Comment: The mention of the candle is somewhat like the Church's experience at Pentecost, when the waiting disciples saw tongues of fire on one another.

Comment: A pillar of fire went before the Israelites in the wilderness at night to light their way.

Comment: The Scriptures are a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path (Psa. 119:105).

Reply: Yes, there are parallels in the experiences of the children of Israel and also during the Gospel Age upon Christians as individuals.

Job 29:4 As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle;

Comment: For the last part of verse 4, the RSV has “when the friendship of God was upon my tent.” In a sense, Job walked with God as Enoch did, and God disclosed certain truths to Job, for example, the fact that the earth is round. Job also knew that he would sleep in the grave for a while but that there would be a future resurrection.

Reply: Yes, Job had training. While no written books of the Old Testament were available in his day, the faithful got information through the records of Noah and his three sons. For instance, the lineage of the pre-Flood era was carried forward and eventually given to Abraham. Job would have been familiar with Abraham.

Comment: According to Young’s, the word “secret” is the Hebrew *sod*, meaning “counsel.”

Q: Was Job the only one in the area where he was living who had “secret” knowledge from the Almighty?

A: A remarkable person, Job was like a loner. During the first dispensation and subsequently during the age of the patriarchs, God dealt with unique individuals such as Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham. Moses was the meekest man in all the earth, and God gave Job an exceptional accolade (Job 1:1). Therefore, Job stood out singularly. Today Christians are not set apart singularly but are brethren. However, in those days, God particularly dealt with, at the most, perhaps three individuals at a time.

Comment: Solomon expressed a general principle for one who is young: “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them” (Eccl. 12:1).

Reply: Without giving details, Job mentioned he had this “secret” experience with God in the days of his youth. Later he became a judge, etc., but the experience began in his younger years.

Job 29:5 When the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me;

Job’s “children” died more or less as adults.

Job 29:6 When I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil;

Comment: Another translation has “buttermilk.” Job was referring to his previous prosperity.

Reply: Later, under the Law Covenant, the Israelites were promised prosperity for obedience. *Temporal* rewards were promised in crops, children, food, warfare, etc., whereas those under Christ are rewarded *spiritually* for obedience, with treasures *in heaven*. In addition, Christians are providentially given the necessities of life and are blessed in their experiences.

Comment: God even went so far as to say, “Prove me wrong.” “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and *prove me now* herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Mal. 3:10). He will open the windows of heaven.

Reply: That principle operated even prior to the Law but upon unique individuals and, to a certain extent, upon their siblings.

Q: Does the statement “the rock poured me out rivers of oil” indicate that whatever Job touched prospered?

A: Yes, the situation with Job was similar to that of the famous King Midas of Asia. Whatever he touched turned to gold.

Job 29:7 When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street!

Comment: The NIV ends this verse with a comma, not an exclamation point as in the King James. The comma clearly shows the connection of verse 7 with succeeding verses. When Job passed others on his way to sit as a judge in the gate, there were reactions from the young men, the aged, the princes, and the nobles.

Reply: Yes, Job was privileged to sit in the gate as a person of rank. Cases that required judgment and counsel were heard in the city gate. In Saudi Arabia today, film clips sometimes show people going before the sheik with their problems. The head of state sits and listens to personal cases.

Job 29:8 The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up.

Q: The Hebrew word translated “hid” also has the definition “withdraw.” Is the thought that the young men stepped back reverently when Job passed by?

A: Yes, and perhaps they subconsciously feared scrutiny on Job’s part. They were in awe of him, even though they were young men.

Job 29:9 The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth.

The word “princes” is the Hebrew *sarim*, which has a more respectful thought than merely a prince as an heir to a throne. *Sarim* usually means “rulers,” and rulers would already have little kingdoms of their own. At the appearance of Job, they “laid their hand on their mouth”; that is, they stopped talking and muted, or silenced, their conversation. Out of respect for this unusual personage, they terminated their private conversations.

While very early in the confrontation from the three comforters, Job declared his innocence and said that in his judgment he had not done any wrong to merit the degree and type of suffering he was experiencing, he did not disclose his inner thoughts as openly as he was now doing. We thank God that Job’s inner thoughts and his will to obey God have been recorded for us in this book.

Job 29:10 The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth.

Comment: When Job passed by, the nobles were at a loss for words. They felt inadequate in the presence of his nobility.

Job 29:11 When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me:

Comment: Job was an example in both word and conduct.

In what sense did the “eye” give witness to Job? According to the NIV, the eye commended Job. In other words, there was some eye-contact recognition. In addition to a verbal comment, subtle actions can show respect, such as a nod of the head.

Job 29:12 Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him.

Job helped the poor and fatherless children, who had no one to represent them.

Comment: Job judged righteously, for these were the innocent poor and helpless.

Reply: In rendering a decision, a judge should be just. On the roof of City Hall in New York City is a blindfolded woman wearing a white robe, symbolizing purity, and holding a pair of scales, representing justice, to weigh matters pro and con without prejudice in decision making. Emotionalism is improper in judgment, lest one have so much sympathy for the poor, for example, that he would automatically render decisions in their favor, even when they were at fault. In matters of judgment, neither wealth nor poverty should be a factor. Nevertheless, when a judge can see that a poor person is being victimized or preyed upon, he should make sure that no other circumstance warps his decision.

Comment: A judge should be no respecter of persons. “Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour” (Lev. 19:15).

Job 29:13 The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy.

“Him that was ready to perish” would be one who was about to die through, let us say, poverty of some kind. What about the widow? In later ages, what improper practices were followed, for example, in some churches?

Comment: A widow was taken advantage of financially. She had to pay for services she could not afford for her deceased husband and was still expected to contribute to the collection plate. She received no mercy according to her circumstances.

Reply: Yes, the Lord criticized such practices in the Jewish priesthood and also in the Roman Catholic Church. For instance, it was, and still is, the custom in some Catholic and Protestant churches to have the parishioners make vows or written pledges as to the amount of money they will contribute for the following year. Usually the one in charge wants to make up a budget for the ensuing year with various expenses in mind, an example being the addition of a new wing to the church. In the Catholic Church, the amount was even identified by the person’s name, rather than being an anonymous pledge. If tragedy struck the family during the year, no mercy was shown in regard to the promised contributions. The estate of the deceased person was considered vulnerable in spite of the tremendous hardship. Jesus criticized the scribes and Pharisees for taking advantage of the fatherless and the widows.

Comment: The book *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome* tells of such practices. As a little boy, Chiniy saw the priest come and take the only cow from his poverty-stricken mother after his father died.

Comment: Job was responding to an accusation made by Eliphaz back in Job 22:9, “Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken.” Job was saying that not only had he not sent widows away empty but he had caused their hearts to sing for joy because of his generosity.

Reply: Yes, Job was rebutting the comforters, who had criticized him and imagined all sorts of improprieties irrespective of his former reputation as a remarkable person. They had accused

him of secretly doing all kinds of dastardly deeds.

Job 29:14 I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem.

Comment: Under normal circumstances, Job's words might be considered bragging.

Reply: Yes, we are reminded of Paul, who had to justify himself as an apostle by enumerating the things he had suffered for Christ. Certainly he was not boasting, but it was necessary for him to show that the others, who considered themselves apostles, were improperly expecting honors, reverence, and service from the brotherhood, whereas it should have been the other way around. Jesus washed the feet of the disciples to show that the attitude of those held in high esteem should be to serve others rather than to be served.

Comment: Psalm 89:14 reads, "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face." Job followed this principle, being first just and then generous.

Reply: Yes, and notice again how closely the Psalms, which were written later, are aligned in thought with the Book of Job.

Comment: Job said, "I put on righteousness," not "I am righteous."

Reply: Usually one who sits in judgment wears special ceremonial robes. Job was saying that at heart, he was intent on doing the very things that the robes represented.

The NIV has "turban" instead of "diadem." However, it was not a turban in the ordinary sense because almost all men in olden times wore turbans, which were usually made of linen. Most turbans had colorations and configurations such as what Arafat wears today. Among the Arabs, the color of the turban, as well as the type and any insignias, signified rank. Even back in Job's day, the turban was a symbol of honor.

Job 29:15 I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame.

Anyone who could truthfully make such a statement exemplified wonderful works. How unusual Job was! This chapter reveals why God singled him out with particular respect, along with Noah, Samuel, and Daniel. What a high ideal is set before the Christian! And Job was an Old Testament saint, so he will not be given the privilege of the Gospel Age saints. Jesus had to be first in time, rank, and honor in every sense of the word, and after him come the more-than-overcoming *followers* of Christ.

Comment: When we receive truth, our eyes of understanding are enlightened. "Once we were blind, but now we can see" is the thought. Being "lame," we have weaknesses we cannot discern, but Jesus shows us the way we should go. We are so blessed to have an understanding of the Word of God.

Reply: And having been blessed because God has helped us, we are now in a position to open the eyes of understanding of others through God's Holy Spirit.

Job 29:16 I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out.

Comment: Job was conscientious as a judge. He tried his very best to do what was right for each individual, and that is what God expects of us.

Comment: Here is a case where the NIV is inferior. The end of verse 16 reads, "I took up the

case of the stranger,” rather than, “the cause which I knew not I searched out.” According to Young’s *Analytical Concordance*, the Hebrew word means “search out” or “investigate.”

Reply: Yes, the King James shows a spirit of humility in spite of Job’s great wisdom and position. In rendering decisions, he wanted to be so just that in a case which puzzled him, he would defer judgment and rendering a decision until he could think the matter over more soberly and quietly. If the testimonies of witnesses were complex and/or emotional, he either deferred the decision momentarily or postponed it until a future date so that he would have time to search out the facts and be able to give an honest, proper judgment.

Comment: Korah, and even Miriam, said that Moses was taking too much upon himself, yet he is called the meekest man in all the earth. Job, who was righteous, was considered unrighteous by the comforters, who said he deserved his afflictions. Similarly with us, our judgment could be skewed, and we could be misjudging one of the Lord’s elect because of outward signs, which are not necessarily a true indicator of what is happening.

Reply: Yes, studying the Book of Job should teach us to be careful in our judgment of others. “The LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7).

Comment: Out of the mouth of two or three witnesses is a matter established. One witness is not enough.

Reply: Yes, and if a claimant was guilty under the Mosaic Law, any false witnesses who tried to support him with false statements received the same penalty.

Job 29:17 And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.

Comment: Job broke the power of the wicked as if he were seizing the prey out of the jaws of a lion. He pulled away what the wicked stole from others.

Reply: Yes, Job’s actions were twofold: (1) he rendered judgment against those who victimized others, and (2) he rewarded the victims who had been despoiled or robbed. Unfortunately, today little thought is usually given to the one who has been victimized. The law is skewed against giving a reward or restitution to the injured party.

Job 29:18 Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand.

Comment: Job felt that his balanced obedience to the principles of mercy and justice would prolong his life, as was later promised under the Law of Moses.

Reply: In other words, let us say that a judge has a fixed tenure of time for service. When he retires, he would like to have the satisfaction that his past life was one of proper deeds.

Q: What is the thought of “die in my nest”?

A: To die *in peace* is the thought. Some like to die “with their shoes on,” that is, while in service.

There is another aspect as well. On the one hand, Job was emotional and personal to those who had been victimized, showing he had an emotional side to his character, but on the other hand, he did not let emotions influence his judgment. A judge should render *impartial* judgment. It is interesting that Job was willing to punish the wicked. People who are too soft do not render proper judgment when it comes to inflicting due redress and punishment. And people who are too hard and severe in judgment lack tenderness in their characters. The ideal for the Christian

is to have both a compassionate spirit and a hatred of evil. Because Jesus *loved righteousness* and *hated iniquity*, God anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows (Heb. 1:9).

Job 29:19 My root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch.

Job's root was spread out *unto* the waters. The principle is that those who hunger and thirst for righteousness and truth are rewarded by receiving some compensation. God is looking for these qualities in His people.

Comment: Jeremiah 17:7,8 reads, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."

Reply: Yes, in principle, that is the favorable perspective given in verse 19. Sometimes the tree is considered in an unfavorable sense. For instance, the wicked are likened to a green bay tree, which not only takes the water but pushes aside other vegetation. Moreover, it grows so large, spreading itself out and devouring the water, that other, younger trees are deprived. Another picture shows that the unjust are like a cow that goes into the water and muddies it, while its face is out (or ahead) where the water is fresh. When the animal returns to shore, those who enter the water subsequently are in muddy water. Hogs are another example, for they want all the food for themselves. However, verse 19 is favorable, showing that God rewards those who are trying to please Him. They will prosper, spiritually speaking.

"The dew lay all night upon my branch." "Dew" usually symbolizes favor.

Job 29:20 My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand.

With regard to doing that which was proper and good, Job said that God's commandments and judgments blessed him almost literally. For example, a comment in the *Manna* says that the Lord's Word not only gives renewal to our minds but also seems to have a beneficial effect upon the health of our bodies, even though they are fallen by nature.

Comment: Isaiah 40:31 reads, "They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

"My bow was renewed in my hand." In ancient times, men looked for a proper bow, one that was very strong but not so brittle as to break. If the strung bow was good and strong and springy, the arrow shot from it was swift and penetrating in flight. Accordingly, this expression about the bow was another way of Job's saying that obedience was health to the body. With a strong bow, Job could pull the string back because of renewed strength. Thus the Lord rewarded Old Testament saints for obedience. When they did right, they were blessed temporally. In contrast, the blessings of Christians in the Gospel Age are primarily spiritual, but to a certain extent, Christians are also blessed temporally, for they are provided with the things that are needful. By misapplying Old Testament promises, the nominal Church sometimes falsely promises that the Christian will become rich. However, God is not trying to tempt us with goodies to do His will. He wants us to obey of our own volition because we appreciate Him and the principles enunciated in His Word. A person who gives a freewill offering of his own heart and spirit of service is what God is looking for now. In the next age, people will be commanded, for every knee will have to bow to Jesus when he reigns in his Kingdom.

Job 29:21 Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel.

Verse 21 sounds like verses 8-11 and thus is self-explanatory.

Job 29:22 After my words they spake not again; and my speech dropped upon them.

Comment: An ad that has been running for many years has the slogan “When E. F. Hutton speaks, everyone listens.” Not only was Job respected for his age and beneficence, but he truly was a wise judge whom the people were eager to hear.

Comment: “And my speech dropped upon them.” Job’s counsel was like a weighty word.

Reply: Another financial ad solicits investments in bonds. In the ad, a man assumes the posture and voice of experience and speaks with authority.

Comment: Job’s words were almost like the wisdom of Solomon. After he spoke, the others were silent because the righteousness of his judgments and counsels was so apparent.

Reply: When two women came and stood before King Solomon, both claiming that a baby was theirs, the king commanded that a sword be brought and the child be divided so that each woman would get half (1 Kings 3:16-28). Then the true mother said, “No, do not divide the child,” and Solomon, who immediately knew she was telling the truth, said, “Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: [for] she is the mother thereof.” The incident concludes with the words, “And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment.” In other words, the people were dumbfounded with the wisdom of Solomon on that occasion.

Comment: Verse 22 shows how far Job’s situation had deteriorated from his former state of honor and respect. Now, following his words and reasoning, the comforters assailed him verbally. No longer did his speech drop upon silence.

Reply: Yes, Job was pleading his cause and giving the innermost thoughts of his heart. He was tenacious in protesting his innocence, for he had not done the evil deeds that were assumed by both the comforters and the populace.

Job 29:23 And they waited for me as for the rain; and they opened their mouth wide as for the latter rain.

We are reminded of a bird on a limb opening its mouth wide to catch a drop of rain. Christians are like the bird, waiting for refreshment. Job used the expression “latter rain” because fall rains were usually heavier. The religious year of the Jews under the Mosaic Law was an agricultural calendar of seven months. Once the seven months had expired, Temple worship was discontinued for the remaining five months, that is, during the winter months. The Jews then had to till and plow the soil, etc., in preparation for the next season. Usually the Jews waited anxiously for the latter rain to come, for the food crop of the next year depended on the precipitation.

Job 29:24 If I laughed on them, they believed it not; and the light of my countenance they cast not down.

Comment: Job was so respected and dignified that the people felt laughter was incongruous with his deportment. He was not given to levity, so when he occasionally genuinely laughed, the beholders were a little nervous as to the motivation. They considered him too noble for laughter.

Reply: “The light of my [Job’s] countenance they [the people] cast not down” because of their

respect for him. There is not one statement in the New Testament about Jesus' telling a joke or laughing. On one occasion, he wept. Moreover, the Scriptures tell that he was indignant about the remarks of some of the scribes and Pharisees, and accordingly, he manifested anger on at least two occasions. But nothing is said about his laughing or smiling.

Job 29:25 I chose out their way, and sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, as one that comforteth the mourners.

Job was so respected that he was head and shoulders over anyone else in regard to his position as a judge and thus could be said to dwell "as a king in the army." For example, Alexander the Great was "king" over an army, but the characteristic that caused the troops to serve him through thick and thin was not only his participation in battles but also his position in the *front*. Alexander the Great did everything that he asked his soldiers to do. He was so athletic and had such prowess—he was superior in his capabilities—that the men under him delighted to be part of his army. Similarly, the principle here in verse 25 is that Job was so esteemed and so superior in counsel, judgment, and mercy that others did not contest him in any fashion.

Job 30:1 But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.

Job now began to speak about his present condition and sufferings. He was acutely aware that in the derision slanted in his direction, the lowest element of society disdained him because of his appearance and forlorn state. Today, in the eyes of society, gypsies in Europe correspond to this base element. They scrounge for a living, going from place to place in civilized countries. Lacking formal education, they resort to fortune telling and are known for thievery and lying. This unfortunate circumstance seems to have come upon them through a genetic arrangement.

In Job's day, a base element existed that survived in the desert, living on some of the least productive foods. They were somewhat like hyenas in nature, who wait for other animals to make the kill and then keep sneaking in for a bite from the carcass. In verses 1-9, Job described how this base element, who previously shunned his presence, now mocked him.

Job 30:2 Yea, whereto might the strength of their hands profit me, in whom old age was perished?

The NIV reads, "Of what use was the strength of their hands to me, since their vigor had gone from them?" The thought is not that Job's vigor perished because of old age but that the base element, the vagrants, were a wasted race physically, mentally, and morally. For survival, they resorted to all kinds of strategies. Not only did Job disdain to have them or their parents shepherd his flock, but they were unprofitable to him in all capacities. Verses 1 and 2 show that these base people did not fit into society, and Job did not fit into their "society." In having a contest to see if Job would remain faithful and not curse God, Satan had put Job in a pitiful circumstance.

Job 30:3 For want and famine they were solitary; fleeing into the wilderness in former time desolate and waste.

Their physical want, their lack of job opportunities, and, to a certain extent, their mental state forced them into the desert to get food for sustenance. They were driven into the ruins of formerly prosperous cities to try to scrounge food from the roots of plants; that is, to derive strength, they lived on the lower products of nature that were not designed as food.

Job 30:4 Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper roots for their meat.

Comment: “Mallows” were a silvery white shrub that flourished by the shores of the Dead Sea. Another translation has “salt herbs.” They had a sour flavor and would never have been eaten if better food was obtainable.

Reply: Yes, mallows were a form of brush.

They “cut up ... juniper roots for their meat.” The base element survived by eating mallows and juniper roots, that is, thorns and thistles. What does “juniper” remind us of?

Comment: Elijah slept under a juniper tree, also called a “broom tree.” “As he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, ... an angel touched him, and said ... , Arise and eat” (1 Kings 19:5).

Reply: Yes, the more literal translation is “broom tree.” In antitype, Elijah slept under a broom tree until 1829. The angel awakened him and gave him a meal that lasted until 1846, the date of the Evangelical Alliance, when a sweeping work was introduced by the nominal system to separate the orthodox from the unorthodox and to identify supposed cults. From their perspective, the debris was swept away in the separation.

Job 30:5 They were driven forth from among men, (they cried after them as after a thief;)

Due to genetics, lineage, etc., these base people were in a dire situation, but others had to be on guard because of the tendency to steal. As the base element were driven away, they snatched items, so that people cried after them “as after a thief.” This lower class of society resorted to animal-like tactics. Based upon their parents and grandparents, they developed these behavioral characteristics.

Job 30:6 To dwell in the cliffs of the valleys, in caves of the earth, and in the rocks.

This base element dwelled in whatever nooks or crannies they could find in nature: cliffs, caves, and rocks. As desperate as their conditions were, they viewed Job’s circumstances as inferior to their own. And Job also felt that he was in this situation.

Incidentally, because of the time element in returning to hotels at night, many who went to the Great Pyramid in the past and examined it to any extent (Petrie, the Edgars, and others) slept in nearby or adjacent tombs, which were comfortable year round. During summertime, the tombs were cool, and in winter, they were warm.

Job 30:7 Among the bushes they brayed; under the nettles they were gathered together.

The base element brayed like donkeys. People who are in dire impoverishment tend to huddle together, even if they are starving. The expression “misery loves company” is thus applicable even in nature. Gypsies, for example, are loners from the standpoint of society, but loners gathered together unto themselves. Back in Job’s day, this base element did the same.

Job 30:8 They were children of fools, yea, children of base men: they were viler than the earth.

The base element was “viler than the earth.” For example, employees in mental hospitals sometimes develop strange characteristics themselves; that is, they begin to acquire the habits of the patients. In other words, environment can have an adverse effect. Reports in the past stated that the most mentally depraved people in institutions ate from troughs on the floor like pigs. Humans who are brought down mentally to such a low estate are regarded as viler than animals, who were born and created that way. Job was using figurative but realistic language. This element of society was debased to a circumstance lower than the animals.

Comment: We are reminded of King Nebuchadnezzar, who was abased for seven years like an animal. “The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles’ feathers, and his nails like birds’ claws” (Dan. 4:33).

Job 30:9 And now am I their song, yea, I am their byword.

Job 30:10 They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face.

Job pictures the experiences of, first, Jesus, the Head of the Christ class, and then his followers. In the Dark Ages, true Christians were considered viler than the basest of men. Orthodoxy, established religion, viewed them as heretics and the scum of society—as worse than thieves and robbers. At the end of Jesus’ ministry, when he became the “man of sorrows,” some spit in his face, but earlier he was perhaps the most popular man in all Israel. Thousands went to hear him preach, and hundreds followed him from place to place, let alone his disciples. He was well known, and through his healing, the common people heard him gladly (Mark 12:37). However, at the close of Jesus’ ministry, that circumstance changed radically to where he was considered the basest of men. The scribes and Pharisees delighted when they had him in their power, and in his closing moments, he was subjected to the meanest circumstances. Not only was Jesus scourged like a common criminal and hung naked on the Cross, but also he was spat upon and taunted. “If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross” (Matt. 27:40). Earlier he was highly regarded, called “Rabbi,” and considered head and shoulders above others in wisdom and understanding. To such an extent was this true that his apprehenders said, “Never man spake like this man” (John 7:46). Thus, through providence, Jesus was taken from a circumstance of favor to one where he was regarded as a curse of society.

And so the Lord tests us to the degree of our capability. (Thank God, we are not tried above what we can endure!) The principle of the permission of evil is that God proves us to see whether we *really love Him* with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Job’s experience had its counterpart in the experience of the true Christian. Stated another way, the Christian who is faithful will get a similar experience to some degree. Those who receive the experience to a greater degree and are faithful, as Paul was, will get the brighter crown, the higher reward.

Job 30:11 Because he hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me, they have also let loose the bridle before me.

From *Job’s* perspective, because God had loosed the cord of communication and afflicted him, this base element of society unbridled their mouths before him. However, God did not directly afflict Job but merely *allowed, or permitted,* Satan to cause suffering. There is a wide difference in the two perspectives, but the time was not due for Job to understand the permission of evil, that is, the reason for his sufferings.

The next chapter (chapter 31) will show the liberation of Job in some respects. A reward began to come upon him.

Just as the cord on a person’s bow can become loose and thus lose its effectiveness for shooting a straight arrow, so Job was unstrung and powerless and did not know what to do. He felt not only undone but also that his death was imminent. Job felt that for some unknown reason, God had permitted this strange experience and had loosed him to this undone condition. In addition, the tongues of his enemies were loosed so that they spit in his face and spoke all kinds of indignities to him without any fear of retribution.

Comment: The Apostle James picked up this thought of the bridle by saying, “If any man

offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body" (James 3:2,3). He continued with the thought that we, as Christians, should try to put bridles on our mouths.

Job 30:12 Upon my right hand rise the youth; they push away my feet, and they raise up against me the ways of their destruction.

In his destitute circumstance, Job was not standing on his feet but was down on the ground with his knees up to his chest and his hands braced against his shins in a mournful, pitiful ball. While he was in this posture, these youths not only spoke disparagingly to him but also kicked his feet as they passed by. Their swift kicks were as if to say, "Let us get rid of this rubbish." For instance, if we saw an article on a common walkway, we might kick it out of the way lest someone trip on it. As Job sat there mournfully, these base youths wanted to kick him out of the way like a piece of rubbish. This base element, which before was very careful not to confront Job in any sense of the word, now heaped all kinds of indignities upon his person. They considered Job as society considered them.

Comment: Recent news reports tell of youths who poured gasoline on a homeless man and set him on fire.

Reply: In seeking prey, the lion looks for the very young, the feeble, the immature, and the wounded, and so it often is with depraved humanity today.

This base, sordid, sadistic element exists in fallen human nature. We certainly want to rise above such tendencies, and we thank God that He has given us the marvelous tool of the Holy Spirit and the robe of Christ's righteousness. Otherwise, without these provisions for our safety and the venue of prayer to get strength and help from the Lord for understanding and grace, we would quail when we look at the perfection of God and Jesus.

Job 30:13 They mar my path, they set forward my calamity, they have no helper.

Some translations give the thought that the base element not only poked fun at Job but also wanted to push him aside out of the path, thus intensifying his already unfortunate circumstance and grief. They succeeded in this destruction and did not fear any retribution from either Job or his friends.

Job 30:14 They came upon me as a wide breaking in of waters: in the desolation they rolled themselves upon me.

The clause "They came upon me as a wide breaking in of waters" suggests that this part of Job's experience was a sudden event that occurred in the month or two before the three comforters arrived. Job was already in a sad, physically diseased state. For many years, he had been prosperous and renowned; then suddenly the calamity came upon him. A break in a dam can start with a little hole, and then suddenly the dam is breached and the flood waters come rushing out. Thus Job was explaining that the calamity had come upon him like a sudden flood.

"In the desolation they rolled themselves upon [or against] me." We can almost visualize what must have happened. Job, in a sad state, was sitting on the ground. The base youths, getting down on their knees, made fun of him and rolled and tumbled over him with laughter. No wonder Job is singled out by name in the Old Testament for his faithfulness!

Job 30:15 Terrors are turned upon me: they pursue my soul as the wind: and my welfare passeth away as a cloud.

Verse 15 is a comparison. Job was previously well established in society and world-renowned in the land of Uz. Job is the true “wizard of Oz,” for what is presented as entertainment was a serious rendition of his life and experience. His establishment as a rock in society was now like a cloud that had been blown away by the wind—like a tumbleweed in the desert that had been blown across the sand, bouncing up and down like a ball. Job now found himself in that terrible situation.

Job 30:16 And now my soul is poured out upon me; the days of affliction have taken hold upon me.

Comment: The NIV reads, “And now my life ebbs away; days of suffering grip me.”

Reply: The NIV is taking liberty to use more modern terms, but the thought is correct.

Job 30:17 My bones are pierced in me in the night season: and my sinews take no rest.

Job’s malady affected him physically, emotionally, and mentally. Both day and night he suffered great discomfiture, extreme unpleasantness.

Job 30:18 By the great force of my disease is my garment changed: it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat.

A peculiarity in time of famine, when the body does not have sufficient nourishment, which evidently was part of Job’s problem, is the occurrence of various anomalies, one being that bones protrude, sometimes like sticks, while the belly swells. For instance, pictures of some children in Africa show exceedingly thin arms and legs, yet their bellies are swollen and frequently their faces as well. Thus parts of the body radically change. Apparently, Job’s neck was discomforting him, for his coat collar was constricting. In other words, parts of his body were swollen, yet his bones stuck out—two opposite conditions.

Comment: Rotherham has, “Most effectually is my skin disfigured; like the collar of my tunic, it girdeth me about.”

Comment: Back in Job 2:4,5, in the allegorical discussion with God, Satan said, “Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.” God permitted Satan to bring Job to the extreme condition of suffering he was now experiencing, but Job did not “curse” God.

Reply: Yes, God wanted to show Satan how great the loyalty of Job was.

We are reminded of Jesus’ last moments on the Cross when his bones were sticking out, and the shape of his body was distorted and twisted (Psa. 22:6,14). When the Holy Spirit descended on him at his baptism at Jordan, the memory of his previous life came back to him with great force, and he knew the whole Old Testament by heart. Although there is no specific evidence, we believe the Book of Job helped Jesus in his suffering on the Cross except for that one brief moment when, in experiencing the curse that came on Adam for sinning, he cried out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Jesus was then relieved of that experience, for his last breath was a cry of triumph, “It is finished!”

Job 30:19 He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes.

Job 30:20 I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me: I stand up, and thou regardest me not.

Job “cried” unto God audibly, not just inwardly. He stood up to get recognition, desiring an answer.

Job 30:21 **Thou art become cruel to me: with thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me.**

The word “cruel” has the implication of “stern.” God became *stern* toward Job—a simple, self-evident fact. (To state that God became “cruel” would be a reflection on the divine character.)

Comment: *Strong’s Concordance* says the thought is “to act harshly.”

Reply: The New Testament states that the hand of God was heavy upon our Lord Jesus.

Job 30:22 **Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my substance.**

Verse 22 reminds us of a tumbleweed in the desert that is blown hither and yon by the wind because of the lightness of the thistles. Job’s sickness had created such a condition in him. Inwardly his emotions affected him to the point that he felt no stability but was being blown about, figuratively speaking. He had no resistance to the experience.

Comment: In previous chapters, Job was starting to see the permission of evil. Now he seemed to be going backwards.

Reply: When people are in extreme pain or illness, they go in and out of experiences—they lose consciousness and revive, they lapse back into a coma-like condition and come out of it, etc. With sickness, these changes occur. Sometimes emotions are involved such as fear and depression; then comes a moment of relief.

Comment: When Job talked to the comforters, he was trying to make them see that their viewpoint was not the proper one, for people do not necessarily suffer in the present life for the evil they have done. When Job talked to God, as here, he was still wondering why his sufferings were so extreme.

Reply: Certainly that was the situation in earlier parts of his experience, but this entire chapter was like a soliloquy where he was almost talking to himself. The others could hear his words, but he was pleading his cause to God, stating the facts of his experience and trusting that God would somehow respond. For the moment, however, he had no reassurance: “Thou ... dissolvest my substance.” Job’s spirit within him had blown away like the tumbleweed.

Q: Was Job pushed here almost to the breaking point as far as getting close to Satan’s objective?

A: Those who are most loyal to God are severely tested proportionately, almost to the breaking point. Such extreme testing crystallizes character in a way that softness and mild conditions cannot accomplish. God will not test us above what we are able, but the testing comes close to that point if we are of the caliber of the Little Flock. The testing, which is in proportion to our strength, brings out the most in a person. Consider the importunate widow, who pleaded her cause before the judge. Finally the judge heard her cause because she was such a nuisance.

Job 30:23 **For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.**

Job knew he could not expect to live forever. All of the fallen Adamic race, who are on the public stage, are going to the grave, whether good or bad. When once there, their suffering ends. Job knew there would be a cessation to the trial that was upon him, and he anticipated that his suffering would stop with death. “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest” (Eccl. 9:10). Thank God, mankind will be granted an opportunity for life in the Kingdom Age, and those God is specially dealing with now, in the Gospel Age, have an even higher opportunity in advance of the world. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10).

Job 30:24 Howbeit he will not stretch out his hand to the grave, though they cry in his destruction.

Verse 24 is like an end to preceding verses. Usually death is not pleasant, for it entails suffering physical pain and/or anguish of spirit. Death ends the particular experience.

Comment: Pain is associated with both entering this world (birth) and leaving it (death).

Reply: Yes, and similarly, we bring nothing into this world, and we take nothing out. We come in bare and go out bare.

Job 30:25 Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor?

Verse 30 starts a change in venue. Job was back in the defensive mode before God, almost as if he were before a judge, pleading his cause.

Although, of course, we should not have the attitude of the comforters, it is good to think of ourselves as witnessing this experience of Job and hearing him utter these words. How do his words react on our heart? We get lessons by almost entering vicariously into Job’s experience. Not only was he a very good judge and a helper of others, but also he was so sympathetic that he actually wept for those who were in trouble. The Apostle Paul says that we should weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who are joyful in their experiences—and not do the opposite in trying to be a comforter.

Job 30:26 When I looked for good, then evil came unto me: and when I waited for light, there came darkness.

Earlier Job had mentioned a foreboding that evil might come, but in doing the best he could to be a blessing to others, he logically expected to get the rewards of righteousness, such as longevity of life. Job was looking for further light and encouragement in his conduct when *all of a sudden*, out of the blue, Satan was allowed to cause this severe experience and loss to come upon him. So extreme was the experience that only Job’s life was spared. The affliction took him by surprise—he was waiting for light, and what came? Darkness!

Comment: When unexpected things happen, the Morning Resolve helps: “Faith can firmly trust Him, come what may.”

Reply: Actually, Job was exercising faith but not in the sense that we are privileged to do now because we have more hindsight and foresight with regard to the knowledge that Jesus Christ came with the gospel. Many mysteries of the past have unfolded and brought a degree of understanding that Job did not have. He had exceptional understanding for a person of his day and age but nothing comparable to what we have today. Thus we are sort of shamed by seeing the sterling character of Job and then comparing it with ourselves and all of our wonderful knowledge. He is an exemplar of one whom God loved, and under those circumstances, we

admire him for not cursing God, which was Satan's objective.

Job 30:27 My bowels boiled, and rested not: the days of affliction prevented me.

Comment: The NIV reads, "The churning inside me never stops." When we are very upset about something, we can have digestion and internal problems.

Reply: Yes, sometimes the distress can even cause a bowel movement or vomiting. Job was testifying of his experience.

"The days of affliction prevented [confront—NIV] me."

Job 30:28 I went mourning without the sun: I stood up, and I cried in the congregation.

Verse 28 shows humility on Job's part. He "went mourning" outside to the public; he stood up and looked for commiseration and sympathy from those to whom he had previously manifested many benefactions. He had previously stood up for them; now he was standing up and asking for sympathy in return. He cried out, confessing publicly in the congregation his misery and need for some comforting words. Of course no sympathy was forthcoming.

Job 30:29 I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls.

The NIV has "jackals" for "dragons." Job was saying that although he was in the company of others, he was in isolation. All kinds of activity, gaiety, and music may be going on, but those who are in low spirits are in a world of their own—in a desert, as it were. It was prophesied concerning Babylon, the great universal empire of the past as well as of the future, that in the latter experience, its adherents will be put out into outer darkness. Owls are birds of the night. The point was that instead of getting comfort, Job found that his going out in public surprisingly, but truthfully, seemed to increase the intensity of his loneliness.

Comment: The Tanach reads, "I have become a brother to jackals, a friend to owls." Then a footnote states, "Jackals and owls make mournful sounds." The mournful sounds harmonized with or described Job's feelings and sounds.

Reply: Jackals and owls are often associated in Scripture with a ghost town. However, one can have a "ghost town" experience even in public. Some people are so depressed that in spite of all the assurances, they commit suicide—the very thing they should not do. Certainly Job was not in a literal wilderness, but he was in a figurative wilderness experience by not getting from others the commiseration and sympathy that he so desired and sought.

Job 30:30 My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat.

Usually with famine, the skin darkens. Job's bones "burned with heat" because an intense fever was part of his malady.

Job 30:31 My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep.

A harp can make a mournful sound as well as a sweet, delicate sound. By "organ," Job probably meant the flute.

Comment: The implication is that the music was played in the minor key, which sounds sad.

The next chapter furnishes wonderful insight into Job.

Job 31:1 I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?

Job made a vow to the Lord that he would be faithful to Him and to his wife in not looking lustfully on another woman. Among the many accusations the comforters had made against Job, unfaithfulness was one. In viewing his disease and affliction, they concluded he had committed some secret sin. Then they began to accuse him of various sins without having any circumstantial evidence. But Job was innocent.

Comment: There is an expression, “With friends like that, who needs enemies?”

Job 31:2 For what portion of God is there from above? and what inheritance of the Almighty from on high?

What reward or inheritance would come from the Almighty on high if Job had sinned according to the accusations of the three comforters? If he made such a vow and then broke it, what could he expect from God but retribution? Afflictions come upon both guilty and innocent people, relatively speaking. Therefore, people cannot be judged for moral uprightness according to accidents, disease, etc.

The account continues along the lines of the inconsistency of making a vow to God and then breaking it. A consecration vow should not be made lightly.

Job 31:3 Is not destruction to the wicked? and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity?

Job 31:4 Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps?

One who makes a serious vow to the Creator and then disannuls it merits punishment. But Job kept saying he was innocent as he declared his own case. In fact, he was circumspect in his behavior in order to please God.

Job 31:5 If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hasted to deceit;

Job 31:6 Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity.

Job continued to justify himself, and properly so. In this chapter, Job revealed to the comforters the innermost thoughts of his heart, expecting commiseration. However, while the three came initially to comfort Job, their criticisms constituted them as enemies. Now, as his last discourse to the three comforters, Job was giving a synopsis of his past history and innermost thinking.

Job 31:7 If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to mine hands;

Job 31:8 Then let me sow, and let another eat; yea, let my offspring be rooted out.

Job was saying, “If I have deviated from my righteous thoughts and intents, then let me sow and another eat, and let my offspring be rooted out.” Now Job went to the other extreme. He not only protested his innocence but said that if the accusations were true and he was guilty of hypocrisy in his words, then God should judge him. What more could Job do to declare his innocence?

Q: The word “offspring” is translated “crops” in the NIV, and *Strong’s Concordance* defines it as “issue, that is, produce or children.” What is the proper thought?

A: From a literal standpoint, the word “crops” is intended, but by implication, Job was saying, “Let not only my goods be destroyed but also my children.” Both thoughts are profitable.

Comment: Job had lost both his crops and his children, so he was speaking in a poetic sense, but he was also saying that *if* he had followed evil ways, God should have removed them.

Comment: Because of his afflictions, Job’s comforters addressed the situation as if he were guilty, but he took the standpoint of the innocent, saying, “I would expect these kinds of punishment if I had done something wrong, but the fact of the matter is that I did not.” Thus his afflictions could not be equated to guilt.

Reply: One should be considered innocent until proven guilty.

Job 31:9 If mine heart have been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbour’s door;

Job 31:10 Then let my wife grind unto another, and let others bow down upon her.

Through verse 12, this chapter pertains to Job’s protestation of innocence in not lusting after another woman. By implication, he was faithful to his wife and his covenant. In verses 9 and 10, he said in effect, “If I have been unfaithful with a woman, then let my wife be given to someone else as a slave or a concubine.”

Comment: The NIV states more clearly what the KJV puts delicately: “If my heart has been enticed by a woman, or if I have lurked at my neighbor’s door, then may my wife grind another man’s grain, and may other men sleep with her.”

Job 31:11 For this is an heinous crime; yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges.

Job 31:12 For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and would root out all mine increase.

Verses 11 and 12 are a summation of the subject matter thus far in the chapter. To commit the heinous crime of adultery would merit the death penalty. Figuratively speaking, the sin would be “a fire that consumeth to destruction,” and it “would root out” all of Job’s increase—that is, it would justifiably take away Job’s offspring, crops, wife, etc.

Job 31:13 If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me;

Job began a different slant on his practices of the past. In connection with the servants in his household, he was no respecter of persons. His habit was not to brush them aside but to listen to their complaints. A man in Job’s prestigious, honorable, and respected position customarily paid little attention to the grievances of his servants, but he was the exception. Even though he was renowned in the world of his day, he condescended to listen to their complaints.

Job 31:14 What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?

Job felt that if he had been hypocritical in dealing with others, he could not expect favorable comments from his Creator. “What shall I answer him [God]?” Job felt that if he had brushed aside the servants’ complaints, God would brush him aside. Job was circumspect, upright, and compassionate. The Scriptures tell us to be slow to speak and swift to hear (James 1:19).

Comment: Similarly, as fallen human beings, we can approach God through Christ Jesus, and our prayers are heard.

Reply: “For thus saith the *high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose [very] name is Holy*; I dwell ... with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isa. 57:15). God gives a hearing ear to those who want His aid, to those who implore recognition and call on Him for mercy and help in their distress and need. “The eyes of the LORD ... run to and fro through the whole earth,” looking for those who are interested in their Creator and want not only to know why they are here but also to bring their life into harmony with Him and have true happiness and peace in their hearts (Zech. 4:10).

Job 31:15 Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?

The miraculous process of producing children goes back to God, who originally designed man and woman with this capability. Job listened to the man or woman servant who brought up a complaint with as much respect as he had for himself, for they were all made in the womb. What nobility of character Job had!

Job 31:16 If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail;

In spite of his wealth and prestige, Job was emotional, compassionate, and approachable—Godlike qualities.

Job 31:17 Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof;

The fatherless ate at Job’s table, and he gave them advice and help, that is, not just words. What more could a Christian do, as far as having this type of attitude?

Job 31:18 (For from my youth he was brought up with me, as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother’s womb;)

Comment: The NIV reads, “But from my youth I reared him [the fatherless] as would a father, and from my birth I guided the widow.”

Reply: Job was, as it were, a father to the orphan and to the widow. He made no distinction with a servant whether male or female.

Job 31:19 If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering;

Job 31:20 If his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep;

Q: The NIV translates “loins” as “heart.” What is the thought?

A: Just as the sinews activate the muscles in the movement of the body, so the heart has “loins” (strings). We use the expression that someone tugs at our “heart strings” (instead of our “heart loins”). Those who are in a position of wealth and honor are prone to think of self and do not observe those who are in need. They are blind to those in need, not necessarily intentionally meaning harm or wrong but having a natural dullness of perception because of being preoccupied with self. That is where Satan fell—his heart was lifted up within himself because of his great wisdom. God gave a very high appraisal of Lucifer as first created, but beauty

entrapped him. Lucifer became self-enamored.

Job 31:21 If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate:

Job 31:22 Then let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone.

Job was “in the gate” when in the role of a judge. A judge, for self-advantage, was in a position to deprive a young, defenseless orphan of his rights. But Job said that if he had lifted up his hand against the orphan, then his arm should fall from his shoulder and be broken from the bone. If he was a hypocrite along these lines and had not shown mercy to the unfortunate, then judgment should come upon him. A judge was supposed to provide help and be a blessing. In fact, God raised up judges to help His people, Israel.

Verse 22 is a reminder of Psalm 137:5, “If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.” The Jews have made this statement at the Wailing Wall and at other times in history.

Job 31:23 For destruction from God was a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure.

Comment: Job had such a reverence for God that he feared to displease Him.

Reply: Yes, Job had a healthy regard for God’s position and for what God would do for inconsistency and an improperly exercised stewardship.

Comment: Job’s reverential fear was shown early in the Book of Job. Worried that his children might do something to displease the Lord, Job offered sacrifice on their behalf (Job 1:5).

Reply: Job is a wonderful example for the Christian.

Job 31:24 If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence;

We can picture someone counting his gold, jewelry, and possessions and thinking of them as his security. To have one’s heart rest on possessions is one thing, but along a practical line during the Holocaust, many Jews translated their property and goods into diamonds, put the diamonds in soft dough, and had their children swallow them. Then they went into exile and converted the diamonds back into money. Such action was prudent under the circumstances but would not be so under ordinary conditions.

Job 31:25 If I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much;

Job 31:26 If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness;

Job 31:27 And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand:

Verse 26 refers to the worship of the sun and the moon. In heathen worship, the mouth kissed the hand in various ways; for example, the behinds of the false-god calves of Bethel were kissed. Today Catholics say the Rosary, pronouncing a prayer on and kissing each bead. Prayer wheels are another practice.

Job 31:28 This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied

the God that is above.

Comment: If Job had committed any of these iniquities—rejoicing over his wealth, worshipping the sun and the moon, having his heart secretly enticed, or kissing his hand with his mouth—he deserved punishment for his unfaithfulness to God.

Job 31:29 If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him:

Verse 29 reveals Job's nobility of thought. Even when his enemy met with misfortune, he did not gloat.

Comment: Job did not hate his *personal* enemies, but *God's* enemies were another matter.

Reply: We are humbled by our own shortcomings.

Job 31:30 Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul.

Some are glad to see retribution fall on their enemies, but Job was not of that disposition.

Job 31:31 If the men of my tabernacle said not, Oh that we had of his flesh! we cannot be satisfied.

Comment: Job was solicitous of the hungry, being careful to feed them if he was aware of their circumstance.

Reply: Certainly he was vigilant not to overlook the misfortune of those who were in need, especially when he was in a position to proffer help and be a benefactor through advice, experience, and temporal means. He was a faithful steward along those lines.

Q: Does verse 31 imply that Job taught those in his household and those under his direct supervision?

A: Yes, Job was an example to his household. When Cornelius became the first Gentile convert, not only he and his immediate family but also the entire household responded to the information the Apostle Peter gave identifying Jesus as the Messiah. They all repented, were baptized, and became recipients of the Holy Spirit. By example, Cornelius was remarkable, and in the same fashion, Job was an example with his household.

Job 31:32 The stranger did not lodge in the street: but I opened my doors to the traveler.

Verse 32 describes hospitality, another commendable quality of Job.

Comment: The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats lists a characteristic of the sheep class in the Kingdom as giving lodging to strangers (Matt. 25:35,38,40).

Job 31:33 If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom:

The Hebrew word *adam* can be thought of as Adam personally or as “man[kind].” Certainly the King James calls attention to the fact that when Adam sinned and partook of the forbidden fruit, he was conscious of his nakedness. As a result, both he and Eve fled amidst the trees of the Garden of Eden to hide themselves when they heard the “voice” of God (that is, God's mouthpiece, the Logos) calling. Adam's sensation came from his conscience. Similarly, when we do something wrong, our conscience, if tender, responds and warns us; it is an indicator.

We pray that God will help us to ever keep our conscience pure, honest, open, and tender and not let it become seared and unresponsive like a piece of dried leather when we do wrong.

Job 31:34 Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me, that I kept silence, and went not out of the door?

Job is described, from God's standpoint, as an outstanding example. Nevertheless, in spite of Job's nobility, office, and stature as a citizen of his native land, he readily confessed whenever he committed a transgression.

Comment: Righteousness was such a part of Job's inner being that when he saw an injustice, he had to speak out.

Reply: Some translations give that emphasis, which is probably the proper thought.

Job 31:35 Oh that one would hear me! behold, my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me, and that mine adversary had written a book.

Earlier Job spoke at times almost in a legalistic mode—like the defendant or a lawyer pleading the defendant's cause before the judge or the court. The language in verse 35 is along that line. In giving his defense before the court, Job presented examples of his behavior during his lifetime to show that he was not of the disposition others were discrediting him with. He was pleading his cause before the court of justice, which was really before God as the Judge.

Comment: The NIV seems to bring out that point: "Oh, that I had someone to hear me! I sign now my defense—let the Almighty answer me; let my accuser put his indictment in writing."

Job 31:36 Surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me.

Comment: If the indictment were put in writing, Job was so sure of his innocence that he could wear it on his shoulder or on his head like a crown because the accusations were false.

Reply: Yes, Job wished that God would prove his innocence and exonerate him. In a court case, especially if the charge is a serious one, a person who is proven or stated to be innocent is usually in a triumphant mode. When what formerly condemned the individual and put him in a bad light before the public is seen to be not only inaccurate but also false, the person comes forth almost as if he is wearing victor's laurels. Such an experience shows that people should be careful not to falsely accuse anyone.

Under the Mosaic Law, a deliberate false witness got the death penalty. Of course people with poor eyesight or hearing can misconstrue evidence and unintentionally give a false testimony. A lawyer then cross-examines the witness to ascertain the veracity of the testimony. Thus the court tries to do what is right, but with imperfect man, there are cases where innocent people are found guilty, and guilty people are found innocent. Thank God that such a miscarriage of justice is the exception rather than the general rule!

Job 31:37 I would declare unto him the number of my steps; as a prince would I go near unto him.

Job would declare unto God (or to the accuser) "the number of my steps; as a prince would I go near unto him." If Job were innocent, he would feel no embarrassment or reflection on his character. As a prince, he could approach either the one who had found fault with him or the Almighty, the Judge, without shame or guilt. Instead of having his head bowed with shame, he could stand in an upright position before the Judge, the jury, and his accuser because of

exoneration.

Q: In terms of Job's narration thus far in this chapter, was he saying that he was prepared to be accountable if he was guilty?

A: He stated the matter both ways. On the one hand, he was ready to be accountable if guilty, but on the other hand, he desired to be declared innocent if that was the case.

Job 31:38 If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain;

Comment: The land would figuratively "cry" against Job and the furrows would complain, if he had planted on, and thus not observed, the seventh-year sabbath.

Job 31:39 If I have eaten the fruits thereof without money, or have caused the owners thereof to lose their life:

Comment: If he had stolen from others, he expected punishment.

Reply: Verse 39 calls to mind Naboth's vineyard in the days of Elijah (1 Kings 21). When Ahab wanted to buy the vineyard and Naboth declined, Queen Jezebel said to seize it with his kingly authority. Through Jezebel's conniving and false witnesses, Naboth was executed. With the type of judgments that came before Job for decision making, he was in a position to similarly use the power of his office and his knowledge to take advantage of the impoverishment of others and thus increase his property at their expense, but he did not misuse his office for personal gain.

Job 31:40 Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley. The words of Job are ended.

Comment: Verse 40 reminds us of part of the curse that came on Adam after his disobedience: "Thorns also and thistles shall it [the ground] bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field" (Gen. 3:18).

Comment: Job felt that if he was guilty of misusing the land or of stealing "fruits" from others, he deserved to have briars and weeds grow on his property.

"The words of Job are ended." We do not know whether Elihu, the author and recorder of the Book of Job, or Job himself made this statement. Job may have used this technique to say, "I am finished. I have said it all. That is the end of my argument."

Comment: Since Job spoke again later on in the book, this verse ended his defense against the accusers. His next words were along another line.

Job was a deep thinker. Even the comforters were given to a philosophical mode and not to frivolous talk.

Job 32:1 So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

The three comforters ceased their reasoning with Job because he indeed "was righteous in his own eyes." They saw they could not convince him of any particular wrongdoing that would merit his circumstances. Verse 1 is a summation of all preceding chapters in which Job and the comforters reasoned back and forth. Verse 2 starts a new setting.

Job 32:2 Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred

of Ram: against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God.

Comment: Elihu was the son of Barachel, the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram. Genesis 22:20,21 shows that Elihu was a relative of Abraham. “And it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold, Milcah, she hath also born children unto thy brother Nahor; Huz his firstborn, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel the father of Aram.”

Reply: Terah had three sons (Abraham, Nahor, and Haran), and the Buzites were descended from the Nahor branch (Gen. 11:26). In one way or another, all of the characters in the Book of Job had one common ancestor: Shem. Several generations down the Shem line was Terah, the father of Abraham. Earlier chapters of Job provide a lineage for two of the comforters to show that they were related to Abraham. The third comforter, Zophar, was also related to Abraham. Although there is no definitive knowledge about his background, he was certainly of the Semitic line.

“Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu ... against Job ... because he justified himself rather than God.” This was a true judgment on the part of Elihu, for Job could not find anything in his life that would deserve, in a compensatory fashion, what the three comforters considered to be retribution for some mysterious sin. As time went on and Job did not confess, the three comforters began to imagine various sins against the orphan and the widow, in taking bribes, etc. Job continued to profess his innocence but wanted God to answer him with regard to the trials he was experiencing. No answer was forthcoming, just silence. Thus, to a certain extent, it appeared that Elihu was correct in saying Job justified himself rather than God. But we should keep in mind that Elihu, who was angry, and the three comforters did not have the experience of Job. It is easy to criticize someone else who is undergoing very difficult circumstances in the Christian walk that we may not comprehend. True, there may be secret problems (not gross contradictions) that give some credibility to a circumstance which seems contrary to the Christian walk. Therefore, on the surface, there was nothing to rebut Elihu’s criticism of Job. From Job’s perspective, however, how could he justify God when he did not know why he was having the afflictions? The point is that Elihu started with a relatively clean slate, but his statements chapter after chapter will be convincing about his antitypical representation.

Job 32:3 Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.

Why was Elihu also angry with the three comforters? The NIV reads, “He was also angry with the three friends, because they had found no way to refute Job, and yet had condemned him.”

Job 32:4 Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken, because they were elder than he.

Verse 4 indicates that Elihu was present and had heard all that transpired between Job and the three comforters. Not only was he the youngest of the four, but he was properly silent until the others had finished talking, showing respect for his elders. Apparently, Elihu came on the scene almost contemporaneously with the arrival of the three comforters.

Comment: We can see Elihu’s ability for recall, for he captured the essence of everything that was said.

The Great Company class are usually considered unripe (immature) wheat. As we proceed, the cumulative evidence will show that Elihu represents the Great Company class.

Job 32:5 When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, then his wrath was kindled.

Elihu's wrath was kindled when he saw that the reasoning of the three comforters did not properly rebut Job's comments.

Job 32:6 And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not show you mine opinion.

Job 32:7 I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.

Verses 6 and 7 are another plus for Elihu, for the Scriptures tell us to honor the hoary head (Lev. 19:32). Generally speaking, older people have more understanding, at least in the pragmatic experiences of life. We get the impression that Elihu had exercised restraint to keep from interrupting the conversations between Job and the three comforters. To his credit, he was respectful and remained silent.

Job 32:8 But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

The Holy Spirit, the inspiration of Almighty God, gives understanding and enlightenment. The Apostle Paul reasoned that we, as Christians, have an advantage in that before consecration, we had worldly (natural) wisdom and experience, and now we have spiritual understanding—a double education, as it were. Thus we have a better vantage point than the unconsecrated, who see things from only the natural standpoint. This type of thinking is compacted into verses 6-8.

Comment: The name Elihu means “[he acts as though] he is God Himself.” This signification is appropriate, since Job will be vindicated.

Reply: Elihu was providentially given this name when he was born because God knew he would be a character in this book.

Job 32:9 Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment.

Verse 9 is a true statement, and thus also to Elihu's credit. People who are considered “great” by the world are not always great in God's sight, yet they can be very influential in history. Elihu was saying, “Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged *necessarily* understand judgment.”

Job 32:10 Therefore I said, Hearken to me; I also will show mine opinion.

Here is a slight hint of Elihu's feeling of superiority: “Hearken to me; I will give you my thought.” Elihu and the three comforters were all unusual men who had a background of wisdom.

Job 32:11 Behold, I waited for your words; I gave ear to your reasons, whilst ye searched out what to say.

Elihu was saying, “I listened to your reasoning while you searched out what to say.” He probably observed that while Job was talking, the comforters were whispering to each other, trying to think what to say. As they heard certain remarks, they said to one another, “We will get him on that point!” Eliphaz, the oldest, was given deference in speaking first, and the sequence seemed to follow.

Comment: With Elihu's lineage going back to Abraham, and then back to Shem, we can see that traits of good etiquette were passed down through the generations.

Reply: Of the five characters in the book, the least lineage is furnished for Job. The statement is simply that Job was from the land of Uz (Job 1:1).

Job 32:12 Yea, I attended unto you, and, behold, there was none of you that convinced Job, or that answered his words:

Comment: The NIV reads, “I gave you my full attention. But not one of you has proved Job wrong; none of you has answered his arguments.”

Job 32:13 Lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom: God thrusteth him down, not man.

Ostensibly, Elihu gave Job the benefit of the doubt—at first. He looked with more askance on the three comforters and indicated he would defend Job like a lawyer. As will come out later, Elihu felt he was providentially sent by God to overhear the conversations.

Job 32:14 Now he hath not directed his words against me: neither will I answer him with your speeches.

Elihu was saying, “Job did not speak with me earlier, but I heard all his arguments. Now listen to what I have to say about his reasoning.” Then he said positively, “Neither will I answer him with your speeches,” yet later he did answer Job with the speeches of the three comforters. As he proceeded, he brought up the same arguments. It is important to listen to all that Elihu said. As his words accumulate, we will get a firm conviction as to whom he represents.

Elihu went out of his way to make himself look like a respected statesman. He had really wanted to speak sooner but realized that had he done so, the force of his words would be undercut. He was saying, “I respect you three because you are older. Not only is it decorum for you to speak first, but an axiom is that usually the aged have more experience.” At the same time, Elihu was building up his own prestige with the attitude “This is what *I* have to say.” He implied he was more capable than the three because he had superior wisdom.

Comment: Since Job represents the Little Flock, it is interesting that his only concern was his personal standing with God, not what the others were thinking about him. In contrast, the others were concerned about Job’s standing with God, not their own.

Job 32:15 They were amazed, they answered no more: they left off speaking.

The three comforters were apparently so absorbed in discussing Job’s situation that they were oblivious to the fact that young Elihu was listening attentively. Being amazed and startled to realize he was there and had heard all that was said, they would now let him occupy the stage. We will hear nothing further about the three comforters.

Job 32:16 When I had waited, (for they spake not, but stood still, and answered no more;)

Verse 16 helps to prove that Elihu wrote the Book of Job, for these are his inner thoughts. Careful reading will reveal clue after clue after clue.

The people of olden times had an effective way of remembering that is now a lost art. As Christians, we need the Holy Spirit to call things to remembrance (John 14:26). God gives us the spirit of a sound mind for retention.

Job 32:17 I said, I will answer also my part, I also will show mine opinion.

Job 32:18 For I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me.

Comment: The NIV reads, “For I am full of words, and the spirit within me compels me.”

Job 32:19 Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles.

Jesus said, “Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish” (Matt. 9:17).

Job 32:20 I will speak, that I may be refreshed: I will open my lips and answer.

Comment: Verses 17-20 are a reminder of Jeremiah 20:9, “Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.”

Job 32:21 Let me not, I pray you, accept any man’s person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man.

Notice how Elihu gave credit to and bolstered himself: “I will not show partiality to anyone or give flattering titles.” It is apparent that he thought quite highly of himself. The Scriptures teach us not to mix honey (flattery) with our offerings to God or to make long prayers and speeches to impress others. In showing he was qualified to give *impartial* judgment, Elihu was building himself up to be the arbiter, the one who would put Job in his place. As he continued, he revealed what he thought of Job. In promoting himself as an unbiased judge, he felt that God, through providence, had caused him to go to Job and listen to the conversation with the three comforters. Hearing Job say certain things convinced him he had been providentially led there. It is true that Elihu’s being there was providential—but not for the reasons he gave. He downgraded the three comforters as not being capable of properly rebutting Job’s remarks.

Job 32:22 For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my maker would soon take me away.

Elihu manifested a false humility. To show humility, some will be last in line or take a back seat, for example, but the *motive* is important.

Q: A comment in a previous study said, “Elihu was not uttering these words aloud to Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. Rather, he was soliloquizing and, as a historian, relating his mixed feelings in listening to the three and Job.” Was Elihu speaking out loud, or was he soliloquizing?

A: He seems to have been soliloquizing for the most part, but whether he was speaking aloud or thinking these things in his heart does not really matter, for his words show an *attitude*. The present study is intended to show the *thinking* of Elihu. He felt that he was superior to the three comforters and that he could answer Job’s situation. He was not just disturbed at Job but was actually *angry*. Elihu’s innermost thinking was being revealed. However, soliloquizing seems to be the proper thought.

Job 33:1 Wherefore, Job, I pray thee, hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words.

Elihu had a high opinion of himself: “Job, ... hear *my* speeches, and hearken to all *my* words.”

Comment: This is the first time a speaker took the liberty to address Job by name.

Job 33:2 Behold, now I have opened my mouth, my tongue hath spoken in my mouth.

How dramatic! In other words, “Listen to what *I* have to say.”

Job 33:3 My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart: and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly.

Verse 3 continues to reveal Elihu’s high opinion of himself.

Comment: Elihu was also being derogatory to Job, implying that *he* had an upright heart but Job did not, and that *his* lips were sincerely speaking but Job’s were not.

Job 33:4 The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.

Elihu was making himself the spokesperson for God. The statement in verse 4 is true, but it is true of all of us. As God’s people, we have our sins covered by the robe of Christ’s righteousness. Our intent is to do God’s will, but the actual performance is a completely different matter. From that standpoint, “our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” except that we are covered with the blood of Jesus Christ (Isa. 64:6).

Job 33:5 If thou canst answer me, set thy words in order before me, stand up.

What self-laudation!

Comment: In a subsequent chapter, God uttered similar words (Job 38:3). Here we can see how conceited Elihu was.

Comment: Despite the fact that Elihu made these remarks, he did not really think Job would be able to reply. He continued to lecture for several chapters.

Job 33:6 Behold, I am according to thy wish in God’s stead: I also am formed out of the clay.

Comment: It was as if Elihu were saying, “Stand up before me, the *judge*. I am in God’s place; I am your judge.”

Reply: Although Elihu said, “I *also* am flesh,” he thought very highly of himself. How odd!

Job 33:7 Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee.

Elihu said, “Neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee,” but it *was* heavy, as later chapters show. As we proceed, it will become apparent that some of his views were similar to those of Job—especially when we consider that Elihu prefigures the Great Company class. For example, Job and Elihu both had the faith of Abraham.

Job pictures The Christ being tried. Of course the body members, being imperfect, are covered with the robe of Christ’s righteousness, but Jesus, the Head of the body, is perfect. Thus God called Job “perfect,” meaning perfect in intent, but the description fits the picture of Jesus as the Head (Job 1:1). Subsequently the Book of Job talks about the body members and the criticisms they get from fellow citizens, as well as from fellow Christians, be they nominal or true.

Job 33:8 Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words, saying,

Job 33:9 I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me.

Elihu was quoting Job's words in protesting his innocence—not from sin completely but from sins proportionate to the trials that had come upon him suddenly at the hand of the Adversary, who was given permission to touch Job's flesh. Job felt he had not sinned commensurate with the type of affliction he was having. He did not think he was perfect in the sense of committing no sin, but he felt he had not committed a sin that would merit what was happening to him.

Job 33:10 Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy,

Elihu continued to quote Job. Earlier Job had expected to receive comfort and helpful advice from the three, but instead they became inquisitorial, as in the Inquisition of the Gospel Age. They kept asking, "What grievous sin(s) did you commit to cause this affliction to come upon you?" As the conversations continued, they even began to imagine that he had taken bribes as a judge, that he was a faker, that his reputation was not justifiable, etc., yet they had no substantive, clear evidence, for they had come from a distance and were not on the scene. They particularized the supposed sins of Job, but their words were all imagination.

Comment: Jesus was talking about a spirit, or attitude, similar to that of the comforters with their evil surmisings when he said, "Men shall hate you, and ... shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake" (Luke 6:22). It is almost with malice that such imaginations rise up in the heart.

Job 33:11 He putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths.

Job's feet were figuratively put in stocks in the sense that he could not return to his normal life as a judge, to his former status of honorable reputation. Instead of showing respect, the people ridiculed him.

"He marketh all my paths." Cain's paths were also "marked" after he slew Abel. Wherever he went, his reputation followed him. However, Cain merited the judgment, whereas Job did not.

Job 33:12 Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man.

Elihu was saying, "In this, you are not just, Job. Therefore, I will answer you, that God is greater than man." The latter statement is true, but the way or manner in which Elihu brought it into the conversation was untoward. It was uncomely of Elihu to thus address Job, who was much superior. Job had had a renowned reputation, being known throughout the area. By comparison, who was Elihu? God's assessment was that Job was "perfect," and such a statement was not made about anyone else—not even Daniel, Noah, or Abraham. Job was perfect in his intentions, and he kept his vows. Near the end of an earlier discourse, Job told of his circumspect vows. It is astounding that he revealed his innermost thoughts of devotion to the Creator in the presence of those who were criticizing him. Many of Elihu's statements were true, but they were not especially applicable to Job.

Job 33:13 Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters.

"Why do you strive against God, for He does not give account of any of His matters?" There was a measure of truth in these words of Elihu, for Job did teeter on the borderline of questioning God's dealings with him. Of course, at that time in history, the permission of evil was not understood. Not until Moses came—the next generation—was a reason given as to why God tries man. "And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no" (Deut. 8:2).

Job 33:14 For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not.

Why did Elihu say, “God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not”?

Comment: Elihu implied that God had answered Job but that Job had failed to get the lesson.

Reply: Yes, he was inferring that God had spoken to Job twice. Elihu tacitly admitted that some of the comforters’ advice rang true. And we would agree that the comforters occasionally gave valid criticism on certain facets of Job’s statements, but from God’s standpoint, Job was an entirely different character than they realized. Moreover, he was personally under severe testing by Satan. The comforters were not suffering or in pain or sickness, and neither was Elihu. And they were not persecuted like Job, who told what happened when he entered the city in his afflicted and blemished condition. Even the children now mocked him with his protruding bones, sores, etc., whereas formerly they had respected and almost feared him.

Job 33:15 In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed;

Comment: Elihu was saying that a dream or a vision is one way God answers man.

Reply: Yes, and this argument is used today in nominal Christendom. Of course it is true that, on occasion, God does answer man’s importuning and prayers by a dream, but that would be in very unusual cases. We sometimes hear people tell about how they have seen Jesus and talked with him in a buddy-buddy fashion. Unfortunately, such disgraceful reports are getting more and more common. And some individuals are even bold enough to say that Almighty God has literally talked with them. The Scriptures indicate that such messages are demon contact, for “no man hath seen God at any time” (John 1:18). In fact, for man to see God in His glory under present conditions in the flesh would bring death.

Comment: An example of an extraordinary circumstance when God revealed things to man in a dream is Joseph in regard to Mary: “But while he [Joseph] thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 1:20). This appearing of an angel in a dream was the exception, not the rule.

Reply: Many of Elihu’s statements ring true. It was his attitude, application, and inferential twist that were inappropriate in his criticism of Job.

Job 33:16 Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction,

“Sealeth ... instruction” would mean answering prayer.

Job 33:17 That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.

Verse 17 gives a negative slant. Elihu was saying that what God reveals in a dream or a vision by night is corrective in nature for the one who is doing something questionable, and that the revealing is designed to hide pride from man. Again there is a degree of truthfulness in Elihu’s statement, and this fact shows that he represents an enlightened class (the Great Company).

Job 33:18 He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.

Elihu had said earlier that he would not use the same arguments the three comforters had used in trying to persuade Job to see the error of his way. He had said, “I am not like them. I will use another strategy. They were unsuccessful, but let me see what I can do.” He was rather confident his reasoning would be superior but soon began to use the arguments of Eliphaz and

Bildad. On the one hand, some of his logic was tainted with the comforters' type of reasoning, and on the other hand, he made some good statements. The situation was mixed.

Job 33:19 He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain:

“Look at Job’s pitiful condition!” Elihu was describing Job’s condition at that moment. With Job’s appearance being pitiful and loathsome, it looked as if God had inflicted a great punishment for something he had done. Elihu was setting the stage for some comments he would make. Now he would proceed to give his thoughts on the remedy.

Earlier in the book, Job had said he had difficulty sleeping because he suffered from pain, his bones ached, and his mind was troubled with nightmares. Satan was severely testing Job according to the flesh, God’s only restriction being that Satan could not take his life. Satan’s testing was nearing the limit, for Job was nearing the grave (verse 22).

Job 33:20 So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat.

Comment: The NIV reads, “So that his very being finds food repulsive, and his soul loathes the choicest meal.” The meaning is the same, but the wording may be easier for some to grasp.

Job 33:21 His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen stick out.

Here is a comment on the pitiful appearance of Job.

Job 33:22 Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers.

Job’s condition was so serious that he was nearing the death state.

Job 33:23 If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness:

Job 33:24 Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.

The word “man” refers to Job: “If there be a messenger ... , an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto Job his uprightness: Then he is gracious unto him.” Elihu considered himself to be the messenger, interpreter, and “one among a thousand” who had providentially entered into the discussion and was in God’s stead. He felt he was the fleshly spokesman for God, the one whom God had chosen. He would show God’s mercy with the hope that it would straighten out Job to see matters in the correct light; then the joy of God’s favor and the light of His countenance would again shine on Job. Thus Elihu was still presuming his superiority.

Comment: Elihu is another type to show that, generally speaking, the Great Company on this side of the veil feels superior to those whom God sees as the Little Flock.

Of course Elihu’s statements here are pleasing to us because we know that Jesus came to give his life a ransom for many. “The man Christ Jesus ... gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Tim. 2:5,6). Elihu had a degree of enlightenment, and his words were often pleasant, such as the next verse, verse 25.

Job 33:25 His flesh shall be fresher than a child’s: he shall return to the days of his youth:

Ultimately in the Kingdom, when Jesus judges the earth, those of mankind who benefit by bowing the knee and hearkening to his instruction will be rewarded with their flesh becoming “fresher than a child’s,” and they shall return to the days of their youth. Sometimes we see a baby or a young child whose face looks so lovely that we cannot help rubbing the cheek with the back of our hand. When the obedient of the human race return to the perfect state in the Kingdom Age, how lovely things will be—physically, mentally, and emotionally!

Job 33:26 He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness.

By implication, Elihu was saying, “Job shall pray unto God, and God will be favourable unto Job: and Job shall see God’s face with joy: for God will render unto man his righteousness.”

Elihu and the three comforters assumed that prosperity, health, longevity of life, etc., were the result of good behavior. The permission of evil was not understood until the time of Moses, who said, “The LORD your God doth prove you whether you do love Him with all your heart” (Deut. 8:2,16 paraphrase). While the statement of verse 26 is true, generally speaking, there are exceptions. Jesus was called a “man of sorrows” (Isa. 53:3). This description did not apply to his entire ministry, but certainly it described him at the end of his ministry, when his soul was “exceeding sorrowful, even unto death” in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:38). Thus the Christian has mixed experiences: cold and warmth, shadow and sun, pain and joy. The point is that Elihu was misreading Job.

Comment: For all of Elihu’s self-accolades and his statement that he would not use the arguments of the three comforters, his words here are very similar to what was stated before. He was saying that all Job had to do was to pray for forgiveness for his sins, and God would forgive and bless him.

Reply: In the previous chapter, Elihu said, “Great men are not always wise, and neither do the aged understand judgment. Therefore, hearken unto me, and I will also show my opinion.” In this chapter, verse 1, he said, “Wherefore, Job, I pray thee, hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words.” Here was a *young* man talking to Job. “Behold, now I have opened my mouth; the tongue in my mouth speaks.... Behold, I am according to thy wish in God’s stead.... If thou canst answer me, set thy words in order before me, stand up.” Then Elihu said his hand would not be heavy upon Job—but that remains to be seen! Elihu continued, “He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, ... and his bones ... stick out.” Of course the implication was that Job had sinned. “Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I will speak.”

Job 33:27 He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not;

Job 33:28 He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.

Elihu was suggesting that Job should confess and repent—just as the three comforters had done previously. Elihu contradicted himself right and left in many of his statements.

Job 33:29 Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man,

Job 33:30 To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.

Job 33:31 Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I will speak.

Job 33:32 If thou hast any thing to say, answer me: speak, for I desire to justify thee.

Job 33:33 If not, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I shall teach thee wisdom.

Notice Elihu's emphasis on self: "I will speak.... I desire to justify thee.... I shall teach thee wisdom."

Comment: In the God's Word translation, verses 31-33 are as follows: "Pay attention, Job. Listen to me. Keep quiet and let me speak. If you have a response, answer me. Speak, for I would be happy if you were right. If not, you listen to me. Keep quiet, and I will teach you wisdom."

Q: Does Elihu's superiority indicate the heart condition of the Great Company?

A: Yes, it does, although those of the Great Company do not recognize this fault in the present life. In the Kingdom Age, it will be seen who God finally selected to be of the Little Flock. Then the Great Company, who misunderstood the preciousness of such individuals in the sight of God, will experience shame in their presence. No spanking of the Great Company will be needed, for the very revelation of their being a second choice will in itself be a form of retribution in the next life. The principle is, "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after" (1 Tim. 5:24). The Great Company will experience humiliation and shame.

Comment: There seem to be overtones of restitution in Elihu's words. For example, verse 25 reads, "His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth."

Reply: Yes, and in fact, Elihu spoke more about the Kingdom than Job did.

Q: Would it be characteristic of the Great Company here at the end of the age, generally speaking, to be more interested in giving a restitution message than an up-to-date very-end-of-the-age message?

A: Yes, that sounds reasonable because certainly in the Dark Ages, restitution was not seen clearly. It was understood in the early and latter parts of the Gospel Age. "Restitution" is the lost coin that the woman was searching for in the parable. When she found the silver coin, her neighbors and friends rejoiced with her (Luke 15:8-10).

Q: Does Elihu represent the Great Company because he had more truth regarding the Kingdom than the three comforters?

A: Yes, that is one point to be noticed in summing up Elihu's counsel and how it differed from that of the comforters. Elihu could not have made some of his statements without being enlightened, but being enlightened does not necessarily make one wiser. For instance, Solomon was wise in one respect and very unwise in another. Biblically speaking, true wisdom, which comes from above, is a little different than sagacity or being erudite.

Job 34:1 Furthermore Elihu answered and said,

Job 34:2 Hear my words, O ye wise men; and give ear unto me, ye that have knowledge.

Elihu's words were aggressive: "Hear my words, O ye wise men; and give ear unto me." He had addressed Job by name in the previous chapter, and now, instead of addressing the comforters as Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, he said, "O ye wise men." With Elihu being the youngest, this attitude was unbecoming. It makes us nervous to hear discourses that speak too much about those in the nominal systems, contrasting them with us. It is better to tread softly when we do not know the background of others, as some unusual individuals are in the church systems. Blasphemous doctrine is another matter, however. We need to stay humble and not

get too confident about where we stand with the Lord. Faith (or trust) and hope are legitimate aspirations, but not until graduation will we really know where we stand in the Lord's sight.

Job 34:3 For the ear trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meat.

Verse 3 is a true statement, but Elihu's tie-in was wrong. In hearing words, the ear tries to discern, and the mouth tastes the bread of truth to see if it is moldy or fresh. Spiritually speaking, the axiom is good, but the application can be untoward under certain circumstances.

Comment: Earlier Job spoke similarly: "Doth not the ear try words? and the mouth taste his meat?" (Job 12:11).

Reply: Elihu probably did not recall Job's words, as is true with all of us in principle. We may think certain statements we make are original, and that may or may not be true because we sometimes forget the source or the occasion on which something was said.

Job 34:4 Let us choose to us judgment: let us know among ourselves what is good.

Again Elihu's words sounded good. In other words, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD" (Isa. 1:18). Many Bible scholars who like Elihu's Hebrew and manner of expression think he was the brilliant individual in the Book of Job.

Job 34:5 For Job hath said, I am righteous: and God hath taken away my judgment.

It is true that Job said he was righteous, but we cannot read the heart intent. When we listen to one another or when others listen to us, what matters is the true motive that lies in our bosom, as it were, and that motive can be misconstrued or given a little wrong twist. Job felt he had not done anything wrong to merit the degree of afflictions that had come upon him. The three comforters and Elihu did not see Job in the proper light. On certain occasions, some of Job's statements appeared quite incriminating, but what was in his heart had a different (and better) slant than the printed words seem to indicate. Thus, although Job's words were not wholly right, he was in a questioning mode, asking why certain things had happened, and he desired an answer. In fact, the very way he expressed his questioning was intended to provoke an answer regarding God's providence toward him.

Job 34:6 Should I lie against my right? my wound is incurable without transgression.

Job did not say he had no transgression. What he meant was that his transgressions were not commensurate with his sufferings and/or punishment.

Job 34:7 What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning like water?

Job 34:8 Which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men.

How quickly Elihu contradicted himself! In Job 33:32, Elihu stated that he desired to justify Job, but already, now, he said that Job drank up scorning like water, associated with workers of iniquity, and walked with wicked men. Elihu probably did not know any more than the three comforters about Job's personal life and exceptional integrity and character before this calamitous experience befell him. The comforters were from a foreign country, and Elihu was probably not a neighbor either. Incidentally, all four and Job were Shemites, i.e., descendants of Shem, but in different branches of the lineage.

Perhaps, too, the printed statements in the Book of Job were intended to show the *thinking* of

the Great Company class rather than being, in every instance, an outward expression of that thinking. But words have to come out in print in order for us to know the thinking. Because of the clues about Elihu that are manifested in his words, it is reasonable to conclude that he wrote the Book of Job. For instance, Elihu expressed his innermost thoughts, and neither Job nor the three comforters would have known his personal thoughts. Thus the Book of Job is not to be considered precise statements in every instance.

Comment: If Elihu is the author of the book—and obviously it was written after the fact—it is remarkable that he wrote in such detail.

Reply: His writing the book was a form of self-inflicted repentance in the hope that it would make him more right with God. Similarly, the Book of Ecclesiastes, which contains many wonderful sayings, was a form of repentance for Solomon.

Job 34:9 For he hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God.

Elihu attributed this statement to Job—that it profits a man nothing that he should delight himself with God.

Comment: A cross-reference to Job 9:22,23 shows that Elihu was perverting Job's words: "This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked. If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent."

Reply: Yes, Elihu misconstrued Job's prior statements with similar wording. We must be careful lest we do injury to others by the way we quote statements they have made or by remaining silent when their words are misquoted.

Comment: We should keep in mind God's commendation of Job in the first chapter: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" (Job 1:21,22).

Reply: Yes, two incidents in the earlier chapters, before the three comforters entered the picture, remarkably bring out the nobility of Job.

Job 34:10 Therefore hearken unto me, ye men of understanding; far be it from God, that he should do wickedness; and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity.

Now Elihu was defending God. His words were true but not necessary. His forms of address to the three comforters, "ye men of understanding" and "ye wise men," could have had a twinge of sarcasm, for they seem to lack sincerity (Job 34:2).

Job 34:11 For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways.

In other words, man will be requited according to what he does or says. And eventually that will be true. "By thy words thou shalt be either justified [acquitted] or condemned" is the principle (Matt. 12:37). In fact, we will be judged by everything that comes out of our mouth, but, thank God, it is the *habit* of thought and expression that becomes vulnerable or liable to guilt or exoneration.

Job 34:12 Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment.

Again Elihu acted as God's spokesperson.

Job 34:13 Who hath given him a charge over the earth? or who hath disposed the whole world?

Job 34:14 If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath;

Job 34:15 All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.

Elihu was saying, "Who has put the whole world under God's care? Certainly God is in charge! We are all created beings. Should God at any time, according to His pleasure or His displeasure, gather the breath of life back to Himself, that would mean the utter demise of all." This was a rather strange, round-about way of saying that God is the Creator and we are responsible, as His created beings, to heed wholly His instruction. Again Elihu was saying grandiose things.

Job 34:16 If now thou hast understanding, hear this: hearken to the voice of my words.

Verse 16 is another example of Elihu's high-mindedness.

Comment: It is interesting how Elihu kept starting out with a correct statement and then mishandling his comment on the statement. After uttering a truth, he followed it with faulty thinking.

Job 34:17 Shall even he that hateth right govern? and wilt thou condemn him that is most just?

These rhetorical questions are self-explanatory. Elihu was justifying his wisdom.

Job 34:18 Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked? and to princes, Ye are ungodly?

What about these questions? Generally speaking, when we, as Christians, are rebuking, we should respect the office of those in authority regardless of the character of the individuals. We should say, "Your Honor," for example. A certain respect is due those who occupy an office, but that respect can be followed by criticism done in a question form. Of course Jesus was an exception to this principle, for he was a superior King. When Peter and John were apprehended and imprisoned and then told not to speak truth anymore, they replied, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). When the Holy Spirit came upon these two unlettered men, they became bold. It is interesting that truth gives the spirit of a sound mind. In fact, in reading Peter's epistles, we are almost astonished with wonder at the change and maturity that came over him. The point is that there is decorum, but there is also a time to speak forthrightly.

Job 34:19 How much less to him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor? for they all are the work of his hands.

In giving his credentials, Elihu had said, "I will give you true judgment. I am not a respecter of persons." Though young, he was saying, "Listen to *my* words and *my* wisdom."

We should not be a respecter of persons in matters of judgment and of right and wrong, but we should be a respecter of persons in the ordinary concourse of life. Especially with brethren, we respect them according to their character development. And Jesus exercised that right with the three apostles, giving them favors that were not extended to the other nine. Elihu made a lot of good statements, but his application in the context he used them was faulty.

Job 34:20 In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and pass away: and the mighty shall be taken away without hand.

In verse 20, “midnight” is the moment of death from the perspective of individuals, generally speaking. Consecrated brethren, when about to expire, may have one of two opposite experiences: (1) they are sure they will go to heaven, or (2) they beg and implore for forgiveness. Neither experience may really fit the picture concerning that individual because, by nature, one is polarized as either an extrovert or an introvert. Brethren are either leaders or followers. It is desirable to reach a happy medium between the two extremes. Certain talks have used as the highlight statement that a dying brother’s rejoicing indicated he had made his calling and election sure, but such emotions are not reliable indicators. After all, Jesus was not too positive until his last breath. We cannot judge ourselves or others by emotions. A lifetime of study is needed, and we hope to come off more-than-conquerors and live and reign with Jesus Christ. We run the race knowing that not all are winners.

“The mighty shall be taken away without hand.” In other words, many die a natural death—by heart attack, disease, or an accident, for example. Sometimes death comes relatively quickly. In olden times, most deaths were probably more sudden. Today respirators or medications can delay what would be a natural death.

Job 34:21 For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings.

Job 34:22 There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.

Job 34:23 For he will not lay upon man more than right; that he should enter into judgment with God.

Job 34:24 He shall break in pieces mighty men without number, and set others in their stead.

In regard to verses 21 and 22, why did Elihu call attention to the fact that there is no darkness or shadow of death with respect to God, that none can hide from His awareness?

Comment: Elihu was implying that even though Job, by outward appearance, seemed to be a righteous man, there must have been something iniquitous and hidden in him.

Reply: Verse 24 supports that thought by saying God would “set others in their stead,” that is, in the place of mighty men who were “workers of iniquity.” Elihu certainly had Job in mind with that statement. He was saying that whatever Job might have done in the past, God was under no obligation to restore him to that position, for others could be put in his stead. Again Elihu made a true statement but misapplied the truth—and the comforters often did likewise.

Comment: All four presumed Job to be guilty.

Reply: Yes, there was not the understanding of the permission of evil at this stage of history. Incidentally, while Elihu was saying there was no darkness or shadow of death, Job realized that God knows everything. Thus Elihu’s statements were not new information, but he misapplied them.

Comment: An important lesson is that we could have a lot of understanding and truth, but unless we have all the facts and the right spirit, we, too, might be guilty of misapplications. Especially the three comforters, but also Elihu, made accusations based on circumstantial evidence.

In verses 7 and 8, Elihu said, “What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning like water? Which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men.” This accusation reminds us of Jesus’ experience when he was accused of eating with publicans and associating with sinners. However, it was not that he loved the fellowship of sinners but that sinners came to him for help. They wanted to hear what he had to say. It is so difficult—and a lifetime work—for us as new creatures to properly judge. Usually it is just before we de cease that we begin to understand, and then we wish we had known earlier.

Comment: In regard to Jesus’ ministry, the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees were even greater sinners, because of their position and knowledge, than those who came to Jesus for help.

Comment: Psalm 139:12 reads, “Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.”

Reply: Yes, in saying there was no darkness or shadow of death, Elihu was implying that to God, everything was light. Elihu stated many principles, but he erred in verses 7 and 8, where he condemned Job for keeping company with sinners. And perhaps sinners came to Job for help. The problem with Job’s accusers was that they had *no substantive credible evidence* to incriminate him. They improperly analyzed *circumstantial* evidence such as his appearance.

Job 34:25 Therefore he knoweth their works, and he overturneth them in the night, so that they are destroyed.

Elihu continued with a statement that is not necessarily true: “God knows the works of wicked men, and he overturns them in the night so that they are destroyed.” On certain occasions, such as the almost immediate judgment with Ananias and Sapphira, this statement would be true but not as a general rule in the present age. Thus Elihu made another blunder. Of course God knows when men commit wicked works and can read the heart, but He does not necessarily destroy the individuals in a way that is evident to the public.

Job’s contention was that judgments come upon both innocent and wicked people, but he also considered the other side of the coin—that both wicked and innocent people have periods of prosperity. Strict dogma cannot be set because there are exceptions to the general rule in regard to both good and bad people in the present life, but the long term is another matter, for the ultimate destiny of the wicked is the pit. The eventual destiny of those who are righteously inclined and whose wills desire to please God is life, and depending on the degree of intensity of zeal and respect that one has for God, there are various levels of reward.

Comment: Malachi 3:15 talks about the circumstances at the present time: “And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.”

Reply: Yes, numerically speaking, the wicked prosper now.

Job 34:26 He striketh them as wicked men in the open sight of others;

To this statement of Elihu, we say yes and no. Much of Elihu’s reasoning was along this line, with unclear statements. His premises were something like the following: “All fish swim. John swims. Therefore, John is a fish.” The first two statements are true, but the third is a false conclusion.

Job 34:27 Because they turned back from him, and would not consider any of his ways:

Wicked men will be given the opportunity in the Kingdom Age to retrace their evil steps. Some

men's sins go beforehand to judgment, and some men's sins come afterward. Certain wicked individuals will not get a resurrection, such as Judas and perhaps a few others, but they are the exception. Those who do wickedly in the present life and do not make a commitment to serve God, as Job did, will have to retrace their harm in the Kingdom Age in order to get life. Retribution will be applied at that time for willful sin committed in the present life. As we will find out later, this principle is illustrated in the Book of Job.

If Elihu had understood about Satan, he would not have espoused these arguments. Because of the lack of information, Elihu expressed things that help us to understand in antitype why the Great Company, who cannot read the heart as God can, misunderstands the Little Flock. To a certain extent, the Great Company reasons like the world but with a little higher level of understanding because of familiarity, to a greater or lesser extent, with God's Word.

Job 34:28 So that they cause the cry of the poor to come unto him, and he heareth the cry of the afflicted.

Actually Job had said that the wicked oppress the poor. In fact, Jesus said that, generally speaking, the wicked take advantage of widows, orphans, etc.

Job 34:29 When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him? whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only:

When God gives "quietness, who then can make trouble?" And when He hides His face, "who then can behold him? whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only." Once again this is a true statement.

Didn't Job listen to the cause or the cry of the poor? In his last speech, he told of his innermost thoughts and conduct during his life. With great detail, he related how he had helped the widow, the orphan, the poor, and those who had been unjustly treated. He pulled the innocent out of the jaws of the wicked, just as David snatched sheep from the mouth of a bear and a lion. Elihu made proper statements, but they did not apply in Job's case.

Comment: It is interesting that this book was preserved in the Jewish texts, prior to Moses, so that throughout the Jewish Age, there was a glimpse into the permission of evil.

Reply: Yes. Of course not only was Elihu a young man, but Job's life was prolonged. The preceding Patriarchal Age developed after the Flood, starting with Noah, then Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Job. And right after Job came the Law, which was given to the Jew. At the death of Jacob, the promises were introduced to his children, who became the nation of Israel. No longer, then, were the promises given to just a few individuals, relatively speaking. Job lived in the transition period between the Patriarchal Age and the Jewish Age.

Q: Then was there sort of an overlapping of the two ages?

A: Yes, and Job lived during that overlapping period.

Job 34:30 That the hypocrite reign not, lest the people be ensnared.

Here Elihu erred in his statement, for hypocrites do reign and ensnare people. There are beneficent kings and there are dictators, who do things in their own way and to their own advantage.

Job 34:31 Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more:

Job 34:32 That which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.

Verses 31 and 32 give the doctrine of repentance or, more specifically, the words of a repentant sinner. Again this statement is good, but it did not apply to Job. Elihu's reasoning and thinking were "scrambled eggs"—the principle was correct but not the application. Since Jesus has come, bringing to light life and immortality and introducing the Gospel Age, we have been wonderfully advantaged in the ability to understand more than the faithful ones of the past, whose integrity of purpose was superior to ours in some cases. Moses and Daniel, for example, were outstanding individuals who, if living now, would have made their calling and election sure.

Job 34:33 Should it be according to thy mind? he will recompense it, whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose; and not I: therefore speak what thou knowest.

Elihu was saying, "Should it be according to Job's mind? God will recompense it, whether Job refuses, or whether he chooses to repent; and not I." Elihu felt Job was responsible—and it is true in the final analysis that God will do what He thinks best whether or not a guilty individual repents. Elihu graciously and properly put the decision making in God's hand, but he was definitely assuming the role of God's spokesperson. As Elihu had said earlier, he considered himself to be in God's stead.

"Therefore speak what thou knowest." But what did Job know? The younger Elihu said that Job was without knowledge or wisdom, yet God honored Job by name in the Book of Ezekiel, and he was mentioned favorably by the Apostle James.

Job 34:34 Let men of understanding tell me, and let a wise man hearken unto me.

Chapter 34 started with Elihu's addressing the three comforters as "wise men": "Hear my words, O ye wise men; and give ear unto me, ye that have knowledge.... Let us [four] choose to us judgment: let us know among ourselves what is good" (Job 34:2,4). At first, Elihu took the three comforters into camaraderie with him, saying, "Let us discuss this matter and straighten out Job." Then here, in verse 34, Elihu implied that *he* had superior wisdom: "Let men of understanding tell me, and let a wise man hearken unto me." That indeed may have been the case with regard to the three comforters, but Elihu was wrong to so state the matter—and of course Job's wisdom was a completely different matter.

Job 34:35 Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom.

It becomes increasingly apparent that Elihu wrote the Book of Job to reveal his own shortcomings. He accurately recorded, in great detail, not only what Job and the three comforters had said but also what he had thought and said, and the book is incriminating evidence against him. In other words, the book is a form of repentance and retribution, for Elihu knew that those who read the Book of Job would think of him in not the best light. In the final analysis, the Book of Job appears to be sufficient repentance and retribution for what he did. Elihu will experience shame when it is eventually revealed that Satan was responsible for Job's outward evidences of loss of property, goods, health, etc.

When the Flood came and destroyed the generation that then lived, with the exception of Noah and his family, the fate of the progeny of the fallen angels was not known. Nothing was written about the fallen angels being chained in *tartaroo*, and nothing was said about their progeny having no right to a resurrection because they were illegitimate hybrid children of angels and humans. In contrast, Adam's children, generally speaking, will come forth from the grave, both the just and the unjust. The former class will be rewarded, and the unjust class will

get stripes as necessary and then be given an opportunity to walk up the highway of holiness and to get everlasting human life. All of these facts we learn later—and especially with the ministry of Jesus and the 12 apostles.

Job 34:36 My desire is that Job may be tried unto the end because of his answers for wicked men.

Once more Elihu mentioned Job by name, which the three comforters did not do. When we critically analyze what Job said earlier, we can understand, because of his lack of information along a particular line, why he said some of the things he did. Furthermore, neither Elihu nor the three comforters had the experience and affliction of Job. Job was looking for comfort, and he got nothing but flack.

Earlier Elihu had said that it was his desire and intent to *justify* Job, and this statement was made after he had heard everything the three comforters and Job had said. Now Elihu's desire was that Job would be "tried unto the end because of his answers for wicked men." The three comforters made specific accusations against Job, whereas Elihu did not go that far in assigning degrees of guilt. Nevertheless, Elihu implied that Job's motives were wrong.

Comment: The NIV reads, "Oh, that Job might be tested to the utmost for answering like a wicked man!"

Job 34:37 For he addeth rebellion unto his sin, he clappeth his hands among us, and multiplieth his words against God.

Elihu said that Job added rebellion unto his sin, that he clapped his hands scornfully among the four, and that he multiplied his words against God. The word "rebellion" includes emotion.

Job 35:1 Elihu spake moreover, and said,

Job 35:2 Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's?

Job 35:3 For thou saidst, What advantage will it be unto thee? and, What profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?

In verse 2, Elihu incorrectly accused Job of believing he was more righteous than God. Verse 3 gives Elihu's justification for this statement; that is, he stated Job's supposed position. Job had said in effect, "If you look on the horizon of the earth, you will see that calamities come on both the righteous and the obviously wicked." We should keep in mind that this was the perspective of Job, not of the comforters. Job was not criticizing God but was simply saying, "This is the way conditions are now. God has not yet manifested to mankind what He really thinks, for He does not visit immediate punishment on the wicked and openly commend the righteous." Why God permits evil was not understood. Job's position was that he would have liked an answer, but he was not criticizing God's character.

"What advantage will it be unto thee ... if I be cleansed from sin?" From a worldly perspective, there seems to be no advantage, for the righteous do not necessarily prosper. And that is what Satan had questioned originally in his allegorical speaking to God. "No wonder Job is faithful, for you do everything for him." When evil was subsequently visited upon Job, the comforters felt he deserved the affliction as a punishment for sin. The question was one of perspective, and Elihu had the wrong perspective. In addition to misapplying Job's statements and making incorrect inferences, Elihu began to judge him.

Comment: Elihu constantly misquoted and improperly ascribed statements to Job. For instance, in verse 3, he was quoting from Job's answer in Job 21:15, "What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?" The context shows that Job attributed such questions to the wicked, not to himself. The *wicked* think there is no profit in serving the Almighty. Elihu was taking Job's statements out of context to make him appear wicked.

Job 35:4 I will answer thee, and thy companions with thee.

Again Elihu's superior attitude is seen. "I will answer you, Job, and your three companions." While many of Elihu's statements were true, some were not. He kept misconstruing Job's words and appearance.

Job 35:5 Look unto the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds which are higher than thou.

Job 35:6 If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him?

Verses 5-8 consider two different perspectives. "Look [up] unto the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds which are higher than you are, Job." Like an orator, Elihu was giving a beautiful, little dramatic speech. "If you sin, does that harm God?" Elihu used the argument of an infidel, who believes God is so great that He is not a revealed God and that He is not interested in mankind. Therefore, what a person does one way or another does not phase God, for He is far above man's actions. It is true that the cattle on a thousand hills are the Lord's in the sense He does not need man's contributions or help (Psa. 50:10). Elihu's statements would have been acceptable if used in the proper place but not as regards Job.

Job 35:7 If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?

Job 35:8 Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art; and thy righteousness may profit the son of man.

Verses 7 and 8 give the worldly standpoint that one's conduct brings a reaction from his fellow man either favorable or unfavorable but not from God because God is so far above man and so great that what one does down here does not affect Him.

"Thy [Job's] wickedness" was the implication. Elihu started out by saying he would justify Job, but he was really doing the opposite—just as the three comforters had done. He even used some of their reasoning, especially that of Eliphaz.

Job 35:9 By reason of the multitude of oppressions they make the oppressed to cry: they cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty.

Because of the multitude of oppressions, people cry out but, generally speaking, not to God. Notice the use of the pronoun "they."

Job 35:10 But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night;

Job 35:11 Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven?

Job 35:12 There they cry, but none giveth answer, because of the pride of evil men.

"But none [of the 'they' class] saith, Where is God my maker?" For example, look at the

condition in Israel—fear, pain, turmoil, etc.—but there is no cry for help from the Almighty, the God of Israel. There is no national impulse to demand of the government that a prayer for help be offered by a spokesperson. The nation should be making a heartrending cry for God’s arm. The Gentile world also fails to pray as a whole. At least the evangelical world feels that prayer is a mighty power, and they do enjoin their followers to pray, but usually the type of answers they expect are inappropriate. This observation of Elihu is true, but he was wrong to apply it to the circumstance of Job.

Job 35:13 Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.

“Surely God will not hear vanity.” Elihu implied that Job was vain.

Job 35:14 Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him, yet judgment is before him; therefore trust thou in him.

Elihu was giving advice to Job, who was in such a pitiful condition. “Job, although you cannot see God, you should trust in Him instead of questioning Him.” It was easy for Elihu to speak because he was not in Job’s situation. All this time Job was just looking for comfort and solace to help him bear his afflictions. Instead he got nothing but flack.

Over the years, talks have been given that regard Elihu quite highly. However, when we analyze his statements, we can see the inappropriateness of his remarks. He certainly was not an especially holy man. Elihu’s belief in a future kingdom leads some to regard him more highly than they should.

Job 35:15 But now, because it is not so, he hath visited in his anger; yet he knoweth it not in great extremity:

Elihu was saying, “God has visited upon you, Job, His anger and displeasure, yet you do not recognize the extremity of the situation.”

Job 35:16 Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain; he multiplieth words without knowledge.

Comment: Elihu again said that Job spoke in vain and without knowledge (Job 34:35). “Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom.”

Reply: Yes, Elihu was judging Job. What a statement for a young man to make to Job!

God was merciful with Elihu because knowledge of the permission of evil was not revealed with clarity in the time frame of Job’s life. When knowledge is available and we do not take advantage of it, responsibility enters in.

Job 36:1 Elihu also proceeded, and said,

Job 36:2 Suffer me a little, and I will show thee that I have yet to speak on God’s behalf.

Elihu continued to speak. His emphasis was on the word “yet,” meaning he had still more to say “on God’s behalf.”

Comment: Elihu seemed to be making a distinction between the last verse of chapter 35, in which he said that Job opened his mouth in vain and multiplied words without knowledge, and now his saying that he was full of knowledge and on God’s side.

Reply: Yes, Elihu was boastful, yet many have admired him, especially when reading his words in Hebrew, because he was an orator. However, an orator's reasoning is not necessarily correct.

Job 36:3 I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.

The implication was that Job was not ascribing righteousness to God but that Elihu was.

Job 36:4 For truly my words shall not be false: he that is perfect in knowledge is with thee.

Imagine the arrogance of Elihu in saying that his words would not be false and that his knowledge was *perfect!* Many have not read the Book of Job quietly and soberly to see Elihu's superior and confident attitude, with the implication that he was more mature in wisdom and understanding than Job.

Comment: Later on, Elihu was humiliated and humbled, and if he indeed did go back and recall and record these conversations, thus writing the Book of Job as a form of penance, they would have sharply pained him.

Reply: Yes, after coming to his senses, he recorded what he had said previously, knowing that he would be denigrated in the eyes of those who studied the Book of Job in future generations. This was his form of penance.

Comment: James 3:1 cautions against there being many teachers because they will receive the severer judgments and testings. The Book of Job is a good reminder of what can happen because, obviously, Satan was working on Elihu to produce an attitude of superiority and pride. When anyone speaks on God's behalf, this is a good example to keep in mind as a safeguard.

Reply: Just as Elihu's words were recorded, so what others say with regard to very elect Christians has been recorded—comments made by both the wicked and fellow Christians—so that especially the Great Company can see why they were not selected to be of the Little Flock to live and reign with Christ. Graciously, God will forgive the Great Company and give them life on a spirit plane, but their words will come back to them.

In Old Testament times, a person in great sorrow for the loss of someone close to him customarily clothed himself in sackcloth and ashes as a sign of deep mourning. And on rare occasions under other circumstances, sackcloth and ashes were a form of shame and penance for a wrong committed.

Comment: A New Testament parallel of an action taken to indicate repentance is James 5:14,15. "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if [though] he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."

Comment: Romans 12:16 says, "Be not wise in your own conceits."

Job 36:5 Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any: he is mighty in strength and wisdom.

Yes, God is mighty in strength and wisdom. Here is an example of something grand that came out of Elihu's mouth, but he also uttered wrong statements and reasoned inconsistently.

Job 36:6 He preserveth not the life of the wicked: but giveth right to the poor.

Verse 6 is not a true statement at the present time, nor was it true in the past, for there were exceptions. However, Jesus did say in the Sermon on the Mount, “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:3). Therefore, in the future life, all other things being equal, the “poor” will be given more than they ever hoped for, even if their lot is earthly restitution. When those who are suffering the most now are given their desires, hopes, and proper aspirations in the Kingdom, they will be more thankful and more appreciative than those who have been comfortably situated in the present life.

Comment: Common sense would say that if God gave “right” to the poor, they would no longer be poor.

Job 36:7 He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous: but with kings are they on the throne; yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted.

Again, this is not true in the present life, but it would apply to the reward of the consecrated who are faithful more-than-overcomers. From the latter standpoint, this statement was profound—almost as if Elihu were speaking under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

The statement “He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous” reminds us of 1 Peter 3:12, “For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers.” The Lord takes special note of this class. Even if they are not rewarded currently, they are storing up goodness like Cornelius, a Gentile, who did good works and offered up prayers to God Almighty but could not come into the Christian family until AD 36, when the gospel went out into the world. In the meantime, his prayers were stored up. Prior to AD 36, God was dealing with the nation of Israel, as stated in Amos 3:2, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth.” Certainly there were others, both before and since that time, whose works God has taken cognizance of, the principle being, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7).

Job 36:8 And if they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction;

Verse 8 is still talking about the righteous class that God is calling to be kings and priests. If faithful, they will be established and exalted forever. And “if they be bound in fetters, and ... cords of affliction” in the present life, certainly God has something prepared for them in the future where their situation will be the opposite.

It is an anomaly that out of the mouth of Elihu came forth both truth and error. At times, he uttered deep truths and proper principles, but when he was emotionally involved, he spoke nonsense and nastiness. And this is the one who said at the beginning of his discourse, “I will try to justify Job.”

Comment: James spoke of the contradictions of the tongue: “But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God” (James 3:8,9).

Job 36:9 Then he showeth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded.

Verse 9 does not match verse 7 in some respects. Many of Elihu’s statements fluttered back and forth. It is true that when worldly kings in the present life disregard their positions of responsibility, leadership, and stewardship for their subjects, they will incur greater judgment in the future life; that is, they will be given stripes in proportion to the degree of sinfulness of their words and conduct. And yet they will be given opportunity to walk up the highway of holiness in the Kingdom Age. If faithful, they will become “kings” in the true sense, for the

Scriptures indicate that those of the world of mankind who are brought up to perfection at the end of Messiah's reign will enter into the age of everlasting life beyond, down here on the earth, as kings. They will not usurp authority over their fellow man but will be kings in the noble sense and with respect to each other. The "Close Your Eyes" statement in the *First Volume* is beautiful for contemplating what the world will be like for those who pass the test in the Little Season at the end of the Kingdom Age.

Job 36:10 He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.

Again, this statement applies generally to the Kingdom, although ears are occasionally opened to discipline in the present life.

Q: Was Elihu taking the perspective of the present life?

A: He was, but when we read his words as being the expression of the Great Company class, we see that they have a duality of application. However, it is true that Elihu was now coming down to an earthly level. His statements ended up being very much like those of the comforters in criticizing Job, yet he started with the hope of helping Job—and so did the comforters originally. The Book of Job is a complex study of human nature.

Job 36:11 If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures.

Elihu continued to speak on an earthly plane, saying that if individuals repented of their former ways and obeyed and served God, they would spend their days in prosperity. Inferentially, he was slanting his words to Job, who previously was everything but a king with regard to those under his influence.

Comment: If the Apostle Paul says that we, in the Gospel Age, see through a glass *darkly*, then knowledge and understanding of the general populace toward God were almost *pitch black* in Job's day, which was even prior to the Law.

Reply: We sometimes say that types are shadows of things to come; that is, types were hard to understand clearly before the Gospel Age, but when understood, they are sharp, precise, and mathematical. The Holy Spirit of sonship, which was given at Pentecost, is superior to the spirit of personal understanding that the Old Testament prophets had of their own utterances.

Job 36:12 But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge.

Still Elihu was speaking on an earthly plane in predicting that the wicked would die either an untimely or an unseemly type of death, which is not the case now. The principle is, "Now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered" (Mal. 3:15). In fact, the wicked seem to be even rewarded, and of course Malachi wrote after the Mosaic Law came into existence. All of the consecrated should be so very thankful for God's Holy Spirit of understanding, and we certainly hope it works in us to make our calling and election sure. It would be wonderful to be with Jesus and to be accounted worthy of that honor in the secure sense.

Q: What does "die without knowledge" mean?

A: The wicked would die without the knowledge of their failure of stewardship or their failure to seek counsel from above and to hunger and thirst after righteousness. The prophets of old,

and even the holy angels in heaven, sought diligently to understand some of the things in the Old Testament, particularly the times and seasons, but even though they were obedient, they did not get that understanding. However, they did get crumbs of information that were helpful and sufficient for them to survive in maintaining their integrity, as Job did.

Back to the question. The wicked, who do not seek counsel from above and do not realize their insufficiency of understanding because of pride, pleasure, or other distractions, will certainly die without the knowledge that they could have had if in the proper heart condition.

Q: Is Judas an example of this class?

A: Yes, Judas is a good example. He must have been a very intelligent person, but he took money from the bag surreptitiously and betrayed the Master. He may have thought his motives were good, for apparently, he did not believe Jesus could be executed but felt the Master would exercise powers he had exhibited during his ministry when, for example, people had tried to throw him over a cliff. Jesus had adroitly moved so that people could not take hold of him. But, then, to the shock and surprise of all, Jesus allowed himself to be apprehended and crucified. Evidently, Judas never dreamed that such a thing would happen. Nevertheless, his motive was not good, for he was trying to capitalize on the situation. When he saw that a just man was crucified, his remorse came too late, and he committed suicide.

King Nebuchadnezzar is another example. He was punished for his pride. For seven years, he ate food like an animal, and his fingernails turned into claws like those of an eagle. But the humiliation brought him to his senses, and afterward he praised God.

Job 36:13 But the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath: they cry not when he bindeth them.

Elihu was implying that Job was a hypocrite. When Job revealed the innermost thoughts and feelings of his heart, he was accused of telling a falsehood. Elihu was speaking strong words.

Comment: Elihu was indicating he could read Job's heart.

Reply: At first, the three comforters judged that Job was guilty because of his outward appearance—disease from the top of his head to the soles of his feet. Satan's afflictions made Job look as if he had the curse of God. As they continued, they began to accuse Job of doing something wrong that he was hiding from them. But Elihu was judging Job's heart intention.

The Great Company class will forever realize, and live with the thought, that they were not fit to be of the Little Flock. Jesus said, "Where I am, there shall also my servant be" (John 12:26). Since this statement also applies to the Great Company, they will be reminded of their insufficiency in an intense sense because they will probably be in the household as servants to Jesus and the Little Flock forever. Their consciousness of their blindness to, and their misunderstanding of, the Job class will be sufficient retribution in God's sight. In contrast, when the world of mankind get their Kingdom blessings, they will be so content with human life, health, and happiness that they will not think of their past misdeeds with the same tenacity of perpetuity.

Job 36:14 They die in youth, and their life is among the unclean.

Certainly it is not a true statement that all hypocrites die in their youth.

Comment: Since Elihu had just accused Job of being a hypocrite, this statement was false, for Job was old.

Reply: Elihu often contradicted his own statements. This is a warning to us not to be careless or too hasty in speaking lest we bring judgment upon ourselves. There is wisdom in the admonition to be quick to hear and slow to speak.

Comment: With the King James marginal words, verse 14 reads, “Their soul dieth, and their life is among the sodomites.”

Comment: The NIV reads, “They die in their youth, among male prostitutes of the shrines.”

Reply: The “sodomites” were male prostitutes, among other, even worse, things. But actually, the word “sodomites” is not used in the Hebrew. That particular word (*qodesh*) means “holy,” but when the vowel is changed between the first two consonants to *qadesh*, the word has the opposite meaning of “unholy.” The thought is that one is consecrated to do *evil* instead of righteousness and following God. The pronunciation of the word, based on the vowels, indicates which is the correct thought. Here Elihu was giving the negative application: a curse. In another instance, the words for “curse” and a “consecrated [or dedicated]” thing have the same consonants but are pronounced with a little different inflection of voice.

Job 36:15 He delivereth the poor in his affliction, and openeth their ears in oppression.

Elihu was saying that when trouble comes, those who properly reflect learn the lesson, but the statement is not always true. In some cases, God delivers the “poor,” who are in affliction, oppression, or a harsh experience, by opening their eyes, but in the present age, that is the exception. Generally, the wicked seem to prosper. In the long term, however, this statement is true, for some men’s sins go beforehand to judgment and other men’s sins come afterward.

Job 36:16 Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait into a broad place, where there is no straitness; and that which should be set on thy table should be full of fatness.

“Even so would he have removed thee [Job] out of the strait[jacket] into a broad place [of freedom], where there is no straitness, and that which should be set on thy table should be full of fatness.” Elihu implied that Job was suffering because of some wrong he had done and that he would not be shackled with this affliction and disease if he listened to instruction. Obviously, Elihu’s words did not comfort Job. This strange account certainly absorbs our attention.

Job 36:17 But thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked: judgment and justice take hold on thee.

“But thou [Job] hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked.” Elihu *personalized* the criticism to apply to Job. “Judgment and justice take hold on thee [Job].” The Book of Job is on the record and will be preserved. In fact, the Scriptures are a witness table *forever*. If the surmise is correct that Elihu wrote the Book of Job, we can see that his pain will not occur every day and every hour, but it will remain forever, whereas the punishment of the three comforters will not be that lasting. In other words, the reader in future generations throughout eternity will make more allowance for the three comforters. The judgmental circumstances that will come upon Elihu, who represents the Great Company, will be more lasting than that of the comforters.

Job 36:18 Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.

Job 36:19 Will he esteem thy riches? no, not gold, nor all the forces of strength.

Different commentators say that verses 18-20 are difficult to understand in the Hebrew, but considering whom Job represents, the King James wording seems to be a little too strong. One

Jewish translator rendered verse 18 as follows: “Beware of thy wrath lest thou be led away by thy sufficiency: a great ransom cannot turn you aside.” Of course Elihu’s words were directed to Job, and he was saying, “With that attitude, nothing will avail to break you out of your mind-set.” Elihu felt that Job was too convinced of his innocence and that the great riches and gold he formerly possessed, some of which he still had, would not be effective.

Job 36:20 Desire not the night, when people are cut off in their place.

Why did Elihu make this statement? It was based on Job 34:20, “In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and pass away: and the mighty shall be taken away without hand.” Another Scripture expresses the thought of the earth being shaken. In other words, people go to sleep very often unaware of a great calamity, such as an earthquake, that will occur in which they perish. Elihu was saying, “Job, do not expect to be mercifully relieved of your suffering by a calamity of this nature in which you will pass away swiftly.”

Comment: While performing conscientious-objector service in a hospital, we observed that most patients who died, died at night, for whatever peculiar reason. Given Job’s circumstance with all the afflictions of his flesh and other trials, it was as if Elihu were saying, “Do not desire the night to relieve your suffering.”

Reply: While we were serving at Medical Center, the majority of deaths that occurred seemed to center around 4 a.m., which was approximately the middle of the night, that is, between midnight and 6 a.m.

Comment: These comments were difficult for Job, for his sufferings were so extreme that he had expressed the desire to go into the grave. It was easy for Elihu, who was not going through the trial, to give such advice.

Job 36:21 Take heed, regard not iniquity: for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.

Job 36:22 Behold, God exalteth by his power: who teacheth like him?

Comment: Job was the last person these words should have been spoken to, for he had not committed any great sin.

Reply: Job uttered certain statements in previous chapters when he was in mental and physical anguish that he would not have made under normal circumstances. He could not understand why such calamity had come upon him when he was so thoroughly consecrated to do God’s will. Of course he was not aware that Satan was behind the afflictions. God permitted the testing but prevented Satan from taking Job’s life. The Book of Job is predicated upon the trials that Job successfully endured without cursing God, and Satan did everything he could to make that happen. Even Job’s wife said, “If you want to get rid of your suffering, just curse God and then you will die.” Especially with the Christian, who hopes for the high calling, the saying applies, “No cross, no crown.” The permission of evil has an educational purpose, and if it is endured in a proper attitude, especially persecution for righteousness’ sake, the individual can make his calling and election sure. The Christian must trust God, even when he cannot understand fully the meaning of a trial.

Comment: Job’s experiences were similar to what Jesus was referring to in Matthew 5:11, “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.” And Job pictures the faithful more-than-overcomers.

Reply: Yes, the mettle of his character was being tested.

Job 36:23 Who hath enjoined him his way? or who can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity?

“Who hath appointed God his way?” In other words, “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my [God’s] ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:9). Many of Elihu’s statements were true, but they were not pertinent to Job’s situation. Occasionally, he said proper things.

Job 36:24 Remember that thou magnify his work, which men behold.

Job had spoken about his belief and faith in God, mentioning the heavens and the Creator’s majesty and glory, yet here Elihu told Job to always keep in mind to praise the Lord and said the complaints were not magnifying God. Elihu was trying to change what he thought was Job’s mind-set to a higher level.

The latter part of the verse should mention singing, as in the NIV: “Remember to extol his work, which men have praised in song.” In other words, “Job, instead of complaining and saying you cannot understand what God is doing, you should be rejoicing and praising God to take your mind off your suffering.”

Comment: Hebrews 12:11 states, “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are [rightly] exercised thereby.” Since Job was still in the trial, his sufferings were “grievous,” and Elihu was not empathetic.

Job 36:25 Every man may see it; man may behold it afar off.

Elihu’s reasoning was along the lines of “when we look up at the heavens, they declare the glory of God.” He was trying to lift Job’s thinking off himself.

A critical thing happened at this point; namely, the remaining remarks of Elihu *changed radically* in that he began to talk at length about God, and about God’s power and glory, with relatively little criticism of Job. He changed from being a critic to extolling God, and the reason is given in verse 26.

Job 36:26 Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out.

Job 36:27 For he maketh small the drops of water: they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof:

In other words, “Behold, God is great [He is exalted], and we do not know Him. We cannot search out the number of His years [for they are unsearchable]. He draws up the number of drops of water according to its vapor.” Rain is distilled into a mist that the clouds pour down.

Notice that verse 26 starts with the word “Behold.” At this moment, while Elihu was speaking, a thunder and lightning storm was in the great distance on the horizon. Elihu was beckoning and pointing to what he was seeing while the storm slowly approached Job, the three comforters, and him. As Elihu continued to speak, he felt that the storm was a providential occurrence to indicate that God was in harmony with what he was saying, and he waxed more and more eloquent. Therefore, from here until Elihu concluded, his comments all centered on the approaching storm. He did not know what would happen when the storm was overhead, but his words became more and more eloquent. As we read on, we should keep the storm in mind, for Elihu used it to dramatize his comments, and the nature of his talk was in harmony with what he was seeing. Of course he used the speaking mode of his day. The storm would

have taken 20 or 30 minutes to arrive overhead.

It is interesting that Elihu was aware of the cycle in nature of water being vaporized, drawn up, and then carried by clouds into a hilly or mountainous area where it falls and becomes a river that flows down into the ocean. Stated another way, water is drawn up from, say, a lake or ocean into the clouds. The clouds contain water like a sponge, and wherever God wishes, He squeezes the cloud sponge so that rain comes down. Man is blessed by the principle of the clouds watering the parched earth.

Comment: “All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again” (Eccl. 1:7).

Elihu, a young man, had a good degree of understanding, but he misunderstood Job’s experiences. His words show that we cannot read the heart of other individuals, for we may misinterpret their outward expressions and motions and not see the situation as it truly is. Man looks on the outward part and cannot see the inward part like God can. The lesson is that in viewing others, we can misjudge what we think are logical conclusions. When Jesus spoke as “never man spake” at his First Advent, many were not moved by his discourses but were actually angered, feeling he thought too much of himself (John 7:46). They did not see that he was the promised Messiah. And so this was all a matter of misconstruing the deeds and reactions of people.

Of course a gross sin is apparent in the sense that a bad tree brings forth bad fruit, and a good tree brings forth good fruit (Matt. 7:17,18). However, that analogy pertains to the *habit* of an individual and an analysis of his deeds over a longer period of time, rather than a single act or a short period of time.

The Book of Job is meant to be philosophical and to make us think a little more deeply with regard to our attitudes toward other people. We should be careful and judge things with proper judgment before speaking too hastily.

Job 36:28 Which the clouds do drop and distil upon man abundantly.

Elihu continued to talk about the cycle of rain. Water is drawn up from the ocean, carried in clouds, and deposited on the mountains; then it returns to the sea and covers the seabed. When water comes down, it supplies mankind with needed moisture in abundance.

Job 36:29 Also can any understand the spreadings of the clouds, or the noise of his tabernacle?

“Can anyone understand the spreading of the clouds, the crashing of his canopy [thunder]?”

Job 36:30 Behold, he spreadeth his light upon it, and covereth the bottom of the sea.

“Behold, God spreads His lightning upon it, and covers the depths of the sea.” Elihu used a second “behold” in discoursing on the majesty and power of God and His mysterious wonders.

Job 36:31 For by them judgeth he the people; he giveth meat in abundance.

“By them, God judges the people, and He gives plenty of food.” Of course rain is necessary for an agrarian society to survive and grow crops, but “judging” is another use for the lightning flashes. For example, a flash of lightning came out of the pillar of the cloud and destroyed Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1,2). A storm is sometimes used in a destructive sense to render

judgment upon the ungodly, but it can also have a blessed effect in producing rain to benefit mankind. Thus God makes the clouds His angel either for good or for judgment purposes.

Job 36:32 With clouds he covereth the light; and commandeth it not to shine by the cloud that cometh betwixt.

How dramatic! Like a powerful orator, Elihu likened the lightning bolt, or streak, to the hand of God protruding from the canopy above and reaching down. Just as a surgeon's hand is covered with a rubber glove, so God's hand is covered by the light of the lightning. Elihu used the lightning display in nature to justify his comments. He kept reminding the three comforters that they were in the equation, as well as Job.

Job 36:33 The noise thereof showeth concerning it, the cattle also concerning the vapour.

Comment: Verses 32 and 33 read as follows in the NIV: "He fills his hands with lightning and commands it to strike its mark. His thunder announces the coming storm; even the cattle make known its approach."

Reply: Cattle get nervous when lightning and thunder approach, and they seek shelter as a place of safety. On occasions when God so desires, He strikes the mark of His displeasure.

Almost all commentators talk philosophically about what Elihu was saying, but his words were accompanied by an actual display of nature, which seemed to be telling him, "What you are saying is correct; keep going." As a result, he waxed more and more eloquent, thinking he was the intercessor for God. That was his original impression, when he said he would be Job's lawyer or intercessor. He was feeling very confident here.

What is touching about Elihu in the final analysis is that he realized he unjustifiably misconstrued what was happening to Job. In accurately recording his original words in the Book of Job, Elihu manifested his contrition. He exposed his foolishness by unabashedly uttering his shame without softening the words. His repentance was sincere. It was admirable of Elihu to record the Book of Job, knowing how his shame would be perpetuated. In spite of the error in many of his statements, a goodness was inherent in him.

Job 37:1 At this also my heart trembleth, and is moved out of his place.

The ground probably trembled from the thunder, causing Elihu to say, "My heart trembleth, and is moved out of its place." Meanwhile, the audiovisual display in nature continued. When this book is fully illustrated in its proper context in the future, this drama of Job, Elihu, and the three comforters will be an interesting spectacle to behold.

Q: Did the Lord cause the storm to providentially occur to indicate His displeasure with what Elihu and the three comforters had been saying and also to set the stage for His own reply to Job, which will start shortly?

A: Yes, although at the time, Elihu misconstrued the storm to conclude that it providentially justified his remarks. He thought the storm was magnifying his own wisdom, whereas in reality, it subsequently caused him embarrassment. It can now be seen why God did not specially criticize Elihu except by a short pronouncement. We are reminded of the experience when Miriam and Aaron rebuked Moses and said in effect, "You take too much upon yourself. You are doing all the talking and teaching. As your brother and sister, we should share the leadership." As punishment, God smote Miriam with leprosy, but He did not seem to specially inflict any damage on Aaron because Aaron's shame will be manifested when the Zadok priesthood is established in the future. When the Third Temple is built in Israel, the fact that it

will be of the Zadok priesthood, not of the Aaronic priesthood, will be a measure of retribution for the remark Aaron made against Moses. And there are other reasons why God did not shame Aaron, but they are not in our purview at this time. Other Scriptures indicate a principle that God used back there in connection with excepting the high priest from the law of retribution that operated on others.

Job 37:2 Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth out of his mouth.

Here again is powerful and beautiful language. However, it did not impress Job with his supposed wrongdoing, because Elihu gave a misapplication.

Comment: The NIV reads, “Listen! Listen to the roar of his voice, to the rumbling that comes from his mouth.”

Job 37:3 He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth.

If we were back there, we would see extensive lightning flashes reaching out in different directions, and we could feel the earth shake from the thunder. From Elihu’s perspective, the storm seemed to be saying to him, “Everything you are speaking is correct.”

Job 37:4 After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of his excellency; and he will not stay them when his voice is heard.

From our perspective, lightning precedes the thunder. Light travels faster than sound, so even if the thunder occurs first in the distance, we will still see the lightning before we hear the thunder.

Q: In verse 1, Elihu said he was fearful as the storm was approaching, but then he spoke of the majesty of God. He was using the storm to preach about the grandness of God, yet he himself was frightened. Isn’t this a contradiction?

A: At about age 8, whenever there was a thunderstorm, I went outside to watch and hear it. Although frightened, I thought it was like the majesty of God speaking. I was drawn to the supernatural storm, yet at the same time, I was frightened. Similarly, Elihu’s heart trembled, yet he glorified God.

Job 37:5 God thundereth marvellously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend.

Elihu continued to speak, still referring to the approaching thunderstorm in eloquent language.

Job 37:6 For he saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth; likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength.

God speaks to the snow, the “small rain,” and the “great rain.” In the latter part of verse 6, the Hebrew is, “He says ... to the rain [singular] to be on the earth, and to the rains [plural].” Rain is usually thought of as plural like the word “sheep,” but here the same statement was rendered first in the singular and then in the plural. Hence the scholars concluded that the singular was more of a gentle rain and the plural a downpour. Water descends on the earth in varied forms: snow, gentle rain, and as a downpour.

Job 37:7 He sealeth up the hand of every man; that all men may know his work.

God has such control over the elements that He makes them His servants. For example, He can use them to speak to the human family and communicate instruction. When He speaks, He does so in such a marvelous way that man is stopped in his tracks. God exercises this power at various times as He sees fit, stilling man's voice, making him rather impotent, and causing him to be in a listening mode. While men are in that mode, God demonstrates what He intends them to know.

Job 37:8 Then the beasts go into dens, and remain in their places.

The animals, too, were affected by the thunderstorm, going into dens for shelter and security. Believing he had superior understanding of God's providence, Elihu felt he was instructing the three comforters and Job. Of course his language was eloquent. However, the value of oratory depends on the intent, or purpose, for which it is used. When we are exposed to oratory, we should discern whether it is in harmony with God's Word. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20). Much that Elihu spoke was beautifully stated, but it did not apply to Job.

Q: In Job 38:1,2, when God started to speak, He referred to Elihu as one who "darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge." Therefore, could we say that while Elihu's words were factually correct, they were not relevant to Job's situation?

A: Yes, Elihu's reasoning did not apply to Job, although his words here in chapter 37 were a little more pertinent than some of his other remarks. A principle is involved; namely, it is one thing to have a tremendous memory and to be able to quote Scriptures and give eloquent talks, but of primary importance is the *message, or intent*, of the instruction. There is a difference between a lecture, which gives instruction to the mind, and a sermon, which provides instruction for the soul.

When we read chapters 38-41, it is surprising to see that God spoke at such lengths to Job. It is important to understand why He spoke that way because that is how He speaks to us. Of course God may speak to us more figuratively and symbolically, and on a higher plane than the natural sense he used with Job, but there is a parallelism. The Book of Job shows the experience of God's people in the Gospel Age—the providences they encounter from fellow Christians, people in the world, and enemies. We gain valuable instruction by studying about Job's experiences. As we proceed, the account will take us to a little higher level of thought.

Job 37:9 Out of the south cometh the whirlwind: and cold out of the north.

As we read chapter 37, we are astounded by Elihu's understanding of the water cycle—that the condensation of moisture from the rivers and the sea is gathered up into clouds like vessels. The water is transported hither and yon in clouds, as God wills, until He lets it fall on man in different forms and applications. Of course Job had the same understanding. What surprises us is that this understanding existed at such an early date. By implication, their understanding gives more authenticity to the greatness that Noah, Abraham, and Moses gained from earlier *pre-Flood* generations. There must have been great knowledge back there, of which we are given only thread-bare information because God is not trying to enhance our understanding of the accumulation of knowledge, interesting though it be. Although we can extract information to a greater or lesser degree, what God spoke about and had recorded are the essentials for making our calling and election sure. However, it is interesting and whets the appetite of our curiosity to realize that other things were going on and that the Apostle Paul later referred to them. God speaks in low-key language when He stoops down to cater to our intellect and understanding, but that low-key language is hiding a tremendous amount of information.

The whirlwind out of the south refers to hot, dry desert winds like the sirocco, which are

contrasted with the cold winds out of the north. Elihu was describing wonderful things that God does in nature with the animate and inanimate agents at His hand.

Job 37:10 By the breath of God frost is given: and the breadth of the waters is straitened.

Comment: The NIV reads, “The breath of God produces ice, and the broad waters become frozen.”

Reply: Yes, that is the thought. Elihu was saying that not only is the activity of God’s manipulation of the elements apparent so that we can see it if we are of an observing mind, but also the content of the elements can be transformed, or changed, to very hot or so cold it is frozen. Water is an unusual element.

Q: What is the thought of the “broad waters”?

A: Frost is distilled and frozen water is spread out, but God can change spread-out frost by regathering it into a solid ice wall. In showing the awesome capabilities of God, Elihu’s words were marvelous. Job could have made the same statements, but not while he was suffering. We should always keep in mind that in the beginning of the book, God said Job was perfect in intention—in the keeping of his vows—yet Elihu was supposedly instructing such a man.

Comment: Elihu was describing general manifestations of nature. Years later there were two outstanding examples of God’s power along this line. One occurred at the opening of the Red Sea, when fingers of ice formed to hold back the parting waters. The other was the incident when Jesus walked on the Sea of Galilee, the thought being that water froze under the surface, so that he was really walking on ice.

Reply: Yes, Jesus walked on an ice sidewalk, as it were.

Q: Is verse 10 saying that God not only forms ice on a little pond but also causes ice to go on the broad expanse of a large lake?

A: Elihu presented the principle from the reverse standpoint. “By the breath of God frost is given” emphasizes the *spreading out*, and “the breadth of the waters is straitened” has the thought of a straitjacket—the *congealing*, the bringing together, into a hard form instead of steam or liquid. One cannot walk on water or steam but can walk on ice.

Job 37:11 Also by watering he wearieth the thick cloud: he scattereth his bright cloud:

When a dark rain cloud slowly traverses over land, it is so heavy-laden with water that, at times, it seems to be dragging its feet, as manifested by strings or irregularities in the cloud. The rain cloud is *full* of water, just waiting to drop its heavy moisture. Hence the translators appropriately used the word “wearieth” to indicate that the clouds *labor* with a heavy, heavy load as they go horizontally across the sky. They are like an animal with wobbly legs carrying a heavy burden. The term “bright cloud” refers to lightning.

Job 37:12 And it is turned round about by his counsels: that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth.

The cloud is turned around by God’s counsels; that is, it does whatever He commands. Again Elihu used powerful language. Notice that “counsels” is in the plural—how profound! It is as though the clouds were previously given an instruction to follow a certain path. Stated another way, it is as if God has a predetermined schedule and the cloud is now automated. God seemingly has a plan for the clouds whereby they obey, automatically operating by prior

counsels and instructions. The *plural* form means that a *variety* of providences are involved.

Without question, not only did Job providentially arise in the annals of history, but also Elihu was providentially raised up to eventually record the Book of Job. From *our* standpoint, a *tremendous* amount of thought was behind the writing of Job. Of course from *God's* standpoint, it was a *simple* matter.

Thus there were good points with Elihu. He was basically honest, but he was fooled by the permission of evil, as were the three comforters. Job, too, did not understand the permission of evil, but he said, "Though God slay me, I will trust in him" (Job 13:15). Although he could not understand, he would not give up his integrity. The instruction here exceeds what one could get in a college education.

Comment: Torrential rain and lightning awe man, but we can see *God's* actions and purposes behind the rain. He pours water into the clouds. When people understand this thinking in the Kingdom, they will reverence God.

Comment: Without the water cycle, none of us would be alive.

Reply: The next verse inferentially brings out that thought.

Job 37:13 He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy.

Elihu mentioned three reasons why God causes the rain clouds and moisture to come. One reason is that rain is a rod; that is, it is used for correction or instruction in a judgmental sense.

Comment: A powerful example of rain being used as a rod was the Flood of Noah's day. Since this event occurred previously, Elihu would have known about it.

Reply: Yes. Elihu was speaking of rain in the active sense rather than in the withholding sense. For instance, the Apostle Peter said it is good if we suffer for righteousness' sake, whereas to suffer for wrongdoing is corrective and thus is not meritorious.

A second reason that God sends rain in the active sense is to benefit the land. "The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof" (Psa. 24:1). Mountains, hills, the mineral content—everything is His. There is an emotional aspect to rain, which waters and thus helps the land. For example, documentaries on Africa show that abundant verdure in the rainy season, which sustains all kinds of creatures, man and beast, is followed by a drought that lasts and lasts, burning the land. The people pray for rain, and at the first drops, there is excitement. When the raindrops get heavier, the people know the rains are coming and the drought has ended. In the active sense, the implication is that when the rains come, the dry earth sucks up the water, and verdure comes almost immediately. As another example, flash floods in the Sinai rush through wadis like a freight train, but when the water spreads out in the sand, flowers spring up in a day or two. Fertility is actually in the land, but the land is starved for water. Thus God can use clouds for judgmental purposes and also for the parched earth, which hungers for moisture.

A third reason for rain is "mercy." Rain, which can be an answer to prayer, is a loving kindness. It is nice that the reasoning in verse 13 starts with a rod of judgment and ends with forgiveness and mercy.

Q: Can rain be thought of as judgment in a *present* sense? In the context of the permission of evil, does God use water as a punishment or a blessing *today*?

Comment: Elihu's day was a transitional period, occurring not too long after the Flood and the

Tower of Babel, in a time when God was directly punishing man under certain circumstances for his transgressions. Today in the Gospel Age, especially from the perspective of the permission of evil, while the principle may not apply that the wicked are punished by, for example, the withholding of rain, because the rain falls on the just and the unjust, God is not precluded from doing such a thing to accomplish His will or purpose (Matt. 5:45).

Reply: God has always done what He pleases, and we cannot shorten His hand in any way. The question is sometimes asked, “Does God listen to the prayers of the unconsecrated?” It is interesting to hear the comments that follow. Some say, “Oh no, never! A person has to be consecrated to receive answers to prayer.” But whether a prayer is answered is *up to God*. God can do what He wants. It is true that as a *general* principle, the unconsecrated should not expect their prayers to be answered, but some prayers do receive an answer. Cornelius is an example of one whose prayers were stored up and answered later. Other prayers can be answered right away depending on God’s purpose. In other words, the general principle is one thing, and the exception is another.

Q: Then is the general principle at the present time that the rain falls on the just and on the unjust, but there are exceptions if the Lord so desires?

A: Yes, that is the reasoning.

More of us today should be faithful because we have the benefit of the hindsight of history. With all of the information available to us, we should be *more faithful*, but unfortunately, not too many learn from history. God’s dealings with us are a profound subject. If we hope to be faithful at the very end of the age by participating in a specific work, we can be sure that our experiences will be tailored to fit that particular position, and a certain type of providential instruction is required. People tend to judge others by countenance, appearance, actions, etc., but God knows the true intent of the individual. Thank God, He takes the will for the deed!

Job 37:14 **Hearken unto this, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.**

“Hearken unto this, O Job [that is, to the fact that God causes the storm cloud to come for correction, for the land, or for mercy]: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.”

Job 37:15 **Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused the light of his cloud to shine?**

“Dost thou know when God ... caused the light[ning] of his [storm] cloud to shine?”

Job 37:16 **Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge?**

Verse 16 is self-explanatory.

Job 37:17 **How thy garments are warm, when he quieteth the earth by the south wind?**

Usually an eerie calmness and a sweltering heat precede a sirocco wind. When the exceedingly warm south wind arrives, it dries up perspiration and at the same time dehydrates the person.

Elihu was again referring to natural wisdom, which people were quite well aware of, generally speaking. God can do with the elements of nature as He wills. Now Elihu used the wind as an element of God’s arm, whereas earlier he used the storm cloud.

Job 37:18 **Hast thou with him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten**

lookingglass?

A woman's "lookingglass" is not molten today, but mirrors in ancient times consisted of metal, usually copper with a tincture of another element in it. The metal was melted and put into a mold. As the metal cooled, it hardened, so that instead of being in a molten, liquid state, it was now hard or firm and could serve as a mirror. Elihu likened that type of mirror, with its shiny, firm, hard appearance, to the sky, which sometimes has a glaring aspect that hurts the eyes. Under those weather conditions, the sky is too bright to look at, even for a person with good eyesight. It is somewhat like looking at the sun, especially by those who traverse the desert. In other words, under unusual circumstances, the sky looks like a mirror, and with its bright, shining light, to look at the sky is like looking at the sun itself. The effect is overwhelming.

Elihu was more or less saying that all the nuances at God's disposal—wind, sky, rain, storm cloud, etc.—show His capabilities. At any whim of the Divine majesty and power, God has all of these elements as His servants. He can make them do His bidding in a variety of ways.

However, there was sarcasm in Elihu's words: "Job, were you ever with Jehovah when He did this? Were you in some way involved?" As verse 14 showed, Elihu kept Job in mind, even though most of his comments dealt with God's majesty and power: "Hearken unto this, O Job."

Job 37:19 Teach us what we shall say unto him; for we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness.

"[Job,] teach us [the three comforters and me, Elihu] what we shall say unto him [God]. Tell us how we can order our speech by reason of [our supposed] darkness, for we do not have your capability and enlightenment." Elihu was being sarcastic, saying in effect, "Job, you think that you are so wise and we are so dumb"; that is, Elihu thought Job was high-minded. When deep truths are explained, people can misconstrue what is being said as expressions of pride. In fact, that is how Jesus was viewed because he spoke with *authority*, as though he knew something—and of course he did have knowledge as the Son of God. Those who misunderstood Jesus looked at his youth and considered his claim to be the Messiah as fraudulent.

In one sense, Elihu was not misconstruing the motives of Job, but he wrongly assumed Job was in a teaching mode. Actually Job was on the defensive, and his statements were more or less common sense. Lest Job's statements be misunderstood, we must keep in mind that he was *suffering*.

Job 37:20 Shall it be told him that I speak? if a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up.

"Shall it be told him [God] that I would speak? Did a man ever wish he would be swallowed up?" In referring back to Job's lamentation "I wish I were dead," Elihu was saying, "Look at all the great things God does. Your wishing to die is foolish talk." Maybe Job was talking foolishly under that circumstance, but his sufferings must be taken into consideration.

Job 37:21 And now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds: but the wind passeth, and cleanseth them.

The storm cloud in the distance that Elihu had noticed earlier was nearing as he spoke. Now it was almost overhead, but because the lightning had ceased for the moment, he anticipated that perhaps the storm would soon abate, that a wind would come and blow it away, and that the sky would then be remarkably clear. This phenomenon usually occurs in the desert. After a storm, there is an uncanny clearness and wondrous effect so that one can see long distances. In an area with a large desert, one can be on a mountain on a day that is extremely hot and dry and have the following experience. When the individual tries to look in the distance, he cannot

see far because heat from the desert sand affects the light that is reflected from the desert floor, causing wavy lines that distort the view and curtail sight. Following a rainstorm, however, before the desert sand thoroughly dries, there is a remarkable clearness where one can see great distances. Another strange desert phenomenon is that if one is in an area with a rich mineral content below the sand, flowers seem to come up almost within minutes.

Elihu was continuing to say that God could do these wondrous things on the spur of the moment. Nevertheless, despite Elihu's anticipation of the "after experience," the storm had not yet occurred, as successive verses will show when God speaks.

Job 37:22 Fair weather cometh out of the north: with God is terrible majesty.

Comment: Fair weather does not usually come out of the north. The American Revised reads, "Out of the north comes golden splendor; around God is awesome majesty."

Reply: The word "north" seems to be in the Hebrew. In North America, cold and inclement weather often comes from the north, but in a desert condition, coldness does not occur during the day. In other words, wind from the north in a desert environment is quite different, although night temperatures can be freezing. The cold north wind is counterbalanced by the extremely hot south wind, resulting in pleasant, clear, and comfortable conditions.

Comment: Only once is the Hebrew word translated "fair weather" in the King James; 348 times it is translated "gold" and 40 times "golden."

Reply: Our understanding from books about travelers who have gone through the desert is that after a sirocco comes an opposite condition. The desert lacks normal trees, whereas in a cultivated land, the same conditions can produce a monsoon. Apparently, other translators considered the word "golden" to have a figurative twist. The translators of the King James would have been quite well aware that the word is used to mean "golden," but they inserted "fair weather" because they felt that was the connection Elihu was trying to make. What preceded could be terrible and awesome, and even judgmental under certain circumstances, yet afterward, when the sky cleared and the wind blew, the circumstance was just the opposite. We are personally inclined to favor the King James, but we are not dogmatic.

Q: Rotherham reads, "Out of the north a golden light cometh." Is the idea that after the storm, sunlight comes from the north? The golden light, or sunlight, coming out of the north indicates that fair weather is ahead.

A: Under these circumstances, Elihu seemed to be contrasting north with south, which was an *opposite* experience. Earlier he mentioned that a storm cloud has three different effects: (1) it can have a judgmental effect that creates a wadi flood of destructive proportions; (2) it can benefit the land, which needs moisture for various reasons; or (3) it can be for mercy because of the scarcity of water. Verse 22 gives one of the pleasantries after a storm. Earlier Elihu spoke of the "calm before the storm." Now, in a play on words, he was emphasizing the reverse: the "calm after the storm." Feeling he was superior, young Elihu did not empathize with Job's severe afflictions. When Job was healthy, people were afraid to talk with him, for they felt insecure in his presence, and Elihu would have had the same reaction now if Job were in good health. With Job being in such a miserable state, Elihu was misconstruing the situation and judging by appearance. Man judges by the outward appearance, and whether we realize it or not, so do we, as Christians (1 Sam. 16:7). Many decisions are based on outward appearances. We can be honestly wrong yet think we are right. Thank God we can be forgiven!

Comment: A meteorological effect is that cool, dry air comes from high pressure in the north, and warm, moist air from low pressure in the south. That is how the jet stream works.

Job 37:23 Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict.

Comment: Elihu was saying that the Almighty would not actively afflict the righteous. However, during the permission of evil, both good and evil are permitted to fall on the just and the unjust.

Reply: To whatever degree or proportion God exercises a judgmental circumstance, it will always be just, for He will not allow the attribute that is being exercised to override the other attributes of His character. There is a balancing of His judgment and justice. In the spirit realm, this balancing is a natural phenomenon as well as a philosophical principle.

Job 37:24 Men do therefore fear him: he respecteth not any that are wise of heart.

Elihu was talking about Job, saying that God did not respect him. If we do not have empathy for people, we can listen to their honest comment about their condition and misunderstand. Therefore, the love of the brotherhood is very important. However, under circumstances where an important principle is being violated, we can be neither kind in our comments nor silent, for to do so would encourage the wrong. Generally speaking, depending upon our disposition, we are either too lenient and merciful or too strict and judgmental. In judgment, a measure of serenity and calmness has to be factored in, but it takes time—and often many hard and bitter experiences—to develop this attitude or better view. We are all born with different capabilities, but the ideal is to try to exercise ourselves with the proper view of matters and ask, “What would Jesus do under this circumstance?”

We can view Elihu mercifully, for he was not aware at this time that a test was going on between God and Satan as to Job’s true character. Satan was responsible for the disease and affliction that came upon Job. Job’s circumstances were not the result of his guilt but were to prove his worthiness. Had Elihu known that, he would have praised Job. The lack of information on Elihu’s part—and to a certain extent the lack of that same information on Job’s part—was causing the confusion. The whole scenario was distorted because of a lack of understanding of the permission of evil. The Book of Job is interesting and informative and a wonderful blessing. It has to be read and reread carefully to glean the good component parts.

Elihu had been speaking for six chapters—for at least a half hour—without stopping. And Job had remained quiet. Previously the comforters spoke for a much shorter time, and Job replied in between with a rebuttal. But when Elihu started to speak, Job remained silent for the entire six chapters.

Job 38:1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,

Elihu had been speaking for six chapters, yet God now “answered *Job* out of the whirlwind.” What is the thought? Job had lamented in several of his “discourses,” wanting communication with God and pleading for Him to give a reason for the sufferings. Job was willing to accept God’s judgment, but not receiving a response troubled him. Thus, from a broad standpoint, God was now responding to Job’s earlier remarks about desiring communication.

Q: Was the “whirlwind” a continuation of the same storm that had been approaching while Elihu was speaking?

A: Yes. God’s voice was so powerful that it was not like talking across the room. The same situation occurred with Ezekiel. “And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst

thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire” (Ezek. 1:4). Out of the north came a dark cloud, and as time went on, God spoke through the cloud to Ezekiel. As the cloud stopped, it enshrouded the prophet. Then fire came out of the cloud, showing other types of energy than just the wind. In the Book of Job, unbeknownst to Elihu, the approaching storm indicated trouble. Elihu did not realize the cloud would stop in the presence of all five: Job, the three comforters, and himself. The purpose of the whirlwind was not just to show God’s power but also to manifest His presence in coming to communicate with all of them, and particularly with Job.

Q: Is the approaching storm a clue to show that all of the discourses back and forth in the Book of Job could have taken place in just one eight-hour day?

A: Yes, and God’s reply would have been in the afternoon.

God was answering Job in such a dramatic way that He cut Elihu off, as it were. Otherwise, Elihu would have spoken for another six chapters. Elihu was actually a bag of wind.

Job 38:2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?

Verse 1 can also be taken from the standpoint that God was replying to Job but was slanting some of the remarks, such as verse 2, for Elihu’s benefit: “Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?” The implied answer was Elihu. The very fact that God was talking to *Job* shows confidentiality and empathy with the sufferings.

Comment: At least twice previously, Elihu made the same accusation against Job that God was making here against Elihu. Elihu said, “Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom” and “Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain; he multiplieth words without knowledge” (Job 34:35; 35:16). Elihu was receiving back what he had given to Job.

Reply: Yes, certainly Elihu had multiplied words, and Job had remained silent, so perhaps Job did not really have a chance to speak.

Job 38:3 Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.

As we go through God’s remarks on various subjects verse by verse, it is hard to say specifically what His purpose was in bringing in particular examples. What was His motivation in choosing this manner of talking to Job, that is, in telling about the great things He has done?

A “girdle” gives strength in lifting a weight. Thus God was saying, “Job, prepare yourself, for what I am going to say is powerful.” With all that happened, God admired Job.

Although God was demanding an answer from Job, He was referring the comment to Elihu in an indirect manner. This technique is used elsewhere in Scripture. For instance, when God said, “Let us make man in our image,” He had in mind what He would do but purposely drew the attention of *others*, the holy angels, to behold the making of man; that is, He invited the holy angels and took them into His confidence (Gen. 1:26). God had a friendly rapport with the holy angels and did not want to create man in private with only Jesus seeing it. This is often done, especially with Jews, who speak with their hands and feet because of the limitation of the Hebrew language, which has few verbs and nouns. When we once get the idea and put ourselves back there, we begin to get in the same mood.

Job 38:4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.

“Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?” Certainly God did not expect Job to answer but was putting him in his place. God added, “Declare, if thou hast understanding.” This statement, too, demanded silence.

Before some of us consecrated, we knew instinctively by beholding the majesty of the heavens that there had to be a God. “The heavens declare the glory of God,” yet the Hebrew says they do not utter a sound (Psa. 19:1-3). The heavens are silent, but to those who can appreciate their profoundness, that silence is *deafening*, for their melody goes throughout the whole earth. As God put Job in his place, some of His remarks were similar to those of Elihu, but Elihu went off-tangent and was actually speaking from second- and third-hand information from God.

One reason for God’s remarks was to make Job say he was sorry for anything he may have said that was untoward. Job did go over the line in some remarks, but considering the circumstances in which he was suffering, God made allowance, for He “knoweth our frame” (Psa. 103:14). All God wanted Job to do was to say, “I am sorry,” and Job did. Then God honored Job. Saying “I am sorry” seems to be a necessity for divine forgiveness. For that reason, we go to the throne of heavenly grace at the end of each day, for unbeknownst to us, we may have done something that is dishonoring or disloyal to God or something that is not quite right. We ask for forgiveness, even though we may not be aware of a particular point.

Comment: Job’s asking forgiveness is in Job 42:3, “Therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.”

Reply: In other words, God was speaking and did not want to be interrupted, so it was not until the forty-second chapter that Job began to say he was sorry.

Elihu was on the scene the entire time but was only mentioned after the others had spoken several times. He felt his presence was providential because Job had said, “If only I had an intercessor. If only someone could be my lawyer or mediate on my behalf.” Job appealed to God direct because he did not know what other course to take. Hearing Job bemoan his situation, Elihu considered himself the intercessor, saying in effect, “I am here in God’s stead.” The Book of Job is a wonderful study in human behavior. We marvel at what Job endured with his not understanding the permission of evil.

Job 38:5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?

The questions “Who hath laid the measures thereof, ... or who hath stretched the line upon it?” show that when God made the earth, He took great care and interest in this very insignificant planet. Earth is like a pinpoint among the galaxies, yet to this tiny speck, Jesus Christ came and died as an example for all future generations. Therefore, we know that this tiny speck is important—so important, in fact, that God made sure all of the measures were exact. One “measure” was that Jerusalem is situated as a land bridge for three continents. All of the measures have meaning, and God was very careful with the details because earth is the object lesson for all future yet-unborn created beings.

Job 38:6 Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;

“Whereupon are the foundations [sockets] thereof fastened [laid]?” In other words, the earth hangs upon nothing; no substratum holds it (Job 26:7). The earth is round, and no base can be seen. This was a rhetorical question. However, Job prudently remained silent because Divine Majesty was speaking. The *invisible* foundations of the earth are precise and real; that is, they are invisible, but they *exist*. For instance, gravity and centrifugal forces counterbalance each

other. God was telling obvious facts to show that His thoughts are much higher above the earth than man's little thoughts down here.

“Who laid the corner stone thereof”? This question, which is definitely related to the Great Pyramid, indicates that from the *natural* standpoint, the Pyramid represents planet Earth. God's majesty is manifested in His physical laws. These laws should elicit admiration of His power and brilliancy of mind. God was talking to Job in the natural sense, not the spiritual.

Verse 6 is an indication that Job evidently knew something about the Great Pyramid. Since he lived after Noah, Shem, and Abraham, the Pyramid was already built. It is not farfetched to say that the Pyramid without the top stone represents planet Earth. The Pyramid appears on the dollar bill in the currency of the United States, and the eye above the Pyramid represents God's omniscient eye over this country, which was founded by people fleeing from religious persecution. The US Constitution contains wording to the effect that God has blessed the country, and we are here providentially. The year 1776 in Roman numerals is also on the dollar bill. God has blessed this country with harmony, unity, and diversity; through a lot of suffering were gained the rights of liberty, justice, and freedom for all. Thus even on US currency, a connection is established between the creation of planet Earth and the Great Pyramid.

Comment: Also, the Great Seal bears the Latin words *Novus Ordo Seclorum*, referring to a new world order. When the Great Pyramid is implemented in the Kingdom, it will truly be the new world order.

Comment: In an unusual way, four socket stones are sunk into the bedrock of the Great Pyramid. The same Hebrew word that is used for the “sockets” of the Pyramid is also used for the sockets of the Tabernacle of Moses.

Reply: Much information could be given on the Pyramid on another occasion.

Job 38:7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

“The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy” when they witnessed some of the Creative Days. With the creation of man and woman, how heightened that joy would have been! From our perspective as humans down here on earth, the Creative Days, each of which was 7,000 years long, were an interminably long period of time. From the creation of Adam through today does not cover even one Creative Day, as only 6,000-plus years have elapsed. But couldn't we reasonably assume that a thousand years in the spirit realm are a very brief period of time compared to the way we view matters down here? Subconsciously, whether we realize it or not, our bodies are limited to a lifetime of 100 years in a generous sense, generally speaking, and everything seems to be spaced on our short life span.

From the angelic standpoint, watching the Creative Days unfold was a relatively brief period of time, during which the surface of the earth was made habitable for man, including the Garden of Eden, and Adam and Eve were created. Therefore, when the morning stars sang together and the angelic host accompanied them with shouts of joy, they viewed a considerable amount of the creative process taking place.

Comment: Man measures time based on sunrise and sunset, so our frame of reference is different from that of spirit beings. Some indication of the time difference is given in 2 Peter 3:8, “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” Time is relative.

The “morning stars” were the Logos and Lucifer. The fact they are paired together in this verse

indicates not only that they were each an archangel but also that they were twins. Jesus, as the mouthpiece of the Father, was more confined, relatively speaking, to a certain sphere or realm of authority, whereas Lucifer had liberty in another direction. It is interesting that Lucifer was originally given a favorable name, which means “son of the dawn” or “son of light.” Thus his very name suggests he was a “morning star.” In other words, he was created in the early dawning of sentient beings, as was the Logos. However, the Logos, being “the *beginning* of the creation of God,” preceded Lucifer by a very, very short period of time (Rev. 3:14).

Comment: A proof text that the Logos was one of the “morning stars” is Revelation 22:16, “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.”

Comment: The term “sons of God” refers to angels when it is used in the books of Genesis and Job. The implication of the statement “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy” is that the morning stars are part of the “sons of God” and hence are angels as well.

Reply: That is true, and at the same time, the fact that the morning stars are mentioned separately shows there is some distinction. The morning stars and the angels, the “sons of God,” are spirit beings. And God, too, is a spirit being.

Comment: Ezekiel 28:14,15 shows that Lucifer had a superior office. “Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.”

Reply: Yes, that text shows that Lucifer had the liberty to go up and down the various planes, or orders, of spirit being—and even to come down here.

Comment: Isaiah 14:12 calls Lucifer a “son of the morning”: “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!”

Reply: Yes, Revelation 22:16 and Isaiah 14:12 show that the Logos and Lucifer, respectively, were morning stars. The Logos was the *Word* of God, which was his office as spokesperson of Jehovah. And his personal name was Michael.

Comment: Isaiah 14:13 tells the thought in Lucifer’s heart: “For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.” The “stars” here are not literal; rather, Lucifer wanted to exalt his throne above all of the other *angels*. He would thus be the highest angel, including being above the Logos. When this verse is combined with Job 38:7, which talks about the morning stars and all the sons of God, it becomes apparent that the term “morning stars” refers to some very specific angels, that is, the first two (or primary) angels, of whom Lucifer is one.

Reply: The very fact that the morning stars were created early makes them outstanding. The same is true of Adam. As the *first* human being, as the *initial* creation, he stood head and shoulders over everyone else. Both Adam and Eve also stood out in bold emphasis, as it were, by the very fact of their being created first and being exemplary of a potential race.

Job 38:8 Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?

Verses 8-11 confirm the explanation of the Creative Days as found in the first chapter of the

Sixth Volume, and particularly the Vailian theory (of Isaac Vail) with regard to the earth being initially surrounded by an aqueous veil and mineralized rings something like the planets Jupiter and Saturn.

In regard to verse 8, we sometimes refer to the earth as “Mother Earth,” which is appropriate here with the thought of the “womb.” As stated in Genesis 1:1, the earth was originally completely covered with water. The surface of the earth was dark except for an aurora borealis effect, and no land masses were visible. When the Creative Days started, the floor beneath the ocean, particularly the higher portions, became like mountains under the sea. Incidentally, *National Geographic* has just finished a complete mapping of all the oceans of earth—Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, etc.—as though they were physical terrain with mountains and valleys underneath the water. Actually, when the Creative Days occurred, volcanic eruptions broke the ocean floors and caused some of the mass to protrude upward above the surface of the waters and then flatten out to make continents. The continents, in turn, shored up the water into pools or receptacles, which we now call oceans.

Job 38:9 When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it,

Comment: With the reference to a womb and a swaddling band, God likened the earth to an infant or a little baby.

Reply: The language is highly figurative, almost poetic, but it is speaking of a reality created by God. An unusual talk many years ago was given by a brother from England about the “Mother Love of God.”

Comment: The term “swaddling band” sounds like a reference to rings around the earth according to the Vailian theory.

Job 38:10 And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors,

Job 38:11 And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?

Verse 10 refers to the formation of the continents when the land masses surfaced above the water. “My decreed place” sounds almost mathematical, like an engineering term. A precision was involved with the formation of the earth. God had a definite, predetermined purpose and decreed boundaries—the ocean floor did not come up like flotsam to form land masses. One illustration of a decree is Israel, which is the land bridge to three continents. God determined that Israel would occupy a unique place on the surface of the globe because eventually Jerusalem will be the capital of earth.

Comment: Jeremiah 5:22 reads, “Fear ye not me? saith the LORD: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?”

Reply: God decreed what He had already determined—something like an architect’s drawing, which is quite specific. When the ocean once occupied the place that God had predetermined, it stayed in that location. Of course the ocean might lap over land momentarily with a flood, but it then returns to its proper place, as decreed. In his sermon on Mars Hill, the Apostle Paul mentioned that the nations had been determined, not only their geographic boundaries, generally speaking, but also their topography, with unique environments.

Comment: Isaiah 40:12 mentions “measure,” “scales,” and a “balance,” showing mathematical precision. God “hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance.”

Comment: A recent article mentioned that if the ocean level were to rise one foot, much land would be overwhelmed by the waters, obliterating many people. If the Lord had not set bounds for the oceans, the results would be catastrophic for mankind.

Comment: All the water that the earth has now is all the water it will ever have. It just keeps circulating and recirculating; none is lost.

Reply: There is regularity with regard to our planet—its travel through space, sunrise, sunset, etc. The mathematics of God can be seen. It has been said that the basis of knowledge is mathematics, and the foundation of God’s throne is justice, which is a kind of spiritual mathematics.

Comment: The moon determines high and low tides. Without such precision, the waters would rise and inundate the land. The amazing precision of the moon in relation to the earth could only be the result of God’s hand.

Reply: The moon’s orbit is complex and not too well understood, but we certainly see its effects. Even plant life is affected. When old-timers planted, they used to be very much concerned as to what the lunation was for the month because they recognized that certain periods were more propitious than others.

Comment: Psalm 104:9 speaks of the ordering of the waters: “Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.”

Reply: The Maine coastline is impressive for its strong rock formations. When waves pound that rock and then roll back into their own depths, the thought of a formidable barrier to quiet the wrath of the ocean is clearly seen.

Q: Is the command “Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further” a principle with God? He controls everything—including evil and Satan’s machinations.

A: Yes, principles can be extrapolated. Of course God was speaking emphatically here along natural lines, but from the principles being enunciated, we can draw other lessons. In fact, God had an ulterior motive in using this type of reasoning with Job. Although the heavens are higher above the earth than we are, and God’s thoughts are higher than our thoughts, He has, nevertheless, granted us, through the Holy Spirit, a little insight into some of His reasons for doing certain things. At the end of the Book of Job, we will try to draw some lessons on God’s reasons for pursuing this methodology with Job.

The current *National Geographic* gave startling statistics that just recently the population of earth has started to wane. The development of AIDS is surely a factor and also birth control.

Comment: It seems that when prophecy is about to be fulfilled, birthing pains precede it. The declining population rate could be a birthing pain of the prophecy of the end times. There is no longer a necessity for population to continue at the same rate.

Reply: In poor countries where starvation was common, the thinking was that the more children a family had, the more likely it was that one would become wealthy and be able to support the others. Therefore, the people procreated prolifically. However, people today think

a little differently.

Job 38:12 Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place;

Sunrise and sunset are dependable and quiet. The sun makes no noise when it rises and sets but has quiet majesty and regularity. The omnipotence of the Creator is manifested in so many ways when we study His handiwork.

Comment: Verse 12 was another way God made Job feel small and insignificant—and also those who were listening. Their days on earth were *nothing*—they were like a blink of the eye compared to the antiquities of God and His creative powers with regard to the earth.

Reply: In other words, sunrise and sunset were going on long before Job—and long after his decease. The brevity of human life is emphasized here; it is like a dream in the night.

Comment: Psalm 74:16 reads, “The day is thine, the night also is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun.”

Job 38:13 That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it?

Verse 13 is a sudden change in illustration.

Comment: Generally speaking, those with evil motives and deeds like the cover of the darkness of night. The sun has a curtailing effect.

Reply: Yes, and wild beasts also like the night. In the daytime, many return to their lairs.

Job 38:14 It is turned as clay to the seal; and they stand as a garment.

A seal is usually an imprint or image carved into an instrument. When that seal is pressed into soft wax and then lifted, it leaves an impression or image, but when the seal is down, no image is seen. And so at night, when the “seal” is down and it is dark, the image of the earth cannot be seen, but when night is lifted and day comes, the image is seen—beautiful mountains, trees, blue sky, etc. Thus night blankets, or covers, and light reveals and exposes.

Comment: The NIV is a little clearer than the King James: “The earth takes shape like clay under a seal; its features stand out like those of a garment.”

The “garment” would be the mountains and clouds that clothe or adorn the earth. Before these were created, the earth was naked, just covered with water, dark, and flat.

Comment: The God’s Word translation has, “The earth changes like clay stamped by a seal, and parts of it stand out like folds in clothing.” The “folds” would be mountain ranges, which are not seen until the seal is lifted up.

Job 38:15 And from the wicked their light is withholden, and the high arm shall be broken.

To the wicked, darkness is like light. The wicked flourish in darkness. When they are deprived of the darkness, they go into their lairs like the wild beasts. The uplifted “arm” of the wicked is suppressed by daylight. Of course verse 15 is speaking of olden times. For thousands of years, people lived an agrarian lifestyle without electricity, but today, in modern society, conditions are different. Now the wicked also work well in daylight, for instance, in stealing people’s

identities and money with their computers.

Comment: “Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19).

Job 38:16 Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?

Certainly Job did not have the capability to enter “into the springs of the sea” because today’s technology was not available back there. Therefore, to Job, these questions were as high above the earth as the heavens. Of course God would have used different questions if Job were alive today, and those questions would have been just as, or even more, confounding. With a few simple questions from God, the current leading scientists and brilliant brains would be more humiliated than Job was.

Job was not familiar with the depths and terrain of the sea and with the springs that issue from the ocean beds. Therefore, these questions were sufficient to humiliate him under the circumstances of his time. In Job’s day, a diver could go down only 25 or 30 feet—and without an air supply.

Job 38:17 Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?

Job would answer “no” to these rhetorical questions from God. Similar questions are in Proverbs 30:4, “Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son’s name, if thou canst tell?” Some of the questions in the Psalms of David and the Proverbs of Solomon are almost quotations from the Book of Job, which was written centuries earlier. Therefore, David and Solomon both gleaned information from the Book of Job.

Comment: Verse 17 is highly figurative, for obviously, death does not have literal gates or doors.

Reply: Those of Job’s day understood what God was saying because they were philosophical in their own statements. These were the “doors” of *revelment*. In other words, God was asking, “Do you know the details of what goes on in the grave?”

Job 38:18 Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare if thou knowest it all.

All of these questions were meaningful to Job because people could only travel slowly in those days.

Job 38:19 Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof,

Job 38:20 That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof, and that thou shouldest know the paths to the house thereof?

Verses 19 and 20 are related. By definition, darkness is the absence of light, but darkness is a mystery because there are peculiar, unexplained circumstances. For example, a volcano a hundred miles away may erupt violently in the daytime and cause sudden darkness, but unless we knew that a volcano was the cause, we would not understand the reason for the sudden darkness over the land. The *Fourth Volume* mentions a phenomenon of darkness and also of falling stars, some of which appeared as large as the moon to people in New England in 1833.

However, the explanation of those phenomena was beyond human perception particularly in Job's day. People who have been trying to prove that man evolved from paramecia or monkeys will look like fools when they see the true situation in the Kingdom. Scientists, with all their supposed education, more or less believe that the creation of the universe started with a gigantic explosion. When they learn the truth in the future, they will be more confounded than Job. Mankind, with all of today's knowledge, gives answers that are more preposterous than even Job could have uttered. In the future, they will be ashamed of their statements that contradicted the teaching of Scripture.

Job 38:21 Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born? or because the number of thy days is great?

Comment: This was sarcasm. The NIV uses exclamation marks: "Surely you know, for you were already born! You have lived so many years!"

Job 38:22 Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail,

Job 38:23 Which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?

The "treasures of the snow" refer to Noah's Ark, which will be revealed, or understood, in the Time of Trouble. Noah's Ark has been preserved by God, and its exposure will prove that the story of the Flood was a reality, not a fable.

Q: The word "treasures" is rendered "storehouses" in the RSV and the NIV. Why is the word plural? Since the Ark is a treasure (singular), what are the other treasures? What else is in the snow?

A: There may be other artifacts, the altar Noah built for an offering after leaving the Ark, etc.

Q: What are the "treasures of the hail"?

A: When God delivers the Holy Remnant out of Jacob's Trouble, there will be hail as in Joshua's day (Josh. 10:11). Hail will come down and consume a part of the invading host of Gog and Magog after they have defeated the city of Jerusalem. God will then go into action and change seeming utter defeat into a miraculous victory.

Q: Would this hail be the kind that came upon Egypt in one of the ten plagues?

A: That would be true also.

The top stone of the Great Pyramid was too large, so it was never placed on the structure. Because the top stone was in the way and a constant obstacle to the laborers, it was put behind the Pyramid, and eventually sandstorms covered it completely. The top stone has been preserved in this buried state. In the future, when new casing stones are put on the Pyramid, the top stone will be found. It will then fit and be in alignment with the refurbished structure. The top stone is symbolic of Jesus Christ, the Head of the body, his Church, which will be portrayed by the 144,000 casing stones, 36,000 being on each side.

"Which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war." The discovery of Noah's Ark is reserved for the end-time trouble, which will be characterized by much "battle and war."

Comment: If the Ark were sighted in the beginning of the Time of Trouble, it would be a powerful encouragement and an anchor of faith for believers (not necessarily the consecrated) who have the right spirit and are seeking righteousness and meekness and thus may “be hid in the day of the LORD’S anger” (Zeph. 2:3).

Job 38:24 By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth?

The word “which” somewhat confuses the fact that verse 24 contains two separate thoughts or phenomena; namely, “By what way is the light distributed, or what scattereth the east wind upon the earth?”

Comment: The NIV reads, “What is the way to the place where the lightning is dispersed, or the place where the east winds are scattered over the earth?”

Again God was showing the limitation of man’s knowledge. Of course, as mentioned previously, God was speaking to Job on a lower scale than He would address mankind today because technological advances of the current generation have brought greater understanding. God addressed Job on a level just high enough to embarrass him and show the finiteness of his capabilities.

Comment: Earth is called the blue planet because of its atmosphere and clouds. Job did not have that perspective because he was confined to earth and never saw the planet from the moon, let alone flew in an airplane. Therefore, God referred to wind, lightning, etc., which Job could see.

Reply: Today many people feel the Book of Job is archaic because they are so proud of their level of understanding. However, God intentionally used this low-key style of reasoning with Job, which was just sufficiently high to embarrass him. Moreover, God could embarrass the most learned today by using another method of reasoning that would show them to be more ridiculous than Job. For example, He could show the foolishness of the Big Bang and the Evolution theories. To say that man evolved from monkeys or that dinosaurs are millions of years old is utter folly and high-mindedness.

Job 38:25 Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder;

“Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters”? God was referring to wadis in the Middle East that receive the torrential rains resulting from flash floods. As seen from an airplane, wadis have sharp definitions based on water coursing down hills and cutting steep ravines. Annual rainfall in the desert may be only an inch or two, but torrential rain can fall in less than an hour and have the speed of an express train. People run for their lives to higher ground. For example, many tourists have died at Petra because they are not familiar with the danger of a suddenly occurring thunderstorm. Natives, however, are acutely aware of the danger, and they can detect the approach of such a storm through a peculiar sound. When they hear the sound, they run for their very lives to higher ground.

God was asking Job, “Do you know what my purpose is in dividing a watercourse for the overflowing waters?” One reason is to provide deserts with underground reservoirs of water. It is now well known that a tremendous well of water lies deep below the surface of the Sinai desert. Also, ravines through which water courses make roadways that are utilized by natives in getting to certain destinations. They know which ravines to take to avoid hitting a dead end. In fact, they lay stones in a manner to indicate the through highways. Thus there are purposes behind the flash floods.

“Who hath [made] ... a way for the lightning of thunder?” The phenomenon of lightning is well

known today. On the one hand, it can even be artificially created in certain types of laboratories. On the other hand, God has used lightning for His own purposes when deemed expedient. In fact, lightning and flash floods are implements of His armory that are used to humble man and teach lessons.

Comment: At the time of Korah's rebellion, lightning suddenly came out of the cloud pillar that was attached to the Most Holy and destroyed 250 men who offered incense (Num. 16:35).

Reply: The main body cloud protected the Israelites from the desert heat by day and served as a blanket at night to keep the heat from dissipating too quickly from the desert sand. As a result, the Israelites could travel by day or night in relative comfort. The elements of nature and weather are God's obedient servants. With man, the situation is otherwise, for the elements and the weather are hard to predict with accuracy despite the use of computers.

Comment: Lightning is good for the earth.

Reply: Lightning can also cause damage. Of course God does not personally control every bolt of lightning, but He permits sin and evil in order to teach man who is the Emperor of the universe. God wants us to love Him for who He is and what He does. The permission of evil is a valuable but temporary instructor. Never again will it be tolerated beyond the Kingdom.

Comment: God was responding to what Job had said earlier in answering Bildad (Job 18:6).

Reply: Job could observe the reality but not the purpose. He did not fully understand the permission of evil. Righteous people and those who trust in Christ suffer for disciplinary and educational reasons. When Christians suffer, there is a purpose. It behooves us, through prayer and other observations, to try to understand the why and the wherefore of trials, but we will not always fully understand in the present life. Nevertheless, we have to trust that God knows what He is doing and has a purpose. Our trials are tailor-made. Sometimes in hindsight, in looking back on an experience years later, we can understand why God did certain things in our life. God sometimes graciously reveals the reason for a particular experience. However, in the next age, if we are faithful to our covenant of sacrifice, we will understand.

Job 38:26 To cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein there is no man;

God continued with questions on water, rain, and storms. Did Job know why God caused rain to fall on the wilderness where no man lived? The critical observer might even use this question to say there is no God. He would reason, "If there is an intelligent Creator, why would He allow water to go into a desolate land for no apparently good purpose?" But God has a purpose.

In Beer-sheba and deserts of Israel, a little water produces good crops of vegetables. Nutrients and chemicals in the sand appear dormant until water is provided; then the desert blossoms like a rose.

Job 38:27 To satisfy the desolate and waste ground; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth?

The phrase "to satisfy" almost makes the "desolate and waste ground" sound human—as if the ground is thirsty. When flash floods occur, remarkable flowers spring forth briefly in the wadis. This growth shows the potential that exists in the desert.

Job 38:28 Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew?

Comment: God was asking Job, “Is there an intelligent Designer for the rain, or is the rain just aimless?”

Reply: The rain that seems to waste away is absorbed in the desert sand and stored up in huge reservoirs belowground, hidden from man’s sight. Therefore, God has a purpose for the rain, even though man looks on the desert as a wasteland. The water is in reserve; it is in a storehouse of treasure and great potential. Incidentally, at the lower part of the Dead Sea are valuable chemicals for agriculture that cannot be fully exploited today because present-day conditions in Israel require a large percentage of the economy to be used for war purposes and the development of technology for protection. Thus hidden chemical treasures cannot be used until the Arab problem is resolved.

The desert is hungry for water, and God is the Author, Founder, Father, and Mother of the source of water. Notice the distinction between water descending upon the earth in the form of rain and water arising from the earth as drops of dew. This latter phenomenon was very pronounced as a reality prior to the Flood. Rain did not fall on the earth until after the Flood; instead dew arose from the ground. “The LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth.... there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground” (Gen. 2:5,6).

Comment: The fleece test with Gideon was also a manifestation of the dew.

Reply: That was a *localized* phenomenon to demonstrate God’s power and control to satisfy Gideon. The first night the fleece was wet and the ground dry; the second night the fleece was dry and the ground wet.

Job 38:29 Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?

Here God likened Himself to a Mother. As the God of nature, He begets the dew like a Father, but He also develops ice in the womb of the earth like a Mother. God created Adam from Mother Earth; that is, the earth was Adam’s mother.

“Out of whose womb came the ice” refers to glaciers. In other words, “Out of God’s womb came glaciers.” God formed the glaciers of frozen ice. “The hoary frost of heaven” refers to snow, which is more delicate, like confectioners’ sugar.

Comment: Being from Nigeria, we never saw snow until we came to the United States. Isaiah 1:18 reads, “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as *snow*; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Before actually seeing snow, we never imagined how white it truly is. What a beautiful thought that the heavens are pregnant with water and snow and are ready to deliver!

Reply: Seeing snow on the trees is often like a wonderland, a fairyland, a dreamland. At times, the snow is so beautiful that it is surrealistic, especially to those who lived most of their life in a warm climate.

Job 38:30 The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen.

Comment: One translation reads, “The water hardens like a stone, and the surface of the ocean freezes over.” And Rotherham states, “Like a stone are the waters congealed, and the face of the roaring deep becometh firm!”

Reply: The second half of the verse complements the first half; they are two different

perspectives of the same thing. The freezing of the face of the deep is a greater phenomenon when the waters are more or less constantly agitated. The “face” of the deep would be the surface and not far below it.

Not only is the face of the deep frozen (hard) as a stone when the weather is sufficiently cold, but also the ice acts like a cloak to hide what is below. Of course as the water freezes more and more, the surface appears whiter and whiter. Thin ice is hard and like glass, whereas thick ice is white and like a wall or blanket that hides anything below.

Comment: The whole concept of water freezing, going from a liquid to a solid, is rather incomprehensible.

Reply: Water is very unusual, for it is the only element that does not contract under cold conditions. Otherwise, the oceans would be all ice today, from top to bottom. Water appears to contract or congeal with the cold, but instead it expands. And so, at the present time, truth is the opposite of what things seem to be.

Job 38:31 Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?

Pleiades is not only celestial north but also the gravitational center of the galactical realm. In the usual mapping of the zodiac, Pleiades is found in a traditional, mythological, astronomical constellation called Taurus the bull. Located in the neck of Taurus and called the Seven Sisters, Pleiades consists of seven stars that can be seen with good eyesight. One of the stars, Alcyone, is brighter than the others. More than a half century ago, a time-exposure photograph taken through a telescope revealed what looked like a million stars in the cluster. Alcyone, which means “center,” is in harmony with the thought that Pleiades is the center of the celestial realm.

Comment: Amos 5:8 refers to Pleiades: “Seek him that maketh the seven stars [Pleiades] and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is his name.”

Reply: As here in Job, Orion is coupled with Pleiades. In mentioning the changing of gloom or sadness into joy, the Amos text indicates a favorable disposition with these two constellations.

Comment: The Pleiades is in the direction of the north, and promotion comes from the north. Psalm 75:6,7 reads, “For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.”

Reply: The angle of the earth’s axis when the planet goes around the sun seems to be pointing toward the north.

Q: Since the “*sweet influences* of Pleiades” refer to the gravitational forces that are exerted, is there a spiritual tie-in with the seven stars Jesus held in his right hand (Rev. 1:16)?

A: There would be some connection in a figurative sense but not in a typical sense.

Orion means “light,” that is, truth from the divine standpoint. Truth and light are associated with blessing—just as sun and light in the natural realm have a beneficial influence on life, vegetation, oxygenation, photosynthesis, etc.

Q: When God asked Job, “Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades?” was He indicating there are so many stars in that cluster that there is a strong gravitational pull? If so, how does that contrast with loosing the bands of Orion?

A: Orion is an exceptional constellation, as it *seems* to be out of control, but in spite of this constellation and its density, there is no collision whatever, showing that Orion follows a set path with its travel being under the control of the Heavenly Father. Man goes to great effort to try to forecast or predict the weather, and while a good job is done in many instances, there are so many variables that absolute accuracy is impossible. Similarly, the mathematical symbol pi, 3.14159 (etc.), the number or symbol of God, seems to us to have no end with its decimal places. Adam Rutherford published about 32 decimal points in his book on the Great Pyramid, and others have carried pi much further. We believe that the symbol is a finite number from Jehovah's standpoint but an infinite number from man's standpoint. Pi figures into many relationships. The principle of pi pertaining to a circle or a sphere is found in God's universe, for all of the celestial bodies are spheres.

Comment: Job referred to Pleiades in an earlier chapter: “[God] commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up [fixes the location of] the stars. Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea. Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south” (Job 9:7-9). First, Job used these heavenly bodies in his reasoning, and now God used them to show that Job may have *known* about them, but He *controlled* them.

Reply: Nevertheless, the *little* knowledge Job had was *great* compared to that of the average citizenry of his day—or even today.

Q: The NIV uses “cords” in verse 31: “Can you loose the cords of Orion?” Is the thought that the stars from Orion seem as if they will fly off, but “cords” keep them in the constellation?

A: Yes, they are under divine control, even though they seem not to be.

Comment: The stars are moving apart, but by telling us there are “influences” and “bands,” God is saying He controls them.

Reply: This comment leads to the larger subject of the Big Bang theory that the universe seems to be parting. If that were the case, the result would be ultimate destruction. However, some astronomers, with whom we concur, claim that this is only a temporary situation and that instead of the stars spreading apart, they are pulsating—like a heart beating back and forth, expanding and contracting, expanding and contracting, etc. We would be in the expanding situation at present.

If that is not the proper thought, we do know that from planet Earth, five different opposing directions are happening at the same time. Therefore, an astronomer who observes the universe with a telescope and concludes that the stars are spreading apart can be seeing an illusion or a mirage. For instance, for one who is seated on a train that is leaving a station, the platform seems to be moving backwards, whereas it is stationary. The point is that scientists do a lot of conjecturing, and in many cases, they realize years later they made a mistake in regard to time-honored theories that had become almost axioms. Astronomers are constantly adjusting their theories. They must be careful, especially when dealing with distant galaxies, for they can be viewing optical illusions.

Job 38:32 Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?

Mazzaroth is the 12 signs of the zodiac, which seem to be stationary but are slowly moving. As the Great Pyramid indicates, the zodiac makes a complete circuit every 25,868 years. That change is almost imperceptible from our standpoint.

Comment: According to the Companion Bible, Arcturus means “the greater sheepfold, known today as the Great Bear.”

Job certainly knew of these constellations and their names, and now God reasoned with him. Abraham and some of the other ancients also had understanding along these lines, but to pursue these subjects at present puts us in the realm of conjecture, which is better to avoid. For the same reason, the Bible condemns the subject of astrology. However, the study of astronomy is permissible within certain reasonable parameters.

Job 38:33 Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?

After referring to Pleiades, Orion, Mazzaroth, and Arcturus, God asked Job the pertinent question “Do you know the ordinances of heaven? Can you set their dominion from down here? Can you make them do your bidding from this tiny planet?”

Job 38:34 Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee?

“Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee?” In other words, “Job, can you control the rain?” People who observe the order of the universe see the mathematical orientation in regard to the movement of the heavenly bodies, but they do not understand the principles, motivation, and purposes behind them. Astronomers estimate, for example, that a very distant star is 3 million light-years away. First, God showed how little Job understood of the methodology and purposes of the ordinances of the *extremely distant* constellations. Now God was coming down to our solar system to show that even in regard to earth’s solar system and its circumambient influences, Job had little understanding. If we are humble, we will see and admit that with all the knowledge we acquire, we need the Great Teacher, Jesus Christ, to instruct us in all our ways. To grow in a proper understanding, we must use the parameters of Scripture and the direction of heavenly light to illuminate our path.

Job 38:35 Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?

The “lightnings” are God’s messengers for accomplishing either judgment or enlightenment depending on His purpose, and He can control the direction of lightning, whereas to us it appears like random, unpredictable zigzags and streaks. God was saying, “Job, you cannot bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, nor can you control thunder and lightning.” The “lightnings” are not man’s messengers, but God’s.

Job 38:36 Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart?

“Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts [of the clouds]?” The context indicates that God was referring to the wisdom of the clouds rather than to the wisdom of human anatomy. As God’s messengers, the lightning, thunder, and rain all respond to His commands. From God’s standpoint, it is as if they have a heart and understanding—as if they are *animate*. From *man’s* standpoint, they are *inanimate*, because man cannot touch their heart and have them obey. God knows what He is doing. With God, nothing is impossible (Matt. 19:26).

Job 38:37 Who can number the clouds in wisdom? or who can stay the bottles of heaven,

Comment: When dark storm clouds are approaching, rain seems to be a certainty, yet those clouds can pass by without a drop of moisture falling.

Comment: The end of verse 37 in the NIV reads, “Who can tip over the water jars of the heavens?” The clouds are like water skins that God can tip over, whereas man has no control over them.

Reply: Yes, God’s real lesson in the form of a repeated rhetorical question was, “Job, can you do it?” Over and over the implied or obvious answer was no, and the inference was that God can do these things because He has *complete mastery* over the elements, whatever they may be.

Job 38:38 When the dust groweth into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together?

Now God described a drought condition. When there is no rain, the “dust” becomes like stone or concrete. Sometimes in a prolonged drought, not only does the ground get hard like a rock, but it cracks and splits open. It is as if the dry earth is calling for moisture like a baby: “Oh, if only I had some rain!” In God’s due time and own way, He furnishes both the desert and civilization with their needs if they inquire respectfully of their Maker.

Comment: Man has made great advances in technology but does not have mastery over nature. Man is impotent against floods, earthquake, drought, etc.

Reply: That is the lesson here. Today there is a deterioration in art, music, literature, and all the other graces of knowledge, as well as in the human body and morals, but the one thing that seems to be advancing in a progressive fashion is technology. However, technology is *very cold*. Thank God for the understanding we have of the gospel of grace and the opportunity for the world of mankind in the Kingdom!

Job 38:39 Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? or fill the appetite of the young lions,

Job 38:40 When they couch in their dens, and abide in the covert to lie in wait?

Job 38:41 Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat.

Verses 39 and 40 speak about the lion and its cubs in the wild and their need for food. Verse 41 speaks about the raven and its young out in nature and their need for provender of some kind. Can man provide food for wild animals and birds in their natural habitat? No! The word “ravenous,” which is related to the raven, means to have extreme hunger. Man is limited and can do only so much under certain circumstances with regard to the needs of God’s creatures.

It was *God* who was speaking on this philosophical subject. Therefore, we should meditate on the valuable, deep lessons. The Book of Job puts us in the proper mode of sitting at the feet of God, as it were, and of His Son. The next step is obedience. Wisdom, or knowledge, is the *beginning* of understanding, and obedience is the *end*, or purpose, of understanding. The purpose of knowledge is to *understand and do*. Jesus said, “Blessed are your ears if you hear my words,” but we are even more blessed if we *do* them (Matt. 13:16 paraphrase).

Job 39:1 Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve?

Job 39:2 Canst thou number the months that they fulfil? or knowest thou the time when they bring forth?

God continued to ask Job (and us) questions, for the communication with Job was also for our instruction. As with Job, there is silence with us too. The Creator implanted peculiar, distinctive

characteristics in these wild creatures.

“Do you know the time that the wild goats of the rock give birth? Can you mark [the time] when the hinds [female wild goats] calve [give birth]?” The context (verses 1-4) pertains to the wild goat, a creature that is unusual for the agility and rapidity with which it climbs dangerous, irregular, jagged rocks and loose stones, especially in higher altitudes. Mountain goats run on this treacherous footing almost the way buffalo and deer run on a flat plain. Their peculiarly shaped hooves, as well as their sense of balance—which God implanted in their body mechanisms—are specially adapted for such terrain.

Verse 2 is really a repeat of verse 1. It takes nine months for a normal female human to give birth. The various animals give birth at different lengths of time. In this chapter, God questioned Job on the *wild* goat and the *wild* ass, both of which are unpredictable, hyperactive animals that are difficult to study. In contrast, domesticated animals are easily studied.

Job 39:3 They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones, they cast out their sorrows.

The wild goats crouch down and give birth to their young. The thought of “they cast out their sorrows” is that wild animals give birth much more easily than domesticated ones. In the wild realm, it is a matter of the survival of the fittest. The survivors are aggressive and clever, and animals are equipped with a defensive mechanism, for example, poison.

Job 39:4 Their young ones are in good liking, they grow up with corn; they go forth, and return not unto them.

The NIV reads, “Their young thrive and grow strong in the wilds; they leave and do not return.” Once wild goats mature sufficiently, they go out on their own, generally speaking, and look for their own family. Being independent animals, they love their freedom.

Job 39:5 Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass?

Verses 5-8 pertain to the wild ass. The NIV reads, “Who let the wild donkey go free? Who untied his ropes?”

Job 39:6 Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings.

The wilderness is home to the wild ass. Wild animals dwell in dens, caves, coverts, etc. We wonder how anything can live in the extreme heat of the desert, but creatures survive there. Some creatures can even survive on what is almost molten lava. And there are bacteria that eat oil spilled by tankers. In other words, God has created safeguards of the strangest kind, many of which we do not fully understand, to preserve planet Earth and its habitats. Certain animals seem to thrive in the most barren, forlorn, harsh circumstances. They are happy in their wilderness homes and would be unhappy in cozy situations.

Job continued to remain silent, for he did not have the answers. Even Satan was deceived. He thought the serpent was wise because it ate of the fruit of the forbidden tree in the Garden of Eden. However, God *created* the serpent to be wily and subtle, and it could eat of that fruit and not die because the fruit was good for food. God merely placed a simple prohibition on the fruit to test Adam. God’s reason for the test was the permission of evil. Because Adam ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, mankind has learned about the fruits of disobedience.

Much about the wild animals is beyond our depth of perception, but we like to observe them

because they are God's creatures. Eventually, man will realize that all of God's creatures have a symbolic or figurative meaning. In the Kingdom Age and beyond, man will delight in an everlasting pursuit of the depth of knowledge of God's creatures. In contradistinction, the Christian has much higher aspirations and the goal to be with the Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus.

Comment: The King James marginal reading for "barren land" is "salt places."

Reply: Yes, and not only does the wild ass need salt, but all wild creatures require a certain amount for survival. Even domestic animals like the horse instinctively need access to a salt lick. Humans, too, need some salt for survival. For that reason, salt was considered to be as valuable as gold in some places. It was even used for currency in ancient times, for Roman soldiers were sometimes paid in salt.

Comment: When salt licks are put out for cattle in certain areas, other animals such as deer and moose avail themselves of the salt.

Job 39:7 He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver.

The wild ass loves and thrives on isolation. If a horse gets obstreperous and disobedient, the driver usually whips the reins up and down on the hindquarters of the animal and shouts to bring it under control. The wild ass wants no part of the city and such control. Loving freedom, it scorns the noise, commands, and stricture of society.

God used potent language that is filled with instruction. Job listened in silence, but the words had an effect on him. In fact, they did what the three comforters and Elihu could not do.

Job 39:8 The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing.

There are two types of wilderness: a barren wilderness and a wilderness with a paucity of verdure. Certain wild animals can feed on a blade of grass in the sand that is not visible to humans. God has provided for His creatures in a unique way that is hard for man to understand.

When God began to talk, He started with the Pleiades, Arcturus, and Orion. He asked Job, "Do you understand what is going on in the distant heavens? You see the constellations and the stars and even give them names, but how much do you really know about them and the zodiac? What depth of understanding do you have?" Job would have to admit, "I did attempt to show my superior understanding to silence the comforters, who were trying to give me advice, but now I have to admit I do not know very much."

God started with the far heavens; came down to earth's atmosphere and solar system with the clouds, lightning, thunder, and rain; went to the mountain ranges; and then would go to the flat plain. Here we see the mathematical, orderly mind of God. Everything is under His control. In fact, His very voice contains logistics of control. The cosmos aspect of creation was done with the word of His mouth—God *said*, and it was done! In other words, during the Creative Days, the actual *voice* of God did what He said in the formation of earth's surface to make it a habitable abode for man. With the galaxies, He used *His fingers, His arms, His span*. We are getting only a small glimpse of the mightiness of our Creator. People should RUN to learn of God, but they go their own way unless something happens, by His grace, to bring them to Jesus so that they can have access to Him and be instructed. How wonderful that we have been so selected! Now we hope we can be faithful unto death, but to inherit the divine nature, we must be more than an overcomer and develop the characteristics God is looking for. If we hear and obey, what a wonderful lot is ours!

Job 39:9 Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib?

Job 39:10 Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee?

Job 39:11 Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great? or wilt thou leave thy labour to him?

Job 39:12 Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn?

Verses 9-12 pertain to the “unicorn,” a one-horned animal, which seems to be the wild ox. Back there the Hebrew word translated “unicorn” did not refer to an animal with just one horn. God was asking Job, “Is the wild ox willing to serve you? Will he spend the night at your crib?”

For verses 9-12, the NIV reads, “Will the wild ox consent to serve you? Will he stay by your manger at night? Can you hold him to the furrow with a harness? Will he till the valleys behind you? Will you rely on him for his great strength? Will you leave your heavy work to him? Can you trust him to bring in your grain and gather it to your threshing floor?”

Job 39:13 Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks? or wings and feathers unto the ostrich?

Different translations give various renderings for verse 13 because the word translated “peacocks” is uncertain in the Hebrew and the translators had difficulty coming to a consensus on its true meaning. In the past, we went along with the King James rendering. Subsequent verses prove that the main subject matter is the ostrich, and verse 13 compares the ostrich to another bird. Because the emphasis is on pinions and feathers in the Hebrew, the King James translators used “peacocks,” thinking that the verse was speaking about its beautiful plumage. They felt that perhaps the verse was comparing the apparent uselessness of the wings of the peacock and the ostrich for flight. However, the NIV reference to the stork seems reasonable and proper: “The wings of the ostrich flap joyfully, but they cannot compare with the pinions and feathers of the stork.” A footnote should have stated, though, that the Hebrew is uncertain. When we consider the rendering to be a stork, the analogy is a little different. Incidentally, the King James margin does show an alternate rendering of “stork.”

The ostrich is an ungainly, awkward bird with a heavy body that seems disproportionately large. Nevertheless, God had a purpose in so creating this bird, even though its wings are not capable of lifting the bird into the sky for flight. Over and over again God was teaching Job that in spite of the anomalies and apparent discrepancies in certain of His creatures, He intentionally implanted these characteristics for a purpose. The insects, the flowers, the animals, and the birds all have symbolism, as will be seen in future ages. Whether the head is different or the legs are numerous or whatever, there is a reason. In fact, the various features represent characteristics of *individuals*. Some features represent good and profitable characteristics, and others show bad characteristics. Thus, in the ages to come, it will be seen that God made the creatures as a *memorial* to show good and bad human character traits of past ages.

While the Crucifixion of Christ is the Ransom as the basis of salvation not only for Christians now but also for all of the willing and obedient of the next age, that scenario shows the depravity of the human race, which came about because of the disobedience of Father Adam. Earth is the first planet on which human beings were created, and it is here that Jesus came to die to show the necessity for trust in and heart obedience to the Creator and His wisdom, justice, love, and power. In the future, when human beings are created on other planets, the

story of the Fall and Redemption of earth's inhabitants will be told and retold, and the animals and other creatures will be object lessons for all. No matter how ungainly and strange or how beautiful an animal appears, God had a purpose in so creating it.

The stork is also ungainly, yet it can fly, in contradistinction to the ostrich, which cannot fly. The wings of a stork are shaped differently from the wings of other birds. Its pinions and feathers are concave, somewhat like an umbrella. A stork can lift itself up and fly, in spite of its weight and clumsy feet.

In verses 13-18, attention is peculiarly focused upon the ostrich, which lacks the long wings of other birds, so the question is, What is God's purpose with regard to the ostrich? Verse 13 emphasizes wings and feathers, and verse 18 answers the question about the purpose of the wings: "What time she lifteth up herself [with her wings] on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider." The wings lift up the ostrich to the extent that its heavy, ungainly body is light as a feather. By flapping its wings vigorously, the ostrich defies gravity so that with its strong, long legs, it can actually outrun a race horse. The wings, which cannot lift the ostrich into the sky for flight, lift it off the ground to a sufficient level, propelling it like an airplane, to produce remarkable speed. Therefore, the wings, which appear to be useless and unprofitable, serve a purpose, as designed by the Creator.

Comment: The legs and feet of an ostrich are so powerful that they can kick and claw a man to death. In addition, their beaks are so structured that they can pick apart the prey.

The shape of the stork's wings allows air to get under the "armpits," as it were, so that the flapping wings lift up the bird. Thus the relatively clumsy, heavy stork can fly and even appear graceful in gliding. However, its liftoff into flight, as well as its walking below in the marsh, appears awkward.

Job 39:14 Which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in dust,

Job 39:15 And forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them.

Here is another characteristic of the ostrich that seems contrary to nature. The ostrich lays its eggs in the sand or earth and warms them with its body. In other words, when the mother ostrich sits on top of the sand with the eggs below, the weight of her body heats both the sand and the eggs for the incubation process. Although the eggs are hidden from the view of predatory animals, they are not covered deeply.

The peculiarity is that when the eggs are about to hatch, the mother ostrich leaves them. Normally speaking, animals and birds protect their young, especially at birth, but not the ostrich from the standpoint of the observer. However, the ostrich does other things, which are not usually perceived.

Comment: Lamentations 4:3 reads, "The daughter of my people is become cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness."

Reply: That is the common observation of the ostrich, which was created as a dumb bird in certain respects. It is true that the ostrich leaves the eggs unprotected, but God has implanted offsetting characteristics. The ostrich is prolific in laying many eggs. When the eggs are laid that are to be specially cared for, she puts other eggs around them. As the baby ostriches hatch, the outer eggs break, and the newborn eat the substance of those eggs. By this means, the newly hatched birds have enough strength to survive for a while. From that point on, it becomes a matter of the survival of the fittest. However, without the nutriment of the other ostrich eggs, the baby birds would not survive. It is likely that when the mother ostrich lays the special eggs,

they have harder shells than the eggs that are laid subsequently, so that, at the appropriate time, the later outer eggs will provide the needed sustenance. The shell of an ostrich egg is harder to crack than the shell of a chicken egg.

All of the peculiar characteristics will provide future lessons for mankind. What are some of the lessons of the ostrich? Those who live into the ages of ages beyond the Kingdom will be able to look back on what happened with the human race during the permission of evil on earth. For example, it will be seen that mothers sometimes abandoned their children and even killed them or destroyed the fetus. Among God's creatures during the permission of evil, there are consequences for disobeying Him, for example, moral decay and a decline in principles and behavior. Therefore, one of the lessons is to show that a woman who gives birth is sometimes so guilty of neglect that she murders her own baby. Other women refuse the responsibility of rearing the child by leaving the infant in a place where it will be found. These lessons are shown by the ostrich, which leaves her eggs and goes away after warming them for the incubation process. When she knows the eggs are about to hatch, she deserts them.

Thus two anomalies of the ostrich are pointed out: (1) the bird has wings but cannot fly, and (2) she incubates the eggs but deserts them before birth. God has a purpose for these peculiar characteristics. If we have faith in God and believe He has a purpose for everything, then even if we do not understand that purpose at the present time, we will trust Him. It was on that premise that Abraham promptly obeyed God in regard to the command to slay Isaac. Abraham's faith was such that he got up early in the morning and went to the designated mount. He trusted that God had a reason for the command—and He did. Similarly, the slaying of animals on Jewish altars seemed to be bloody, but there was a reason. Moreover, the animals were not tortured but were put to death kosher-style, which is painless. And *God had a reason* for the sacrifices—for Jesus' death as well as for the slaying of the animals. In the long term, whatever the lessons or purposes, they are for the good of all God's creatures. Job was asked question after question to show that he knew very little and that God had a good, solid reason for whatever He did.

The ostrich "forgetteth that the foot may crush them [the eggs], or that the wild beast may break them." God made the ostrich so that she would not protect her eggs. In contrast, birds usually build nests in a sheltered location in their habitat and then guard the eggs. Those characteristics are easy for us to understand, but God intentionally created the ostrich without understanding. Incidentally, the turkey is next to the ostrich for lack of understanding. Turkeys on farms are so dumb that they do not remember where their food is. A pig at least knows the location of the food trough, but turkeys have to be guided to where they eat *every day* because they forget. And that is what happened to the nation of Israel. God criticized the people for forgetting how He had instructed and fed them for years (Isa. 1:2-4). While humankind basically have some good characteristics, they also have the seeds of death and moral decay from the Fall. Christians are instructed how to overcome the difficulties, and God measures the *degree* of effort to do His will. If He sees that their zeal and obedience are sufficient, they can become members of the Little Flock. Those who are at least faithful unto death will get a secondary prize of life itself as the Great Company.

Job 39:16 She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers: her labour is in vain without fear;

The labor of the ostrich "is in vain without fear [that is, without respect for her young]." The bird has no sense of responsibility or principle. Thus "fear" can mean to have reverence, that is, a *respectful* fear. We reverence God and fear to disobey Him. Thus, to Christians, "fear" is a watchdog that barks to admonish them and alert their conscience when there is danger. The conscience is to be kept instructed, tender, and meet for God's use.

Job 39:17 Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding.

God *purposely* deprived the ostrich of wisdom as an *object lesson*. Nevertheless, the bird enjoys its life under normal circumstances. With regard to human beings, just to have lived 20, 30, or 40 years is a benefit, even in our fallen state. If we had never come into existence, we would know nothing and be nothing. We have many things to be thankful for and have to learn to live in the situation in which we find ourselves.

Job 39:18 What time she lifteth up herself on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider.

Verse 18 is the key to one reason why God created the ostrich. In the future, man will have an *eternity* to explore God's wisdom. No one will be able to fully fathom it, but trying to understand will forever be a process of exploration and edification. These lessons will take an eternity to explore, and no one will ever be of the stature of Almighty God. Even if we attain the divine nature and are flooded with understanding, the Creator will still be head and shoulders over any of His creatures. In summary, God has a *reason* for what may seem *illogical*.

Job 39:19 Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?

In verses 19-25, the subject matter is the warhorse. A proper horse was useful in warfare, and God created the horse with such qualities in mind. King Solomon admired horses so much that he disobeyed God and built stalls in the southeast corner of the Temple Mount.

“Hast thou clothed his neck [the neck of the warhorse] with thunder?” A warhorse was fearsome when it reared up. And when angry, it snorted, neighed loudly, flared its nostrils, and lifted its powerful neck. In fact, when the horse was disturbed, its neck actually vibrated.

Comment: Most of the nations of the world were built on the back of the horse.

Reply: Yes, the horse has been prominent in the history of the human race. It was the “automobile” of the past.

Job 39:20 Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? the glory of his nostrils is terrible.

In a hayfield or in tall grass, the startled grasshopper jumps up in the air like a rocket for about six to eight feet and flaps its wings, but the weight of the body makes it fall down. As a person walks through the grass, multiple grasshoppers jump in different directions, making a sound as their wings beat against their bodies. If we carefully observe a grasshopper, we will see that it resembles a horse, particularly the head.

Comment: In the Book of Revelation, under the fifth trumpet, the Christian is described in the eyes of orthodoxy as a locust shaped like a horse: “And the shapes of the *locusts* were like unto *horses* prepared unto battle” (Rev. 9:7).

“The glory of his [the horse's] nostrils is terrible [awesome].” When a horse is disturbed and angry, it distends its nose to make its nostrils appear almost large enough to hold a grapefruit. We should keep in mind that *God* made the horse with such capabilities, and the warhorse was fearless in warfare.

God used common sense with Job. As created beings, we should realize that God's thoughts are as high above our thinking as the heavens. He has a reason for everything He does. All of His works will ultimately praise Him by manifesting His wisdom.

Comment: Warhorses really wanted to fight.

Reply: Yes, they did. Likewise, the horse of a matador is fearless in proximity to a wild bull. The matador uses his knees on the shoulder of the horse, not reins, to guide the animal. The horse obeys the rider implicitly because it enjoys fighting the bull as much as the matador does. The horse would charge right into the bull if the matador so directed it. The level of obedience and understanding of the horse is unusual. What is the lesson for us? We should have *implicit faith* in our Creator and in His purpose with regard to us. What a blessed privilege to have been called with the high calling! The fact that we even know about Jesus and have the opportunity to give our heart and render obedience to God's Son should make us enjoy and *love* to do God's will. But being "of the earth, earthy," we have to fight the flesh (1 Cor. 15:47). "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit" (Gal. 5:17).

As we grow in consecration, the Lord rewards us manifold for obedience. Even in the present life, we are given treasures of understanding, and we have the fellowship and friendship of a much larger family. For every sorrow, there comes a reward, but we have to live through the sorrow. "No chastening [trial] for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable [precious] fruit of righteousness [and patience] unto them which are [rightly] exercised thereby" (Heb. 12:11). As we mature, we are blessed ever so much. We are seated in the Holy with the Candlestick, the Incense Altar, and the Table of Shewbread—very near the Most Holy.

Job 39:21 He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men.

The warhorse was eager to enter the battle.

Job 39:22 He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword.

Job 39:23 The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield.

The warhorse was not afraid of either the battle or the weapons.

Job 39:24 He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet.

The warhorse "swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage"; that is, the animal was so impatient that it champed at the bit, opened its mouth, and bent its head down to the ground in frustration and anxiety, awaiting the command for the charge. An alternate interpretation describes the swiftness with which the warhorse ran in pursuit of the enemy to engage in battle, covering the distance quickly.

Comment: Rotherham reads, "With stamping and rage, he drinketh up the ground."

"Neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet." Although descriptive, the Old English wording of the 1611 King James is not what we are accustomed to. The warhorse was even more anticipatory than his rider in waiting for the signal to engage in conflict. The horse knew, through the sensory organs God had implanted, that the sound of the trumpet was the prelude to the coming battle and that once the signal was given, the horse could go, no matter what, and plunge into the conflict.

In the days of the Roman Empire, the generals handpicked both the men and the animals under their direct command. They made sure the men were dedicated, fit for endurance in warfare, and willing to remain away from home for several years, if necessary, in a campaign

against a foreign enemy. Since there could be no timidity in the horses, their selection to be trained for battle was a life-and-death decision; it was the difference between victory and defeat. Rome was especially known for its discipline and preparations for war.

Comment: The second half of verse 24 reads as follows in the Darby translation: “and cannot contain himself at the sound of the trumpet.”

Reply: Yes, the warhorse recognized the true signal and was instantly ready to enter battle.

Job 39:25 He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.

The sensory organs of the warhorse were exercised for battle—to smell battle, as it were.

Job 39:26 Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings toward the south?

God asked Job, “Does the hawk fly by your wisdom, and stretch her wings toward the south?” Verse 26 provides a clue as to the type of land where Job lived. He dwelled in a wilderness area of small villages with enough verdure and water resources to live comfortably, but the inhabitants were more or less confined to this “oasis-like” area lest they enter a barren wilderness. In other words, Job lived north of the arid area of the desert, on the Transjordan side, in the Arabian Peninsula. Today the Arabian Peninsula is known as Saudi Arabia.

As a bird of prey, the hawk prefers to live on the fringes of society, and like the eagle, it survives because of keenness of sight, among other characteristics. “He watches me like a hawk” is a common expression that means one is under the gaze of someone who is giving penetrating scrutiny. Thus the hawk not only looks for prey but characteristically has piercing eyesight.

The “south” is the desert, which seems to be the general feeding ground and habitat of the hawk. The hawk is adapted by nature to live well in the desert, and what happens there? Many people and animals perish for various reasons. Water is scarce, shade is lacking, and one can easily lose his sense of direction. In addition, the most deadly poisonous snakes live in the desert. They are usually rather small in size, but their venom packs dynamite. Both the hawk and the eagle look for animals that perish for want of water or for other reasons. Incidentally, as designed by God, some birds can eat poisonous meat and survive.

Job 39:27 Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high?

Verses 27-30 pertain to the eagle, which is a symbol of freedom and independence, as on the Great Seal of the United States. The eagle makes her nest on high because she is a solitary bird that likes to be away from mankind. Also, from great heights, the eagle, with excellent eyesight, can see a great distance. Even with humans, the higher one gets up in the air, the farther one can see down on the surface of the earth. The curvature of the earth is slight, but at a distance of 20 or 30 miles, it becomes significant. The eagle, which dwells in a higher clime, can see farther, and the curvature of the earth is less of an inhibiting factor in spotting prey on the ground. God thought of all these things long, long in advance of actual creation.

Comment: From a great height, an eagle can swoop down and pick up a fish from under the water.

Comment: Obadiah 1:4 is a good marginal reference about the figurative height of an eagle: “Though thou [Edom] exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD.”

Job 39:28 She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place.

The “crag of the rock” is a rock that projects out from the mountain. Building a nest on such a protrusion at a great height provides more security from enemies. Some animals and creatures almost seem to be able to reason, but man is head and shoulders over all of the other animals because only he can worship God, an *unseen* Creator. Thus a wide gulf separates man from the animals, in spite of the wondrous qualities and characteristics of the latter.

The eagle “dwelleth and abideth ... upon the crag of the rock, and [even] the strong place.” Not only is the rock itself barren and formidable, but the crag of the rock adds security and strength, making the eagle’s dwelling place like a fortress without walls all around.

Comment: A phrase in the hymn about Jesus entitled “To the Rock” is, “O then to the Rock let me fly, to the Rock that is higher than I.”

The Book of Job gives insight into God’s thinking. God condescended to come down to the level of human beings and reason with His little creature, Job. How touching and wonderful that we have access to this type of communication in the Bible! Our hearts are warmed to think that the Great Creator regards our infirmities and our difficulties and tries to assure us of His aid, but we must apply ourselves to secure the benefits He provides.

Job 39:29 From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off.

The eagle dwells in the crag of the rock, first, because of keenness of vision and, second, because of the height above the curvature of the earth. It is pathetic and depressing to see the majestic eagle in captivity—so forlorn and immobile, with plumage and frame seemingly bowed. To prevent flight, certain feathers are often clipped, or a ligament under the wing is cut.

Job 39:30 Her young ones also suck up blood: and where the slain are, there is she.

The eagle will eat carrion if survival necessitates such a meal, but it prefers fresh meat, *live* animals. In contrast, vultures look for carrion; they glide a lot with their wings looking for dead animals, waiting until all movement ceases. The hawk will attack a live chicken and not always wait for carrion, but the eagle prefers a live animal or one that has just died. The blood of a *freshly* slain animal can be sucked up, but even if only a little time passes, the blood coagulates, separating into the clot and the serum. The young eaglets regard not only the blood but also the eye as a delicacy. “The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it” (Prov. 30:17). While the eye is left to the eaglets, the adult eagle requires flesh, even bones, to sustain its size and build.

Jesus referred to the symbolic significance of the young eagles sucking up the blood in Matthew 24:28, “For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.” Today the attraction of young Christians to present truth is the divine plan of the ages, but for more than 1,800 years that was not the case. The attraction of the unbeliever to becoming a believer and consecrating was the death of Christ and what it signified—that he is the Savior because he died for mankind. Today the divine plan of the ages is the attraction because people live in such an effete, soft society and are less emotional and more pragmatic and practical. In any event, the *dead humanity of Christ*, the doctrine of the *Ransom*, is the bottom line. In the past, the *emotional* aspect of the Ransom was the drawing card, but now, in the Harvest period, the *philosophy* of why Jesus died is needed for development.

Comment: The Law teaches that the life is in the blood (Lev. 17:11).

Comment: There is an interesting analogy between the eagle's keen eyesight and the spiritual eyesight of God's people.

Reply: The natural man cannot perceive spiritual things. As Paul said, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But God hath revealed them unto us by his [Holy] Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:10,14).

Q: Wouldn't the analogy between the eagle's eyesight and the Christian's ability to see things afar off have a special application to *prophetic* understanding? In other words, wouldn't understanding be especially *proportional* to one's interest in prophecy?

A: That is an interesting slant, particularly now. Jesus admonished us to "watch and pray." Many Christians pray but do not watch; others watch but do not pray. Both are essential for a spiritual understanding of prophecy. A segment of the brotherhood lacks the desire and thus is indifferent to prophecy. If we realize we are living in the end time, we should, of all times, be *most watchful now*. Jesus told us to watch and pray lest we succumb to the temptation and trial that will arise from a prophetic standpoint to test God's people in a special sense. All will be deceived except the very elect (Matt. 24:24). The suggestion is that something will happen in the not-too-distant future to temporarily deceive or blind *many* Christians. Because the foolish virgins in the parable were not hungry enough, they did not have a sufficiency of oil in their lamps and had to go back to the marketplace to get more oil. The wise virgins, who had the oil, could not transfer it to the foolish virgins in the *brief* time and *expediency* of the moment. Therefore, the foolish virgins had to go and buy the oil for themselves.

Job 40:1 Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said,

Job 40:2 Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.

"Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him?" "Contendeth" means "argues" or "finds fault." The answer is an emphatic *no*. Job expressed earlier that he could not understand why God had permitted the calamities to come upon him and why God was keeping him in ignorance of the reason. Of course we can understand Job's dilemma, and at times through his stress, he made some comments that were not too commendable with regard to what God allowed him to experience.

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

Job 40:4 Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.

God waited and then Job replied. He realized his faultfinding was not only foolish but uncalled for. However, a big factor is that Job spoke under *extreme* duress, and God considered the circumstances. Nevertheless, Job did make some inappropriate comments, and the Lord had to make him cognizant of his words. Job responded properly at this point: "I am vile." He was ashamed—he could blush with shame, as it were. However, we are only at the approximate midpoint of God's discourse to Job, and more was required of him. The Almighty had additional things to say with regard to what Job had done, and at the end of the discourse, Job's reaction would be complete and what God was looking for.

"I will lay mine hand upon my mouth." Job was breathless, astonished, and ashamed and said, in effect, as an excuse, "I am but clay."

Job 40:5 Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.

Job had spoken three times to each of the comforters (except in one instance). He presented his rebuttal to their advice after they had given him a tongue-lashing. God requires perfect obedience and respect. Therefore, it behooves us as His creatures, no matter who we are, to respect His office and dignity. On a certain technical level, God found fault with Job because He had to keep His office on a dignified stratum. However, under the circumstance and in consideration of the duress, Job did remarkably well. If we had been in Job's position, it is unlikely we would have done as well. Job was unusual and he behaved admirably, but as an imperfect being, he did not behave perfectly. God realizes we are fallen and takes cognizance of that fact, but He expects us to give Him the dignity that His office requires. Under the severe affliction, Job neglected to do so momentarily. God's standard is perfect.

A big gulf exists between man and his Creator. All of God's creatures should behave with discretion and in recognition that they have been made by His hand. They should implicitly obey and have confidence in Him not only for His power but also for His goodness. A certain harmony is displayed even in the works of nature, especially in the ethereal realm with the blessings of the sun and its healing power and the joy and comforts it brings, as well as the necessities. The heavens dominate us, and even the inanimate realm is dependent upon them. Job was struck with awe as he was reminded of the words that had come out of his mouth.

In his rebuttals, Job put words in the Creator's mouth, using an imaginary method; that is, Job framed a question and then expected an answer, but God did not reply for the moment. It is astonishing that the very thing Job desired did happen—God answered him. The Book of Job is indeed rare in that God spoke for four chapters to an *individual*, to a tiny microbe down here on planet Earth. God condescended in using common-sense reasoning on a human level.

Comment: At this point, the comforters, who were listening, would have felt justified because God was criticizing Job.

Reply: Yes, that was true momentarily, but eventually they were shocked to see that Job was vindicated.

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

Comment: Verse 6 is the second time we are told God answered Job "out of the whirlwind" (Job 38:1). The repetition emphasizes God's strength, power, authority, and majesty.

Reply: God was shrouded for the entire conversation, so there was no visible aspect. Out of the whirlwind came forth a voice. In the middle of this long discourse, we are reminded that God was still speaking from the same posture.

Job 40:7 Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.

Job 40:8 Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?

The emphasis of God's words to Job were probably as follows: "Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. Wilt *thou* also disannul *my* judgment? wilt *thou* condemn *me*, that *thou* mayest be righteous?" The inflection and intonation of God's voice would have been very penetrating, not only because the words came from a whirlwind but also because the common-sense reasoning was soul-searching. God condescended to even speak to Job, but the words were intended for the benefit of not only Job but also all posterity of subsequent ages. The bottom line is that God requires *absolute obedience plus absolute faith and*

respect. When Abraham was told to slay his son, he got up early in the morning to go on that journey at God's behest. His obedience shows how remarkable his *faith* was. He had *absolute faith* that God had a *reason* for demanding what would seem to be an *unreasonable* request. And that is why Abraham is called the "father of the faithful." To be willing to slay even his own son because God asked him to, Abraham is an exemplar of the epitome of absolute faith. Very few people would have obeyed under that circumstance.

While Job was a very remarkable person with regard to faith, he did not have direct communication with God, as far as we know, like Abraham. Abraham's faith was developed through experiences, but in addition, God spoke to him. Had Job been given that type of experience, we know he would be an exemplar of faith like Abraham because God singled him out in Ezekiel 14:14,20, "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it [the land], they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD [for the nation of Israel needed correction]." Prior to his affliction, Job was pointed out as the most remarkable person on planet Earth. He was "perfect" in the sense that he did the most he could while being in fallen flesh (Job 1:1).

We should keep in mind that Satan, the *wily* serpent, did his utmost to destroy Job. Satan was allowed to do almost anything except take Job's life. That is the kind of duress and *attack* Job was under. Therefore, we think that Job would have been on at least a level with Abraham if he had had the same providences for development. Satan attributed Job's obedience to the Creator to fame, wealth, possessions, and wisdom. When the afflictions were removed, Job was better prepared, and he is reckoned among the Ancient Worthies.

Comment: Then there is a contrast between Abraham and Job. On the one hand, Abraham had an almost intimate level of communication with God, for God specifically told him to sacrifice his son Isaac. On the other hand, Job did not have that communication, and then, all of a sudden, multiple calamities befell him and God was seemingly mute on the whole subject. Whereas Abraham knew what was going on and was instructed and obeyed, Job did not know what was going on because of the lack of communication.

Reply: Yes, we have to consider all of the factors like a judge. A judge would consider all the facts of a case before making a final judgment of acquittal or guilt. Of course God was pointing out some facets of Job's character that needed further development.

Job 40:9 Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?

We must put ourselves in Job's situation lest we get too high an opinion of ourselves. Aren't we each, by nature, prone to think quite highly of ourselves individually? A proper rationale would teach us to be humble and to realize that we are nothing but creatures of clay whom God has marvelously dealt with. For this we are very thankful. We should be respectful of one another because of the calling and be humble in every aspect. By God's grace, He will make somebody out of a more-than-overcoming nobody.

Comment: Psalm 29:3-5,7-9 tells of God's voice. "The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD is upon many waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty. The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars.... The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire. The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness.... The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory."

Reply: During the Creative Days in the Book of Genesis, God just spoke—"Let there be light," "Let there be a firmament," etc.—and it came to pass through a process. The Creative Days started with chaos: "The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of

the deep.” Then God spoke, and gradually things happened. We see today that things can be made to obey mechanically. For instance, we can open a garage door by pressing a button on a remote control. Or we can use a cell phone in a busy supermarket to have a conversation with someone across the country. To make these things possible, man sets up instrumentation that is sensitive to certain impulses. On a *much grander* scale, God has created everything, even the atoms and the molecules, to do His will. All He has to do is speak, and what He wants is done. Today we see only a fragmentary, tiny detail of the possibility of what humans will be able to do in the future, but God has always been able to do those things.

Comment: The Roman centurion said to Jesus, “Just as I have soldiers under my command, so all you have to do is give the command and my servant will be healed.”

Reply: That was remarkable, and Jesus said that some of the Gentiles had more faith than any in Israel at that time with the exception of his disciples.

Comment: Psalm 148:3-5 reads, “Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he *commanded*, and they *were created*.”

Comment: From *our* perspective, there is a physical principle in a physical universe that matter can be neither created nor destroyed, but there seems to be a unique principle with God’s voice. If He has the ability and power to both create and destroy matter or energy, the possibilities are endless.

Reply: Yes, with the power of His voice, He is the Creator and also the Destroyer of whatever He wishes—whether elements or sentient beings. In His talking to Job, the best way to illustrate His power was with thunder.

Job 40:10 Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty.

Job was in a pitiful, deplorable condition with boils from head to foot, and God now said to him, “Change yourself. Deck yourself with majesty and excellency; array yourself with robes of glory and beauty.” With all of Job’s thinking and imaginations, he could not change his situation one iota, but God could snap His fingers and instantly restore perfect health and clothing to Job. Man is very limited in sight, hearing, physical strength, and intellect. All are dependent on the Creator to give what He thinks would be beneficial and to His glory.

Job 40:11 Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and behold every one that is proud, and abase him.

Job 40:12 Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place.

Job admitted earlier in his testimony that wicked people exist and eventually die. He certainly could not change them to be pliable in his hands by his voice or his thinking, for *supernatural* capabilities were required to produce the desired results. For example, when Nadab and Abihu disobeyed, God caused lightning to come out of the cloud and destroy them instantly. In Korah’s rebellion, the ground opened up and swallowed whole families. In addition, sudden judgments were manifested with Sennacherib’s army, the death of the firstborn of Egypt, Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Flood in Noah’s day.

Job 40:13 Hide them in the dust together; and bind their faces in secret.

The wicked are hidden in the grave. “Dust to dust” is an expression used at burial services. Man was created out of dust and returns to dust.

Comment: “Bind their faces in secret” refers to the custom of wrapping the head in preparation for burial.

Reply: Lazarus is a good example, and even our Lord’s head was wrapped in a napkin before he was placed in the sepulcher. At the time of his resurrection, the body and head were extracted so that the wrappings collapsed without being unwound (John 20:6,7).

Job 40:14 Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.

Of course Job was not capable of doing all the things God hypothetically asked if he could do.

Job 40:15 Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox.

Now God introduced into the discussion a creature called “behemoth” that eats grass like an ox. He proceeded to call attention to various characteristics of the anatomy of the behemoth, particularly emphasizing the power in the body frame. This animal existed back in Job’s day and also in our day. When all of the details are considered, it seems to be the rhinoceros. The elephant and hippopotamus, which are suggested by various Bible scholars, are ruled out by some of the descriptions. However, of the two, the elephant is closer to the behemoth.

Job 40:16 Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly.

The two characteristics, “strength is in his loins” and “force is in the navel of his belly,” could apply to all three animals: rhinoceros, elephant, and hippopotamus. These are the only three tremendous-size animals that like both water and land. A whale, for instance, is limited to the water as its realm.

Job 40:17 He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together.

“He moveth his tail like a cedar.” The rhinoceros, a *huge* animal, has a little, skimpy tail with a tuft at the tip like a tree. When the animal is mad, the tail stiffens like a board, becomes erect, and wags, waving back and forth, thus signaling its wrath and displeasure. Moreover, “the sinews of his stones [thighs] are wrapped [knit] together.”

Comment: Some scholars think the Hebrew word translated “tail” refers to “trunk”—and hence describes the elephant.

Reply: However, such scholars do not go into detail because they would encounter a problem.

Job 40:18 His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron.

Strength is seen in the body of the behemoth. The rhinoceros has a powerful horn on its face that can even penetrate steel, and the elephant has large, thick tusks protruding from its face. Therefore, verse 18 rules out the hippopotamus, whose bones are not as pronounced. An elephant and even a hippo can be tamed but not a rhinoceros. If one of these creatures charged us, fear would cause us to magnify certain attributes.

Job 40:19 He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him.

God can tame any creature and make it like a pussycat, but man cannot.

Comment: An example of the supernatural taming of wild animals is Daniel in the lions' den.

Reply: God shut the mouths of the hungry lions. When Daniel's detractors were later cast into the pit under the king's orders, the lions readily devoured the men before they hit the bottom.

Job 40:20 Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play.

Both the elephant and the rhinoceros are on land most of the time. Of the two, the "behemoth" seems to be the rhino, as already stated, because of its untameability. Not only is the behemoth a land creature, but also it dwells where "all the beasts of the field play"; that is, the other animals do not fear the behemoth because it is vegetarian, not carnivorous. As fierce and ill-tempered as the rhinoceros is, it eats grass.

Q: Did Job actually go to the area where the rhinoceros was indigenous, or did he just have knowledge of the animal? God would not have questioned him about something that was unfamiliar.

A: Job was a person of wealth and one who traveled to Egypt rather frequently, so he was knowledgeable about Egypt and the animals there.

The primary experience that crystallizes character comes relatively late in a Christian's life. Consider Abraham, who was not called to sacrifice his son until he was a reasonably old man. Job did not have this crucial experience until relatively old age. A critical decision-making experience occurs early, when one initially hears the truth and the Adversary tries to distract him. However, consecration is only the beginning of the Christian experience. The remainder of one's consecrated life is for other purposes.

Job 40:21 He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens.

Job 40:22 The shady trees cover him with their shadow; the willows of the brook compass him about.

Comment: Verse 21 in the NIV reads, "Under the lotus plants he lies, hidden among the reeds in the marsh." Lotus plants are in the water.

A rhinoceros needs a source of water, for it likes reeds, marshes, and lotus plants. In addition to desiring shade (if possible), the animal delights to dwell where grass and trees grow, both of which require water. The Nile is specifically referred to here. Incidentally, the Nile River originally had seven tributaries in the delta area, but now there are only three, since four are blocked. The Book of Job is telling about history more than 4,000 years ago when conditions were quite different from those at present.

Job 40:23 Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.

The rhinoceros consumes a lot of water and hastes not; that is, it is not like other animals that come to the bank and look in all directions for predators and enemies before taking a drink. Unlike many other animals, the rhino takes its time in drinking because it does not fear that a predator will approach from behind. The elephant and the hippopotamus react likewise.

Q: The NIV takes a different approach in the beginning of verse 23: "When the river rages, he is not alarmed." Is that aspect also applicable?

A: Yes.

“He trusteth [is confident] that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.” “Jordan,” which means “judged down,” also has the thought of water running down; therefore, the word is not a reference to the river by that name. The thought is of water that flows with a relative current. Conditions are different today. Fertile soil washing down from way up above, deep in Africa, has caused the Nile and other rivers to silt up with sediment. There is a place in Turkey, for example, where the harbor is four miles away from where it used to be.

Job 40:24 He taketh it with his eyes: his nose pierceth through snares.

No one can be dogmatic on what creature the behemoth is, for many different thoughts have been advanced. However, reasons and attributes for selecting a particular creature are not always given.

Comment: No matter what animal is determined, it has to be in harmony with what God said to Job in verse 15, “Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee.” In other words, we are supposed to observe this creature for a lesson.

“He taketh it with his eyes.” When the hippopotamus and the rhinoceros are in the water, their eyes are at water level. The elephant’s eyes are not usually thought of in this regard.

Q: Is the clause “his nose pierceth through snares” a reference to the horn of the rhinoceros sticking up?

A: Yes, a snare is meaningless because the creature is so powerful. Neither an elephant nor a rhinoceros can be captured with a net because their sheer weight would burst it asunder.

Q: Is the lesson here that the Lord has selected a huge, powerful animal after going through a series of birds and animals? Now He came to a climax, saying in effect to Job, “Can you control this creature? I can control the rhinoceros like a little pet.”

A: Yes, that is the bottom line. These huge, powerful creatures are *playthings* in God’s sight. He can make them do whatever He wants—with no effort at all.

Job 41:1 Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down?

The “leviathan” is the crocodile, a powerful creature that is stronger than the alligator. Little is known about the crocodile in this country.

“Canst thou draw out ... his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down?” If we tried to tie the tongue of the crocodile with a rope, its jaw would crush us. The Lord was using sarcasm here.

Comment: Of all the creatures the Lord discussed with Job, He spent the most time—an entire chapter of 34 verses—on the crocodile.

Comment: Isaiah 27:1 is a cross-reference: “In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.”

Reply: Satan is pictured as a dragon in Scripture. In mythology, a dragon has legs and jaws and is more fearsome than a snake, which crawls on its belly. Drawings of a supposed dragon show a mouth that can devour somewhat like that of a crocodile.

Comment: Normally, when a crocodile is captured, the mouth is tied on the *outside* with a rope to keep the creature from opening its jaws.

Reply: That is true, but the Lord was using sarcasm here. Man cannot put a fish hook in the nose of the crocodile or tie its tongue with a cord.

Job 41:2 Canst thou put an hook into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a thorn?

Comment: Even though the crocodile is a water creature, man cannot catch him like a fish.

Job 41:3 Will he make many supplications unto thee? will he speak soft words unto thee?

Absolutely not! Again the Lord used a tinge of sarcasm. The crocodile cannot make supplications or speak soft words. The sarcasm started in verse 1 and was carried through. It was humiliating for Job to hear the Lord talking to him this way. Job would have felt very small, especially with his knowledge of these creatures in real life, not just in books or pictures.

Job 41:4 Will he make a covenant with thee? wilt thou take him for a servant for ever?

Comment: With the questions, God was leading up to the conclusion in verse 34 that leviathan is “a *king* over all the children of *pride*.”

Reply: The account is also saying that the characteristics of leviathan are a fit illustration, in the *literal* sense, of Satan himself, who is likened to a dragon and a serpent and is called “the devil,” but of course this chapter is speaking only about the natural, from which spiritual lessons are drawn.

Comment: Job wanted to know the reasons for his sufferings. God did not answer Job directly, but He climaxed His discourse with all this information on the crocodile, which represents Satan, who has been instrumental during the permission of evil.

Comment: By using sarcasm, God could have really demeaned Job, but He did not. Even though sarcasm was a way of making Job feel small, God surely could have made Job feel a lot smaller. In the allegory at the beginning of the Book of Job, God said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant, Job? There is none like him” (Job 1:8).

Reply: Yes, we carefully said God used a *tinge* of sarcasm because we had that thought in mind.

Job 41:5 Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?

God was saying, “Can you, Job, play with a crocodile as with a bird? You cannot, but I can.” In every case, the Creator can make anything He has created subservient to His will—and to almost a ludicrous conclusion—whereas man is very limited. From beginning the dissertation to Job with the heavens, the Pleiades, God came down and down and down to creatures on earth to show man’s smallness compared with His Creator.

“Wilt thou bind him [the crocodile] for thy maidens?” The delicacy of “maidens” is contrasted with the ferocity of the crocodile. They are incompatible at present, but just as in the Kingdom, God will cause the lamb and the wolf to lie down together, so He can make the crocodile docile so that man can play with it as a bird (Isa. 11:6). God will restore to perfect man what Adam had in the Garden of Eden when he named the animals. Originally, by nature, man was superior to the animals, even to ferocious beasts.

Comment: The NIV reads, “Can you make a pet of him like a bird or put him on a leash for your girls?”

Job 41:6 Shall the companions make a banquet of him? shall they part him among the merchants?

God was asking, “Is there an auction where people are interested in buying these creatures?” No, the crocodile is so ferocious, that it is not useful in commercial life; it is not commercially viable. The skin of an alligator is used but not the skin of a crocodile. The crocodile is not found in the marketplace; it is not parted among the merchants, the buyers.

Job 41:7 Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with fish spears?

Of course the account is talking about the adult crocodile. “Barbed irons” are harpoons. Verse 7 emphasizes man’s inability to tame or capture the crocodile through various methods, as well as the senselessness of doing so because it is commercially useless.

Job 41:8 Lay thine hand upon him, remember the battle, do no more.

Comment: The NIV reads, “If you lay a hand on him, you will remember the struggle and never do it again!”

Job 41:9 Behold, the hope of him is in vain: shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him?

The crocodile can appear to be a log in the water, but those who are familiar with the creature know the danger. Animals that come to the stream to drink are also aware of the danger, but when their heads are down at water level, the crocodile is more difficult to spot. Thus animals can be victimized by the crocodile “log,” which leaps over eight to ten feet of water in half a second and grabs their head or foot and devours them. The body of the crocodile is so wiry that it can fishtail and spring forward with alarming speed and ensnare an animal from a distance. The crocodile is deceptive. Knowing this danger, man keeps a healthy distance.

From a spiritual standpoint, we continue to see the characteristics of Satan in the crocodile. We are no match at all for Satan except by divine protection. A *remarkable* invisible providence protects us.

Comment: The NIV reads, “Any hope of subduing him is false; the mere sight of him is overpowering.”

Job 41:10 None is so fierce that dare stir him up: who then is able to stand before me?

Comment: God was saying, “Since the crocodile is such a fierce creature that no one dares to stand before it, then who can stand before me?”

Reply: Yes. Anyone or any animal within striking distance of the crocodile is a goner. Likewise, we must keep a safe distance from Satan.

Job 41:11 Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him? whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.

“Prevented” means “preceded.” God, who is from everlasting to everlasting, was now focusing on His own attributes—He can control the crocodile.

Incidentally, with regard to Satan's being pictured as the crocodile, he is so head and shoulders over all of the other fallen angels—the most fearsome beings we can think of—that they have a high respect for him as “king.” The incorrigible beings want to do things their own way, but they recognize Satan as boss because of his great superiority. A wide gulf exists between Satan and the fallen angels, and likewise, a great gulf of superiority exists between God and Satan.

Comment: In chapters 38 and 39, God discussed different phenomena of nature and animals. Then in Job 40:2, God said to Job, “Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.” God asked this question because of some of Job's earlier words. At the time, Job merely said, “I am unworthy.” Since Job was short of asking for forgiveness, God now discussed two huge animals to remind him again, “Who has a claim against me that I must pay? Everything under heaven belongs to me.” (See the NIV.)

Reply: Yes, Job had not yet repented. After he said, “I am vile,” God gave the second half of His dissertation to lead Job to repent. Job's repentance was finally accomplished without God's actually having to say, “Job, not only is it expedient for you to recognize how vile you are, but also I want to hear out of your own mouth, ‘I am sorry for what I did.’” Although Job was momentarily bold enough to make certain negative observations about the Creator, God sympathized with him. Nevertheless, even though God loved Job and knew he was unusual, He had to give Job a tongue-lashing, for it is essential to always have a reverential mode when dealing with the Creator. Therefore, God wanted Job to say he was sorry. Then God would do many wonderful things on Job's behalf.

Comment: Were God's words to Job also intended to be heard by the comforters, for they were even more guilty?

Reply: God was primarily talking to Job, instructing him on *what to do*. Secondly, or as a side lesson, the words were for the comforters and Elihu, telling them *what not to do*.

Comment: Jesus sometimes spoke to his disciples in front of the multitudes. His message was mainly for the disciples, but others overheard. Those with a hearing ear also received a lesson.

Reply: When Jesus spoke to his disciples about wrong attitudes, he was actually speaking of the religious leaders, yet the scribes and Pharisees did not repent and were not converted. The disciples, however, gained valuable information.

Comment: Jesus said, “If you have seen me, you have seen the Father” (John 14:9 paraphrase). Therefore, in instructing his disciples, Jesus did as the Father had done with Job.

Reply: The usual concept is to be very gentle with voice, emotions, facial expressions, etc., but these are superficial. In the Gospels, Jesus repeatedly used strong language. However, we must guard against being too much like Jesus in this respect, or we will speak too strongly, bluntly, and freely in our observations of certain things. Then our words might boomerang back on us. When Jesus spoke strongly, the disciples listened because they knew he was the Son of God. We want the instruction from Jesus' lips, but if brethren did that to us, we would be very much disturbed because we would not know their motive and might misconstrue it.

Job 41:12 I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his comely proportion.

God said He would not conceal the parts of the crocodile nor its power or comely proportion. Sometimes in looking at the ferocious appearance of a creature, we fail to discern features that should be observed if we realize the creature was made by God. Fear and terror inhibit further investigation. For example, the waddling motion with which a crocodile walks appears to be

clumsiness, but if we view the creature's outstanding characteristics from a dispassionate, disinterested standpoint, we see its power, strength, swiftness in turning around, and agility of motion, particularly when angry or seizing a prey. The tail has a powerful influence, and the proportion of the tail to the head and the body is like one third, one third, and one third. People do not usually analyze the crocodile but judge the creature by its face. Sometimes it is of value to look at the comely proportions.

Job 41:13 Who can discover the face of his garment? or who can come to him with his double bridle?

Who can uncover or strip off the skin, the outer surface, of the crocodile? Man cannot open up the crocodile's outer garment, for it is like armor. (In contrast, the hide of an alligator is used for shoes, pocketbooks, etc.) However, God has perfect control over the crocodile.

Who can approach a crocodile with a "double bridle"? In breaking a horse, if a person can stay on and not get bucked off until the animal is worn out, he can dismount, approach the animal from the front, and put a double bridle over its head. The wild horse can be broken and thus becomes tame. With a *double* bridle, the animal cannot move.

Comment: A bit in the mouth constitutes double control, a double bridle.

Reply: It is tricky how to hold a bridle. If a horse is obstreperous, it is almost impossible to put on a bridle because the person is trying to open two different things at the same time.

Comment: A person has to walk up to the horse with the bridle, and one cannot do that to a crocodile, as indicated further in verse 14. The bridle itself is not the bit but holds the bit, and some bridles do not have a bit. Presumably back there the early form of the bit was used.

Reply: It is true that the simple bridle is also double, but when an animal is already tamed and a person wants to go for a ride, especially in warfare or when the horse needs to know the importance of the movement, a bit is used for complete subjugation. Stated another way, when the horse is used as a servant, a bridle is used with a bit. An exception would be an *extremely well-trained* horse that responds just to the knee movements of the rider without the use of a bridle. Some skilled riders use reins and a bridle without a bit, but normally speaking, both a bridle and a bit are used.

The point of verse 13 is that it is *impossible* for man to put a double bridle on a crocodile. How would man open the jaws to insert the bar of the bridle, let alone put the bridle over its head? However, the Lord not merely can approach the crocodile and put a bridle over its head but also can put a bit in its mouth. Thus the "double bridle" *inferentially* includes the bit.

God uses hyperbole in some instances, and so does Jesus. For instance, this description of the crocodile mentions in a hyperbolic sense that the crocodile can break a spear in half like straw. Strictly speaking, that is not true, so the thought is that the ordinary tools man uses to tame animals are ineffective and useless when approaching a crocodile. Certain expressions in the Book of Job are purposely exaggerated to sear into our minds what God was talking about and what He can do.

Job 41:14 Who can open the doors of his face? his teeth are terrible round about.

Even if man could open the jaws of the crocodile, the teeth would be more frightening than the jaws. Alligators can be handled and their jaws opened but not the crocodile. However, God can control the crocodile just by speaking.

Job 41:15 His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal.

As we consider the crocodile as a literal predator, we can see the figurative application to Satan, the prince of demons. None of the demons below Satan would dare to disagree with him. He runs an awesomely tight ship, but he rewards and gives presents to the other demons according to the desires of their evil hearts. As the prince of demons, Satan is Beelzebub, the controller of flies. Swarms of flies are disorganized with the insects flying in all different directions—up and down, sideways, etc.—but as lord of the flies, Satan can make them fly in unison, as an organized army. Moreover, he has control over the wild waves of the sea. However, Jesus has superior control, so when Satan stirred up the Sea of Galilee with a terrific wind, Jesus rebuked the wind with his voice, saying, “Peace, be still” (Mark 4:39). Thus, with Jesus and Satan, it is just a matter of one being superior to the other. Accordingly, God discussed a number of creatures with Job but reserved the crocodile, which represents Satan, for the last, the climax. In other words, the climax is both the literal and the figurative crocodile. The figurative crocodile is described as a dragon, and the dragon is pictured very much like the crocodile except that the dragon walks on land more.

Q: Could the creature in the Garden of Eden have been a crocodile?

A: No, the creature in the garden was more like a snake, and it manifested a different characteristic of Satan than the crocodile’s ferocity, power, agility, and dangerous jaws. A serpent is a subtle *deceiver*, whereas a dragon possesses much more fearsome qualities as one who can *devour*. The creature in the Garden of Eden was probably more beautiful, and it was wise, intelligent. Thus Satan can appear as an angel of light, even looking like Jesus when he wants to, although he is not comfortable with the role of appearing humble and docile but is more apt to be hard and proud. The last verse of this chapter shows him as the king of pride.

Job 41:16 One is so near to another, that no air can come between them.

Verse 16 refers to the bumpy, thick “scales” on the back of a crocodile that act like a shield of protection. The scales are so close together that “no air can come between them.”

Job 41:17 They are joined one to another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered.

The scales “are joined one to another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered.” The crocodile’s armor is so interwoven that there is not even a little crack for a spear or another projectile thrust by human hands to penetrate. (Of course guns were nonexistent in Job’s day.) God continued to emphasize the fierceness of the crocodile.

Job 41:18 By his sneezings a light doth shine, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning.

Two quite different characteristics of the crocodile are mentioned in cryptic language, short and to the point. The King James Version has “neesings,” which, according to Young’s *Analytical Concordance*, is “sneezings.” Animals sneeze just like humans.

“By his sneezings a light doth shine.” God, Jesus, and the prophets sometimes effectively used hyperbole, or exaggeration. Similarly, the fear that a person experiences in beholding ferocious creatures can result in his exaggerating the characteristics of that animal. For example, in a cartoon of a bullfight, the bull is often illustrated with plumes of anger coming out of its nostrils. Here in Job, the sneezings of the crocodile are exaggerated. When the crocodile sneezes in the water, spray goes up like a geyser. The shining of the brilliant sun on the water vapor which is blown into the air causes the droplets to emit light with the result that they appear like fire to the beholder. Thus the hyperbole is that the crocodile’s sneezings are like

sparks of fire that shine forth. This description is very real to anyone who watches the crocodile in its natural habitat. God was emphasizing to Job how powerful and fearsome the crocodile is.

“His eyes are like the eyelids of the morning.” A crocodile gets its prey through deception. Because the creature is not nimble enough to go and catch animals, it lies in the river, waiting for animals to come for water. Since approaching animals know the danger of the crocodile, the creature lies in the water like a log and seems very docile. The crocodile cleverly lies just near enough to the shore that when it leaps, it can capture the prey. As an animal drinks water from the river, the crocodile quickly jumps eight or ten feet with its powerful legs, using its tail as a propellant, and seizes the prey in its strong jaws. Because the crocodile has to see the prey, it lies in the water with the orb of its eyeballs half above and half below the water. The appearance, or shape, of the eyes resembles the dawning of the half orb of the sun as it comes over the horizon. Also, subsequent verses suggest that the eyes, which have no animation or activity in them, look innocent. Not only is nothing hostile in their appearance to indicate danger, but also the eyes look almost mournful.

Comment: In summary, then, the crocodile submerges in the water with just its eyes and eyelids showing on the surface. These are likened to the sun rising on the horizon.

In a spiritual or antitypical sense, the characteristics of the crocodile represent Satan. The Bible pictures Satan as a dragon, a serpent (or snake), and a lion, but the crocodile best describes the character of the Adversary. Originally a beautiful being, Satan was adorned with pleasing characteristics. God said of Satan, “Thou wast *perfect* in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee” (Ezek. 28:15). In the dawn of creation, “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy” (Job 38:7). Thus initially, Satan was not only beautiful but had a marvelous voice and charisma. All of God’s works are perfect, but Satan degenerated. Over thousands of years, his character changed to that of a dragon, a snake, a lion, and a crocodile, the latter being the most fitting representation overall. The last verse of this chapter sums up all the characteristics of the chapter: “He [the crocodile, that is, Satan] beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride.”

Job is one of the least studied books of the Bible, and it is a book that the Pastor treated lightly. In fact, at one time, he even questioned the spirituality of Job, Ecclesiastes, and Proverbs. Thus he bypassed these books and spoke on other subjects.

Comment: The Scripture “*Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall*” dovetails with Satan’s destruction, which will occur at the end of the Millennium (Prov. 16:18).

Job 41:19 Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out.

Verse 19 is again hyperbole, which Jesus used frequently in his parables and lessons. For instance, he said that the scribes and Pharisees strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel. Of course they did not literally do these things, but if we think of Jesus’ words literally, the exaggeration scores into our minds the lesson of the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees when they criticized Jesus’ healings and miracles. The point is that this type of discourse has its place in both fiction and reality.

The spray from the crocodile’s nostrils looks like smoke. This characterization is often used in cartoons. Similarly, children delight to see the wild bull scratch the ground with one foot and repeatedly snort with fire coming out of its nostrils. The illustration adds to the drama and the excitement of the description.

Comment: The crocodile leaps, seizes the prey, drags it under the water, and devours it whole.

Comment: Both the serpent and the crocodile were worshipped as gods in Egypt.

Reply: A crocodile somewhat symbolizes a snake with a lot of warts, which indicate maturity and a hardening in pride and bad character; hence it is a fearsome creature. When Satan uses deception, he appears as an angel of light and innocency, but when a crocodile goes into action, the beholder gets the true picture. Satan is filled with hate for those who do not curry his favor. On the one hand, Satan runs a very tight ship, and all the fallen angels over whom he is king fear him—so much so that they dare not disobey any of his orders. On the other hand, God is looking for those individuals who, of their own volition, want to give their whole heart to Him in meekness and in trust; He wants a freewill offering forever.

Job 41:20 Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron.

The first half of verse 20, “Out of his nostrils goeth smoke,” was explained in preceding verses. The smoke going “as out of a seething pot or caldron” refers to the water that is churned up as a result of the crocodile’s sneezing or breath going out of its nostrils. Also, when the crocodile turns in the water, it revolves like a bit in an electric drill. In other words, when the crocodile gets its prey, it spins extremely fast like the bit in a drill, violently churning up the water. The scene is horrifying. And so a person treats a crocodile with great respect and keeps his distance from that creature.

Job 41:21 His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth.

Verse 21 is a duplication, but God’s repetition is not vain because we are so dull-witted that repetition is necessary. For instance, in the description of Ezekiel’s Temple, every little detail is described again and again and again. Things must be drummed into our heads in order for us to get the lesson.

Job 41:22 In his neck remaineth strength, and sorrow is turned into joy before him.

The strong neck of a crocodile is almost half of its body. “Sorrow is turned into joy before him.” The crocodile looks innocent and docile like a dead log, but getting the leg of a prey is its delight. Likewise, Satan is happy if he can make one of God’s saints fall into destruction. He wants to snare God’s consecrated children, but if an individual has a strong character and rebukes him with firmness, he goes away and looks for another opportunity when a weak moment comes and the victim is most vulnerable. Therefore, we must stay away from unfavorable environments that would give Satan an advantage in deceiving and capturing us. The joy of the crocodile is in the capture, as the King James indicates.

Job 41:23 The flakes of his flesh are joined together: they are firm in themselves; they cannot be moved.

What is the comparison here? Earlier God said that the scales, the armament, the protection on the top part of the crocodile, could not be separated. The “flakes of his flesh” refer to the belly of the crocodile, which is hard and relatively smooth. Each flake of the skin is like a shield that is smooth and slippery, whereas the scales on its back are bumpy. In contrast, the belly of an alligator is relatively soft. A crocodile is protected on the back and on the belly, whereas an alligator is vulnerable on its underpart.

The way to distinguish between an alligator and a crocodile when they are small is that the head of the latter is flat on top and a little rounded underneath the gullet. Similarly, the difference between a snake that is nonpoisonous and one that is venomous is that the head of the latter is flat.

Comment: The hardness of the crocodile, top and bottom, indicates the hardened character of Satan.

Job 41:24 His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone.

The crocodile's "heart is as firm as a stone"; that is, Satan's heart is like flint. He shows no mercy, sympathy, or kindness, and anyone who crosses his will is his enemy. A person observing the habits of the crocodile considers the creature to be the epitome of fierceness.

"Yea, [its heart is] as hard as a piece of the nether [lower] millstone." Why is the lower stone harder than the upper stone? Not only is the stationary bottom stone heavier, but also, being the stone upon which the grain is crushed, it is of superior quality. The nether millstone is like the anvil, the hard iron underneath, on which the blacksmith hammers the molten metal into the desired shape. Thus the bottom millstone was the harder stone.

In other words, like Satan, the crocodile is a cold-blooded killer that lacks compassion or contrition. Normally, the crocodile seems docile, but when the prey is near, a remarkable transformation takes place. Then the crocodile is extremely vicious—like Satan, who is God's enemy and thus our enemy as well.

Comment: Verse 24 is describing an incorrigible heart.

Job 41:25 When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid: by reason of breakings they purify themselves.

The crocodile seems to waddle and walk with difficulty but not when catching its prey. At such times, the crocodile raises itself up for an awesome forward leap, especially if it is 18 to 20 feet long. Also, when the huge crocodile leaps in the water to catch its prey and then falls down, it makes a great splash. Therefore, the leap, the splash, the clamping of the jaws on the prey, and the rapidity of revolutions to wrench the prey into the water—all of these actions frighten the beholder. The ferocity of this creature in capturing its prey strikes even the beholder with fear.

When considering Satan, we often emphasize that he goes about as a roaring lion seeking to devour his prey (the Christian) by paralyzing the individual with fear (1 Pet. 5:8). However, the crocodile seems to be the most fitting of all the natural creatures to represent characteristics of Satan because it has the ferocity of the lion and looks somewhat like a serpent crawling on its belly. Moreover, the crocodile deceitfully appears docile, pretending to be a log, in order to capture its prey. The pronounced, bulbous eyes picture Satan's characteristic alertness and powers of perception to do evil and nefarious work.

"By reason of breakings they purify themselves." The 1611 King James English is archaic and thus seems strange to us, but it is powerful when properly understood. The clamping of the jaws and the tremendous splash make the beholder want to "purify" himself, that is, to keep his distance from the crocodile, to *separate* himself from the danger.

Q: In antitype, when one is turned over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, would the individual react this way if rightly exercised?

A: Yes.

Comment: The word "breakings" has the thought of "thrashings," which is what a crocodile does with its prey. The prey in its jaws is moved back and forth.

Job 41:26 The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold: the spear, the dart, nor the

habergeon.

The word “habergeon,” meaning a coat of mail, a steel vest and shield, which prevents the penetration of a sword or spear, does not fit the context as well as the word “javelin” (see the NIV). The hide of the crocodile is so tough that it cannot be damaged with any kind of pointed instrument like a spear, dart, or javelin.

Comment: On each of the plates on the underside of the crocodile are small dots that function as sensory organs so that when a shrimp, for example, is below in the murky water, the crocodile can sense it and knows when to strike with its mouth. This characteristic perfectly represents Satan because it shows his awareness all around him.

Reply: In addition, the eyes, half of which are on top of the water, function similarly for the environment above the water.

When Satan is destroyed at the end of the Kingdom Age in connection with his going up to the “camp of the saints,” he will be in a materialized temporal body (Rev. 20:9). At that time, the people will be able to see him with the natural eye because he will be locked down here for his destruction. The Prophet Isaiah indicates that Satan will be as a man in appearance, having solidity, when he is destroyed. “They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms” (Isa. 14:16). He will no longer be able to dematerialize, as the unholy angels did in the past at the time of the Flood, when only their progeny were destroyed. The unholy angels were imprisoned in earth’s atmosphere in a quasi-state where they could neither go back to heaven nor return to earth and materialize anymore. And that is where they have been, more or less, throughout the present evil world.

Job 41:27 He esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood.

A form of hyperbole, verse 27 gives the idea of how impervious the crocodile is to feeling any danger. Spiritually speaking, Satan feels the same way. What dramatic language! Satan is so confident that he does not fear death. In comparison to Satan, the other angels are much more timid. Satan believes he is indestructible—that God cannot destroy him. If he had any fear of being destroyed, he would not have boldly disobeyed and done evil so many times.

On the other hand, Satan can recognize superior power. For instance, Michael joined Gabriel to resist the prince of Persia (Satan), who was trying to interrupt the answer to Daniel’s prayer (Dan. 10:13). Therefore, Satan knows that Jesus, as a spirit being, is more powerful than he, and certainly God is more powerful, but Satan’s thought of being indestructible has encouraged and emboldened him for thousands and thousands of years. In fact, Satan thinks there will be a tremendous battle at the end of this age, and he is assuring his legions that he will win. He is so hardened in sin and blinded by his own arrogance and pride that he has deceived himself into thinking too confidently of his own powers. In short, the crocodile is a fearsome creature and a wonderful, awesome representation of Satan and his characteristics.

Job 41:28 The arrow cannot make him flee: slingstones are turned with him into stubble.**Job 41:29 Darts are counted as stubble: he laugheth at the shaking of a spear.**

Verses 28 and 29 are self-explanatory. Incidentally, do not animals have feelings? Sometimes they can think to quite a high level, although, of course, they cannot worship an unseen God. For example, a gorilla can do a little arithmetic, adding and subtracting. The Book of Job describes the crocodile as having a lack of fear, and in its own way, the creature actually feels impervious to destruction. To a certain extent, even plants have feelings. Flowers and plants

seem to respond when people talk to them in endearing terms. This statement may sound farfetched, but there seems to be some evidence along this line.

God took time to be rather repetitive in stating that weapons were ineffective with the crocodile in Job's day. The point is that God Himself, who created the crocodile, considers the creature very unusual. Through repetition, He wants to impress this lesson upon us.

Job 41:30 Sharp stones are under him: he spreadeth sharp pointed things upon the mire.

The underbelly of the crocodile is also impervious to attack. The sensitive organs are shielded in the sense that man cannot get the crocodile to be docile enough to find a weak spot for inserting a spear. By nature, even the underbelly has somewhat sliding scales, which are of a different nature than the scales on the crocodile's back. The underpart is smooth so that the crocodile can glide swiftly through the water, whereas its back is lumpy, hard, and thick.

Q: According to the King James margin, "sharp pieces of potsherd" are under the crocodile. Although the belly may be smooth, aren't there projections that make a trail in the mire (or mud) when the crocodile moves?

A: Yes. While the crocodile makes that trail, the belly is slippery and designed by nature to be agile in water.

Comment: The NIV reads, "His undersides are jagged potsherds, leaving a trail in the mud like a threshing sledge."

Reply: The crocodile's feet propel it on land in a cumbersome fashion but through water in an awesome fashion.

Job 41:31 He maketh the deep to boil like a pot: he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment.

Although repetitive, verse 31 clarifies an earlier verse. The crocodile "maketh the sea [that is, the local environment of water about him] like a pot of ointment." When the crocodile makes rapid revolutions and sideways motions upon seizing prey, it is as if a giant motorized eggbeater is being used, causing numerous fine bubbles of water that appear like salve, or ointment. The whirling movements with terrific speed like an electric drill prevent another crocodile from taking away any part of the prey as the creature devours the leg of a zebra, for example. When fully visualized, these word pictures of the crocodile are graphic. In the future, the whole Bible will be clearly understood, having accompanying illustrations, films, etc., that are awesome to behold.

Job 41:32 He maketh a path to shine after him; one would think the deep to be hoary.

With every motion of the crocodile's body, all of the scales on the underpart also move. Just as the scales overlap on the creature's back so that no air can seemingly get in between, so the scales are similar on the belly. In other words, the crocodile slithers through the water, leaving a wake behind him that appears to be hoary (white).

Comment: In antitype, as the people in the Kingdom look back, they will see Satan's wake, that is, all the misery and trouble that he caused during the present evil world.

Job 41:33 Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear.

Job 41:34 He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride.

Verses 33 and 34 are the climax of the description of the crocodile. “Upon earth there is not ... [the like of the crocodile], who is made without fear.... he is a king over all the children of pride.” God’s omniscience is seen in the creation of the crocodile to represent Satan. Also, the description of the crocodile in the Book of Job reminds us that Satan is a snake as well but in reptilian form.

Comment: Verses 33 and 34 read as follows in the NIV: “Nothing on earth is his equal—a creature without fear. He looks down on all that are haughty; he is king over all that are proud.” Satan is supreme over all who are haughty like him.

Reply: The saying “birds of a feather flock together” applies.

Comment: Martin Luther may have used verse 33 in part of his hymn “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.” The particular portion referring to Satan is, “On earth is not his equal.”

Verse 34 concludes God’s speaking to Job for several chapters. With present truth, Bibles, and concordances, we can begin to grasp God’s awesome words, although the full power of the reality will not be available until the future with perfect descriptions and illustrations.

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

Job knew that it was propitious for him to respond at this exact moment. God had just said, “He [the crocodile, picturing Satan] beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride” (Job 41:34). Job’s conscience was pricked, for he did not want to have pride in any sense, and he felt the lesson was being slanted to him personally. Very early in the preceding discourse, the Heavenly Father had told Job (paraphrased), “I have something further to tell you, and then I would like to hear your response.” When God finished speaking at the end of the last chapter, He wanted Job to respond. What He had said produced the proper effect in Job, as we will see.

Job 42:2 I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.

Job began to speak. Of course he knew previously that no thought could be hidden from God, but he needed further information. Now he could see that his attitude had been wrong in wanting to know why God did not grant an answer for his afflictions.

Comment: The NIV reads, “I know that you can do all things; no plan [or purpose] of yours can be thwarted.”

Reply: Both thoughts are correct and have instructional value.

Comment: The King James contains both thoughts, for the margin reads, “No thought of thine can be hindered.”

Job 42:3 Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.

Previously Job did not understand, but now, after hearing God speak, he understood. Job was referring to an earlier question, when God had asked, “Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?” (Job 38:2). God was directing his words to Job, but the words were uttered to particularly benefit Elihu, although the latter was not named. Elihu had a multitude of words, for he had just spoken for six chapters. In other words, when God first approached in a cloud, the words were slanted to Elihu, without addressing him by name,

because he was long-winded.

Comment: Having heard the question God asked earlier, Job now reiterated the same question and responded, showing his humility. Job admitted he had uttered what he did not understand.

Reply: Yes, even though the question was originally slanted to Elihu, Job benefited by considering it.

Job 42:4 Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.

Continuing on in chapter 38, God said in verse 3 (paraphrased), “When I finish my comments and explanations, Job, I want to hear your reply.” Now Job was replying. Obviously, the word “demand” is too harsh a translation of the Hebrew word, for Job would not have spoken to God in this manner. Job was saying with humility and a proper tone of voice, “Be patient with me, O Lord. I petition thee; declare to me [further instruction].”

Comment: According to *Strong’s Concordance*, the word “demand” should be “inquire” or “request.”

Job 42:5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.

Job continued much as a blind person would say, “Now I see with understanding.” He had listened to God’s reasoning from the cloud. Having heard with the literal ear God’s explanation of things in nature, he now understood what God’s purpose was in discussing the clouds, stars, animals, etc. It dawned upon Job that with God’s profound knowledge and power, he had been out of place to question the motive of the Almighty. Even though God had been silent, Job should not have questioned. Job could have asked for the information but in a different mode.

God was successful in getting through to Job in a long, round-about explanation. All the time Job was thinking about the creatures and the unique qualities God had put into their frame, he was being educated to realize he should not have doubted that God had a purpose. After asking two or three times and not getting an answer, Job should have said something like, “I see that God is not granting me this request, so I must humbly wait and trust that in His own due time and manner, He will reveal the reason to me.” Earlier he was in a more demanding attitude, whereas now he was humble and contrite.

Job 42:6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

For Job to utter these words shows that God was successful in bringing a confession from Job’s lips. In the long explanation God gave, He *never asked* Job to repent. In contrast, the comforters and Elihu told Job it was propitious for him to repent because of sin. Job now said, “I abhor myself, and [figuratively] repent in dust and ashes,” and these words are what God wanted to hear. God was looking for this freewill, spontaneous repentance.

The natural question now is, What did Job repent of?

Comment: Scofield has a nice footnote. “The problem of which the Book of Job is the profound discussion finds here its solution. Brought into the presence of God, Job is revealed to himself. In no sense a hypocrite but being godly and possessing a faith which all his afflictions could not shake, Job was yet self-righteous and lacking in humility. Chapter 29 fully discloses this, but in the presence of God, he anticipates, as it were, the experiences of Paul, and the problem is solved. The godly are afflicted that they may be brought to a self-knowledge and self-judgment. Such afflictions are not penal for their sins but remedial and purifying.”

Reply: Comments we made about 20 years ago were similar. And about 20 years prior to that, other comments were made that were never recorded. After the Book of Job is read, the benefits we can extract are of the most value. For instance, in regard to Scofield's comment, all that Job could actually see was the whirlwind cloud, and in addition, he heard God's voice. But now Job could discern a dimension that he had never understood before. What was that dimension? Before in his affliction, the emphasis was on "I": "I am righteous," "I have maintained my integrity," etc. Therefore, the Lord took Job on an excursion and discussed various creatures He had created to show that He even fed the little ravens as they cried for food. God taught Job that He cares for His creatures, and those who observe and meditate on nature can see that care. God said that even the water which gushes through the wadis and evaporates and seems to be a great waste is needed by the desert. The desert is crying for water. Whether or not Job could see any appreciable difference, God cares for the rain, the wild ass, the hinds on the rocks that easily give birth, etc., etc. If one truly observes God's tender mercies as David did, he then sees that the Lord is good to all and that His tender mercies are over all His works (Psalm 145). For example, the flowers (their color, fragrance, and texture) and the variety of food (the flavor and color) bespeak God's care and consideration. Job could only understand the mechanics of nature. In fact, he probably understood them better than any other person living in his day, but if the aspect of God's *personal* interest on behalf of His creatures was maintained in His work, how much more it would be manifested for God-fearing man, let alone a beast or a flower or some other things! God certainly would be more interested in a God-fearing man, especially one who prayed daily for his family, as Job did. The reason for Job's sufferings, therefore, would be revealed in due time, if not in the present life.

Now we can see that Job would say, "I despise myself to have even questioned during this period of my bereavement. Now I truly repent in dust and ashes." God's technique to address Job in a round-about way was effectual. The manner in which Job had emphasized his own integrity needed to be improved. God accomplished what the comforters and Elihu could not do because Job was much superior to the others. Elihu had great words—in fact, better words than Job, for he was very eloquent—but they were superficial compared to Job's words. Nevertheless, Job needed a lesson, but it was wonderful that he did not crack under the Adversary's testing. God was victorious in Job's life. Job truly was a more righteous person than anyone else then living. His will and intention were perfect. The Book of Job is instructive.

Job 42:7 And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.

How remarkable that God told Job his rebuttals to the three comforters, generally speaking, were proper answers to their intrusions into his faith! As the comforters questioned Job, their intent changed and became accusatory, but Job's replies were proper. The problem was in Job's addressing God—some improvement was needed there.

Comment: The very moment that God got repentance out of Job, He then vindicated Job to the three comforters. And it is interesting that Elihu was not mentioned here.

Reply: Yes, we will discuss that fact at the end of the book when we explain whom Job, Elihu, and the three comforters represent. Elihu was listening, but he was in a little different category.

God addressed Eliphaz directly and the other two comforters indirectly. Eliphaz was the most learned and profound of the three comforters. Incidentally, Eliphaz's son was Amalek, one of the worst enemies of God in the Old Testament. Amalek was the father of the Amalekites.

Job 42:8 Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant

Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.

God was addressing the comforters: “Take seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job and offer a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will then pray for you, and Job will I accept, lest I deal with you after your folly, in that you have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.” The Book of Job is deep, and it gets more meaningful each time it is studied.

If the comforters went to Job and did these things, then Job, God’s servant, would pray for them. Verse 8 ties in directly with the Lord’s Prayer: “Forgive us our debts [trespasses], as we forgive our debtors [those who trespass against us].” In other words, as we forgive others, so we will be forgiven. God was instructing Job on things he needed to learn. We can be sure that Job dutifully prayed for the comforters when they offered the seven bullocks and the seven rams. Their compliance (repentance) had to occur first, and then Job would forgive and pray for his accusers. Not until Jesus’ First Advent did real light of understanding come. As Christians, we have been greatly blessed by the possession of the Holy Spirit and the Bible, especially the Gospels and Jesus’ instruction, as well as the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ to cover our shortcomings. We have great benefits that Job did not have.

Comment: The three comforters would not have humbled themselves before Job of their own volition, but the Heavenly Father stated the matter so bluntly that they had to repent. By extension, those who commit willful sins against others must ask forgiveness.

Reply: Yes, people must ask forgiveness either in this life or in the next life when awakened from the grave. Verse 8 is one Scripture to prove that Job represents The Christ, Head and body members.

Comment: God said that if the three comforters did not make this offering, He would deal with them after their folly. Jesus enunciated the principle “For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again” (Matt. 7:2). If the three comforters did not repent, they would be judging themselves out of their own mouths.

Q: The offering of seven bullocks and seven rams was unusual. What does it signify?

A: In one sense, each of the three comforters represents a class of society. The definitions will be given at the end of the book. A much larger drama is pictured than what actually happened back there. It is necessary to study the Book of Job properly in order to understand the lessons. The Holy Spirit, intense desire, and a lot of prayer are needed for an understanding of this book, which will be meaningful in the future when it is dramatized and given accurate explanations in the minutest of detail.

Job 42:9 So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD commanded them: the LORD also accepted Job.

Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar “did according as the LORD commanded them” by offering seven bullocks and seven rams. No small offering, it was commensurate with the nature of the mischief the three comforters had done to Job. To procure and make the offerings took a little time, so it was probably the next day now.

Notice that the comforters were identified by name and origin. The offering reminds us of the account of Balaam, in which King Balak had to build seven altars and on each altar offer a

bullock and a ram (Num. 23:1,2).

Job 42:10 And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.

“The LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends.” Originally, the three comforters were Job’s friends, but their advice and comments during his affliction disenchanting them in his eyes.

The expression “turned the captivity” is used quite frequently in Scripture in regard to Israel and Judah. By knowing about Job’s experience in being captive to evil circumstances and happenings, we understand better the meaning of the expression. Job had been under restraint physically, mentally, and emotionally by Satan. The term indicates, too, that God forgave Job for words spoken under duress, although Job needed some correction, nevertheless. Notice that God turned Job’s captivity when he prayed for his friends.

Comment: The Scripture comes to mind, “Pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matt. 5:44).

Here the three comforters got a dose of their own medicine because they had more or less been telling Job to repent. They were willing to pray for Job, but they were waiting for him to confess his sin. However, he maintained his integrity all the time. Since part of the Lord’s Prayer is, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,” verse 10 is New Testament advice in Old Testament format (Matt. 6:12).

Comment: Up to this point, Job was still covered with boils, so the healing must have been almost instantaneous and thus a manifest miracle on Job’s behalf.

Reply: Yes, his release from the physical, mental, and emotional afflictions was outwardly manifested by a startling visible healing process.

“Also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.” The details of the various animals comprising his flocks are given in verse 12. It would be interesting to know how the doubling occurred. Job’s healing was instantaneous, but acquiring the animals required perhaps days or even months.

Job 42:11 Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.

Then all of Job’s brothers and sisters and previous acquaintances came and ate bread with him in his house. Notice that he had not lost his house or land in his afflictions. It took time for these gatherings to take place.

Comment: James 5:11 reads, “Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”

The intrinsic value of the gold earrings (or nose rings) was nothing compared to what the three “friends” (comforters) had to do. Incidentally, we would presume that the three comforters were also present at Job’s house for the feast of “bread” with relatives and acquaintances. They would have tarried to give their respect. Some of these people were rich, and the giving of gold earrings would have been costly from the standpoint of being attached to personal items.

Giving was their way of comforting Job for the experiences he had endured. The mention of “a piece of money” indicates that Job lived in olden times, for there was no coinage. A piece of money was like a piece of gold or silver that had to be weighed to determine the value.

Comment: Job’s family forsook him when he was afflicted, feeling he was cursed. Therefore, the offering of these gifts was like a peace offering.

Job 42:12 So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.

With the remarkable increase of sheep, camels, oxen, and she asses, it would have been obvious that the Lord was blessing Job. Before his affliction, he was the richest man, and now he was twice as rich. Previously, he had 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen (a total of 1,000), and 500 she asses. Being female, the she asses would potentially, or inherently, produce offspring. God’s blessing on Job was markedly evident.

Job 42:13 He had also seven sons and three daughters.

Originally, Job had seven sons and three daughters. Now he had seven *new* sons and three *new* daughters to replace those who had died (Job 1:2).

Job 42:14 And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Keren-happuch.

The first daughter, presumably the oldest, was named Jemima, which means “a dove” or “handsome as the day.” The second daughter, Kezia, is also spelled Cassia, one of the ingredients of the holy anointing oil (Exod. 30:24; Psa. 45:8). Keren-happuch, the name of the youngest daughter, means “a horn [or child] of beauty.” Almost all of the women in ancient times had, as a sign of nobility, a horn attached to the veil over their heads. A horn sometimes symbolically represents a child, but normally it represents power, such as the horns on the Brazen Altar. The usual translation of Keren-happuch is the thought of a horn as a vessel holding the pigment, ointment, or antimony that is used to enhance the eye. Because of the cost of that particular type of cosmetic, it is considered a mark of nobility in Egypt and some other lands. Incidentally, with the names of the sons not being mentioned, the daughters were given greater preeminence, even though there were more sons, numerically speaking.

Why did Job get *seven* sons and *three* daughters? The seven sons may picture the seven stages of the Kingdom Age. Why were only the daughters named? Obviously, the daughters represent three different classes. In the ancient Arab, Jewish, and Asiatic worlds, particularly Indonesia, women had an inferior role. Female babies were handicapped for the rest of their lives, whether they were under the Muslim, Jewish, or Christian religion. In the Christian religion, for example, women cannot be elders. As a general lesson, women have had to be patient in their development in the present life, but they will be compensated in the Kingdom Age for that role of humiliation and constraint (or restraint). At that time, women will get freedom and recognition, and they will be rewarded for having patiently curbed their inherent rights. Those who went beyond the bounds and became masculine and aggressive will not be rewarded. However, those who obediently recognized and dutifully observed constraint with modesty in the present life will be abundantly rewarded in the Kingdom Age and will be more beautiful in God’s sight. As an illustration, when a woman washed Jesus’ feet with her tears and dried them with her hair, he told her that her sins were forgiven. He also said that those whose sins are forgiven much, following repentance and reform, loveth more than those who do not have that experience.

And in regard to the Little Flock, we would not be surprised if there are more female than male overcomers. Jesus will be the age-lasting Father, the Second Adam, and the Church will be the Second Eve. The antitypical Rebekah will be the mother of thousands of millions, that is, *billions* (Gen. 24:60). Just as now the natural mother is closer to the children than the father, so in the Kingdom Age, the Church will be closer to mankind than Jesus. Likewise, the underpriesthood in the type had more hands-on experience with the Jewish people who brought their sacrifices than the high priest, who was the overseer and did not do the daily burdensome chores. With regard to rulership, the Church will look to Jesus for advice, just as the 70 elders consulted Moses when they had a hard case.

Job pictures The Christ, and the seven sons and three daughters will be down here in the Kingdom Age. Those who were dead will come forth from the tomb and be alive; that is, they will have two experiences—just as Job’s first seven sons and three daughters died, and then, after his affliction, he was again given seven sons and three daughters. The double experience is an experience with evil followed by one with good. The representation of the Book of Job does not go beyond the Kingdom Age. Job will be honored in the Kingdom Age, and all those who persecuted the antitypical Job in the present life will have to ask forgiveness of their victims when they come forth from the grave in the Kingdom Age.

Job 42:15 And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren.

Job’s three daughters were the most beautiful in the land. Thus they were superior to his first three daughters in being recognized for their outward beauty. In addition, the three daughters were given an inheritance among their brothers. Normally, only the male children got an inheritance in the land, with the firstborn getting twice as much.

Comment: With regard to the three daughters getting an inheritance in the land, when the Job class, The Christ, is off the scene in heaven at the end of the Kingdom Age, their “father,” as it were, will be gone, but they will be taken care of by their inheritance.

Job 42:16 After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons’ sons, even four generations.

Comment: A note in the Companion Bible states that Job lived 140 years after this experience, and this length of time was not only like a double blessing but also a confirmation that he was about 70 years old when his afflictions began.

Reply: There is no question that Job was 70 when he started the experience, even when we consider the Septuagint. Although the Septuagint has two different figures, it still ends up with age 70 as a start. In certain places, the Septuagint was purposely fudged by the Jewish translators in Alexandria, who took certain liberties from a moral standpoint.

Job 42:17 So Job died, being old and full of days.

Elihu represents the Great Company class, and Job represents The Christ. Job pictures Jesus, the Head, in the beginning of the book, where he was characterized as “perfect” in God’s sight. His integrity symbolizes the experience Jesus went through and also his disciples. They will be rewarded for their faithfulness.

Comment: The application of Job to either the world of mankind or Israel does not fit from the standpoint that he was reckoned perfect to begin with; also, the double reward would not be true of either. They will get restitution, which is a restoring of that which was lost and nothing more.

Comment: Neither the world of mankind nor the nation of Israel was faithful in its trials, so a double reward would not be appropriate.

It is reasonable to conjecture that Elihu represents the Great Company because he saw he needed to repent for doing the same things the three comforters had done. He said he would justify Job, but he did not. Elihu's contrition forced him to do a biography of Job as a form of repentance, and he told the unvarnished truth of his terrible statements to Job. Elihu was a relative of Terah, the father of Abraham, Nahor, and Haran. In fact, Elihu was a descendant of Buz, who was a son of Abraham's brother Nahor. Lot, also a picture of the Great Company, was a son of Abraham's other brother, Haran. Thus there was a close relationship of Lot and Elihu to Abraham.

The three comforters represent three classes who persecuted The Christ (or Job class) during the Gospel Age, starting with Jesus' baptism at Jordan through Pentecost to the end of the age. Eliphaz, the oldest, pictures Judaizing Christians. Of the Jews who became Christians, some were a problem, especially in the first century. Stated another way, the Eliphaz class was the first of three classes to appear on the stage of history. The next, Bildad, represents the worshippers of Baal, or Bel, the god of Babylon—hence Catholic persecutors, Catholicism, in antitype. Zophar, the third, means "chirper." Not only does a bird chirp, but many species of birds are imitators. Accordingly, Zophar represents Protestants or Protestantism. These three classes—Judaizing Christians, Catholics, and Protestants—have persecuted the gospel Church throughout the age. All three have been supposed *friends* of Christianity, believers in Jesus, and ostensibly consecrated but in reality nominal Christians. The Apostle Paul straightened out many Judaizing Christians with the Book of Hebrews and his Epistle to the Galatians. Some went out of the faith, and others saw the error of their ways. It was humbling for those who realized they had misconstrued the gospel to acknowledge they needed Paul to instruct them and to be brought into harmony with the Job (spiritual) class.

THE BOOK OF JOB

(Series of discourses by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1984 and 1985)

Job is a picture of the Church, not of the world of mankind. Several reasons follow: (1) Throughout his experiences, Job was righteous and faithful. (2) He loved God, although he did not understand why he was having such hard experiences. (3) As a result of faithfully passing his test, he got a higher reward than the world will get. The world gets restitution (that which was lost), *not double* that which was lost.

Job was in the land of Uz, and there Satan was allowed to test the mettle of his character. Job's experience, or trial, is analogous to that which the Church experiences during the Gospel Age in one aspect or another. Some have felt that only natural wisdom is portrayed in the Book of Job, but that observation is not correct because many of the trials that Christians have are along similar lines, for they are residing in the flesh and dealing with other human beings. Hence the trials Christians have often take the natural form. Seeing how Job reacted helps us to know how God wishes us to react under similar circumstances.

Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.

Job 1:2 And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.

Job 1:3 His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

First, Job's possessions are listed. Not only was he highly esteemed among men, but he was very wealthy.

Job 1:4 And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them.

Job 1:5 And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.

Job 1:6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.

Job 1:7 And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

Job 1:8 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

Job 1:9 Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?

Job 1:10 Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

Job 1:11 But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.

Job 1:12 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.

The Adversary felt that Job followed the Lord because of the material benefactions, prosperity, wisdom, etc., he received for his obedience. This particular allegory will not be treated at this time, but the final result is that Satan was allowed to test Job.

Job 1:13 And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:

Job 1:14 And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them:

Job 1:15 And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

One day while Job and his wife were at home, his sons and daughters were attending a party in the house of Job's eldest son. Suddenly a messenger burst in the door to inform Job and his wife that a great calamity had just occurred. The oxen and asses that Job possessed in a certain part of his domain were taken by the Sabeans, and the servants who had the custody of these animals were slain. Thus Job lost his oxen and asses and the servants in one stroke.

Job 1:16 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

The first messenger had hardly finished declaring the calamity to Job when a second messenger came running to the door to report that in another part of Job's property, a fire had burned up all his sheep and the servants who were tending them.

Job 1:17 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

No sooner had the second messenger finished his report when a third messenger arrived to say that the Chaldeans had come through his property and taken his camels and killed the servants taking care of them. What a variety of animals Job had possessed—and they were all gone!

Job 1:18 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:

Job 1:19 And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

Yet another messenger came with even more devastating news. During the festivity in the eldest son's home, a great wind storm had arisen that collapsed the house and killed all of the young men.

Job 1:20 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the

ground, and worshipped,

Job 1:21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.

Job 1:22 In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

All of these calamities had occurred one after the other. In one stroke, as it were, Job was deprived of all his material goods plus the fruit of his own body. Although these calamities were crushing to Job, his beautiful character shone through. He declared that when he came into the world, he was naked, and it appeared that he was to leave the world the same way. No murmurings or complaints crossed his lips. Even though he did not understand the reason for these calamities, he *did not sin*.

Job 2:1 Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD.

Job 2:2 And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

Job 2:3 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.

Job 2:4 And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.

Job 2:5 But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.

Job 2:6 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.

Because Job's faith in God held firm, Satan then allegorically approached God again and said that if he could afflict Job's own person, his *own body*, Job would curse God. And so Satan was given that opportunity to test Job.

Job 2:7 So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

Job 2:8 And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.

From the top of his head to the sole of his feet, Job was smitten with "boils." For several reasons, these were not boils in the ordinary sense. They were a type of eruption that was not only very distressing but also very itchy and burning. We know this because Job used a broken piece of pottery to scrape his flesh to try to relieve some of his torment. However, the scraping greatly disfigured his flesh, and the agony continued.

Job 2:9 Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.

Job 2:10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not

Job sin with his lips.

Job's wife said, "Why don't you curse God and die? At least you would be relieved of your suffering." This was a severe test on Job's wife as well, and she succumbed—she was unfaithful in making this suggestion.

Of course Job realized that death would end his agony and his troubled spirit. What else was there to live for? Nevertheless, in all this, Job did not sin with his lips.

Job 2:11 Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.

In the meantime, news of Job's calamities had spread in the area, and three "friends" came to mourn with and comfort him. The three were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite (Shiite today), and Zophar the Naamathite. The point of naming these individuals and their family background is to show that while the story began with an allegory about Satan talking with God, Job was, nevertheless, a *real person*. He actually lived in the land of Uz, and these experiences literally happened to him.

Job 2:12 And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven.

Job 2:13 So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.

Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar sat down on the ground by Job's side and commiserated with him for seven days—*without speaking*. Evidently, Job did not speak either. Seven days and nights are a long time to silently commiserate with a person.

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

Job finally broke the silence (verses 1-26). The three remained silent until after Job spoke.

There will not be an attempt to explain every verse. Rather, the *principles of interpretation* will be considered. (The principles are more valuable in some respects than the detail, but the detail is necessary in order to size up the situation.) The general perspective is all important in understanding the reason that Job's experiences were recorded. It is true that the Book of Job is a gripping, dramatic story, but the *lessons* derived from it are more valuable than the story itself. Many who have read the Book of Job know little about it because of the complexity of detail, the type of language, and the thinking that is employed by the wise men of the East. Incidentally, the three "comforters" were all wise in this world's thinking; they were known for their apparent innate natural wisdom in matters of everyday life. This natural wisdom is evident from the way they talked. Job, too, was a very wise person along these lines, but far superior in his thinking.

There is an important element to consider in the counsel of the three when they were beholding Job. When they first approached, they could see from "afar off" that he was disfigured and in a pitiful state (Job 2:12). Then they sat down with him and beheld his mental and physical anguish for seven days. It is important to realize that *their observations colored their thinking*. The reason for the philosophy subsequently expounded by Job and the three men is to show the "dos and don'ts." The reasoning of the three is presented to show that we must be

careful *not to use their type of attitude* in connection with the judgment of others. Having a completely wrong concept can do great injury to an individual if he does not have the caliber of Job (and few do). Those who are instrumental in the destruction of others through wrong reasoning and advice are responsible for their words. It is like pushing a blind man over a cliff.

Therefore, it is important for us to observe Job's attitude in his experiences, as well as the attitude of the three observers. When a situation arises and certain details are known, not everyone draws the same conclusion. In other words, different conclusions are drawn from the same facts. Moreover, the *motivation* of those who observe determines how they react. For instance, Jesus was perfect in all that he did and said, yet of those who observed him, some were very critical and tried to thwart his ministry. Others who had the same facts and observed the same things responded favorably and followed him, some becoming disciples. Therefore, the *motive* is very important in matters of judgment, for it can produce *opposite* results.

Job 3:2 And Job spake, and said,

Job 3:3 Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived.

Job 3:4 Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it.

Job 3:5 Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it.

Job 3:6 As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months.

Job 3:7 Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein.

Job 3:8 Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning.

Job 3:9 Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day:

Job 3:10 Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes.

Job 3:11 Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?

Job 3:12 Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck?

Job 3:13 For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest,

Job 3:14 With kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves;

Job 3:15 Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver:

Job 3:16 Or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never saw light.

Job 3:17 There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.

Job 3:18 There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.

Job 3:19 The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master.

Job 3:20 Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul;

Job 3:21 Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures;

Job 3:22 Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave?

Job 3:23 Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?

Job 3:24 For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters.

Job began to speak by lamenting the circumstances of his birth. He wished that the day of his birth, the day he was introduced into the world, had not occurred, for had he not been born, he would not have come to the very day of agony and complete loss he was suffering. His words show the extremity of his suffering.

We must try to enter into his experience in order to understand the words he uttered. To criticize Job under such trying circumstances would be very unreasonable on our part. In the final analysis, when God spoke at the end of the book, even He did not find fault with Job along this line.

Job was now a poor man, bereft of all his property. With this loss went the loss of power, authority, and respect for his wisdom and judging. And so, those who look at another who is poor in this world's goods, and perhaps disfigured with illness or another deformity, usually allow these circumstances to enter into their thinking and judgment of him. It is difficult to disassociate our thinking from the material aspect of an individual because "man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on [into] the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7). Realizing that this principle is enunciated in the Word of God, we must try to develop a *detached perspective* in viewing others, and we must tread with care in our dealings with such an individual.

Job 3:25 For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.

Job 3:26 I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.

Job was very concerned for his family and prayed daily for their spiritual and temporal welfare (Job 1:5). He was interested in their development and future, as well as in his own, because he knew the evil influences of the world and how easily one could be turned off from God through material prosperity. It is interesting that many faithful individuals of the past were wealthy, but what strong and wonderful characters they had to be in order to remain faithful! Wealth is a difficult obstacle to overcome, and Job was one of the overcomers.

Verses 25 and 26 refer to Job's concern for his family. The object of his prayers was for their "safety," but what Job feared would happen had occurred. Except for his wife, his family was all dead and everything was gone. Subconsciously he had had this fear and concern. (Of course we know they will have a resurrection, and actually, Job's prayers were being answered—but not in the way he anticipated.)

What was hard for Job to understand—and we must enter into his spirit and thinking here—

was that daily he was faithful, daily he persevered, and daily he was concerned for the safety and welfare of his family, yet these calamities had occurred. In spite of his concern for their welfare day and night, extreme trouble had come. The core of his problem was that *he could not understand why these things were happening*. (He was unaware of the allegory between God and Satan.) He did not realize that he was being made a special target to further magnify God and his own character. In Old Testament times, material prosperity was often the reward for obedience, but here God was showing that favoritism was based not on personality, but on the *internal merit* of the individual under His tutelage and development.

After Job made this statement, one of the three wise men, Eliphaz, now began to speak.

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

Job 4:2 If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? but who can withhold himself from speaking?

Job 4:3 Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands.

Job 4:4 Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees.

Job 4:5 But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.

Job 4:6 Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?

Job 4:7 Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?

Job 4:8 Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.

Job 4:9 By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.

Job 4:10 The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions, are broken.

Job 4:11 The old lion perisheth for lack of prey, and the stout lion's whelps are scattered abroad.

Job 4:12 Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof.

Job 4:13 In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men,

Job 4:14 Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.

Job 4:15 Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up:

Job 4:16 It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying,

Job 4:17 Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker?

Job 4:18 Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly:

Job 4:19 How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth?

Job 4:20 They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever without any regarding it.

Job 4:21 Doth not their excellency which is in them go away? they die, even without wisdom.

Job 5:1 Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?

Job 5:2 For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one.

Job 5:3 I have seen the foolish taking root: but suddenly I cursed his habitation.

Job 5:4 His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them.

Job 5:5 Whose harvest the hungry eateth up, and taketh it even out of the thorns, and the robber swalloweth up their substance.

Job 5:6 Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground;

Job 5:7 Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.

Job 5:8 I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause:

Job 5:9 Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number:

Job 5:10 Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields:

Job 5:11 To set up on high those that be low; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety.

Job 5:12 He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise.

Job 5:13 He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.

Job 5:14 They meet with darkness in the daytime, and grope in the noonday as in the night.

Job 5:15 But he saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty.

Job 5:16 So the poor hath hope, and iniquity stoppeth her mouth.

Job 5:17 Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:

Job 5:18 For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.

Job 5:19 He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.

Job 5:20 In famine he shall redeem thee from death: and in war from the power of the sword.

Job 5:21 Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue: neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh.

Job 5:22 At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh: neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth.

Job 5:23 For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.

Job 5:24 And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin.

Job 5:25 Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth.

Job 5:26 Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season.

Job 5:27 Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good.

Eliphaz's line of reasoning, without going verse by verse, was as follows. He realized that in earlier days, Job, being a man of great wealth, not only was concerned for his family but was interested in other people, giving help and comfort as needed. Not only did he instruct others and give intellectual counsel with regard to their problems, but he commiserated with them and comforted and encouraged them. Eliphaz said, "This is what you did for others in the past, but now when calamities come upon you, you cannot even comfort yourself." What a blow these words would have been to Job! This type of testing is much like what Jesus was subjected to while on the Cross: "You saved others. Now come down and save yourself. Then we will believe you." In one way or another, the consecrated of the Gospel Age are similarly tested, and the higher one's development (the more mature the individual), the more testing he receives.

Eliphaz continued to reason: "Where do you have an example of the righteous being destroyed? Are not the ones who please God rewarded? Even though the wicked may prosper for a while, is there not a stigma attached to them, and do they not receive calamities?" Eliphaz was saying that the righteous prosper and the wicked eventually perish. In other words, he first hinted, and then was more bold, that Job must have sinned for this visitation to come upon him. "If we observe this in others, why should we, in considering your suffering, suddenly reverse these laws, excuse you as our friend, and say that with you it is different? This is our natural wisdom and observation of why things happen. Why should you be any different than others with regard to calamities?" Then Eliphaz introduced the subject of farming. "If the land is plowed with iniquity and the seed of wickedness is sowed, is not a corresponding crop reaped?" He was saying that Job was reaping what was in his character and that the fruitage was his calamities. Some friend indeed!

The three friends came initially to comfort Job, but their observation of his extreme suffering colored their thinking. Instead of being his friends, they became his enemies, as it were. It would have been better if they had never come in the first place, and Job said this later on and wished they would leave.

Eliphaz reasoned further: “Job, you are magnifying your innocence and your integrity, but do you mean to say that you are on a par with God? Can a mortal man compare his integrity before God in the manner you are trying to do when you are experiencing such calamities? Why, it is self-evident that something is wrong.” What cruel reasoning!

Job and the three “wise” men knew of the first dispensation, in which holy angels fell from their first estate. With this knowledge in mind, Eliphaz continued, “When God had angels as His servants in the past, He found fault with them. If God had a reservation in dealing with spirit beings, then when He comes down here where people are made of clay and mud, would He think of them on a higher level? You are trying to justify yourself, but it stands to reason that God would find more problems down here.”

The three comforters did not like the fact that in spite of all the calamities, Job still felt he was innocent. Poor Job was very perplexed and could not understand the trials. In his place, we could not have understood either. Would we have done as well? (Perhaps the answer would be yes if we were of the Little Flock.) In observing Job, we should be observing ourselves, the mettle of our own characters and to what extent we would endure under such circumstances. No wonder God later mentioned Job by name as one of His top ten.

Eliphaz continued, “This pot of clay down here is trying to justify itself, but when we are born, we are as prone to iniquity as the sparks that fly upward. Unto God, I would commit my cause.” He was suggesting that Job should pray about the matter. These same words are often said to brethren. A person who is undergoing extreme agony and confusion of mind cannot even utter an intelligent prayer. Prayer becomes a groan, an agony of the spirit, which God can answer. “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Rom. 8:26). The Holy Spirit can interpret unintelligible prayers and groans from the heart, and sometimes these are the most efficacious prayers.

Eliphaz resumed, “The destiny of those who are proud and froward is darkness.” In other words, “Job, not only should you pray about the matter, but you are manifesting a proud attitude in connection with your experiences. You know what the destiny is for the proud and froward—oblivion. God does not like that type of individual. Happy [blessed] is the man whom God corrects. If you listen to my instruction, maybe some good will be salvaged out of this situation. Therefore, do not despise the chastenings of the Almighty. If you commit your way to the Lord, not only might He salvage you, but He could do this on several occasions. You could have six such experiences, and eventually you will be delivered out of all of them. And even with the seventh experience, He can lift you up, but this depends on obedience. Such as are delivered do not sin.”

All the time Eliphaz and the other two were thinking that the reason the calamities had come upon Job was because he had sinned. They felt this should have been obvious because of what was happening to him. “If you were in the proper attitude and a calamity came upon you, you would have no fear. The troubled spirit and anguish you manifest every time you open your mouth shows us that you have sinned. One who has not sinned can stand any trial and receive it rejoicingly.” How very courageous on the part of Eliphaz! His advice was the opposite of what the Apostle Paul said about a severe trial: “*No chastening* [trial] for the present seemeth to be joyous, but *grievous*: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (Heb. 12:11). Many, even amidst our own brotherhood, have this wrong concept and have given wrong advice.

Again, “If you were of the proper heart disposition, you would live to a ripe old age. Just like the corn in the field that puts forth the mature ear, so the right-hearted man will live out his years to old age. This truth, which is obvious to us, we have observed and searched out. Listen

to what we are trying to tell you. This is what God wants you to know, even if the advice comes through us.”

Job replied to Eliphaz in chapters 6 and 7.

Job 6:1 But Job answered and said,

Job 6:2 Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together!

Job 6:3 For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up.

Job said, “My grief is becoming unbearable. It is like heavy sand weighing on my soul.” Job was saying that the words of Eliphaz had added to his burden. Eliphaz’s supposed comfort and counsel were just increasing the weight and tipping the scale beyond endurance. “Therefore, my words are swallowed up.” In his overwhelming grief, Job could not properly respond to this situation.

Job 6:4 For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.

Job 6:5 Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? or loweth the ox over his fodder?

Job 6:6 Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt? or is there any taste in the white of an egg?

Job asked, “Does the wild ass bray or the ox low when it has food to eat?” No. When these animals are eating, they are satisfied and will not bray or low. Job was likening Eliphaz and his counsel to the wild ass and the ox. It was easy for Eliphaz, *who was not having the trial*, to give counsel to Job, but his logic and talking were like the braying of a wild ass. The advice Eliphaz was giving did not make sense; it did not correspond with the facts of nature. He was satisfied and not having the trial, so he should not have been “braying.” Eliphaz and the other two comforters were hypocrites in their counsel.

Either here or later, Job admitted that the counsel of Eliphaz was good and accurate, but *misapplied*. In other words, just because certain things are generally true, that does not mean they are true with regard to a particular situation. Eliphaz had logic, but it was *illogical* in Job’s situation.

Job 6:7 The things that my soul refused to touch are as my sorrowful meat.

It was as if Job were being force-fed with things that were obnoxious to him. In his defenseless, sorrowful state, he had to listen to this garbage.

Job 6:8 Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing that I long for!

Job 6:9 Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off!

Job 6:10 Then should I yet have comfort; yea, I would harden myself in sorrow: let him not spare; for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One.

Job had always been courageous and outspoken with regard to his God. He did not let his wealth interfere with reverence and worship. By both words and deeds, he had been faithful to his God.

Job 6:11 What is my strength, that I should hope? and what is mine end, that I should prolong my life?

Job 6:12 Is my strength the strength of stones? or is my flesh of brass?

“But is my flesh stone? Is it brass?” Job asked. In other words, man is psychologically affected by pain and other factors, and there is a point beyond which one cannot endure. The three should have realized that he was bemoaning his fate and his experiences because he was almost at the breaking point. Instead they felt he should manifest a better spirit and attitude and have better control of his tongue. But he asked, “Am I a stone or brass that I can do such things?”

Many people are idealistic but very impractical in a particular situation. It is easy for one to talk who is not undergoing a trial. Poor Job was bereft of his children and possessions and was disfigured and in pain with sores from head to foot, but instead of comforting him, the three friends did nothing but criticize him.

Job 6:13 Is not my help in me? and is wisdom driven quite from me?

Job 6:14 To him that is afflicted pity should be shown from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty.

Job 6:15 My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away;

Job 6:16 Which are blackish by reason of the ice, and wherein the snow is hid:

Job 6:17 What time they wax warm, they vanish: when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place.

In the land where Job and the three lived, there were wadis that had water only at certain times of the year. Job said to the three, “You, my friends, are like these wadis. For a time, they appear to be refreshing, but when the sun comes up and as time goes on, they just evaporate and become a dry riverbed.” In the final analysis, those who came to refresh him were as disappointing as a wadi of water that evaporates and provides no comfort or refreshment.

Job 6:18 The paths of their way are turned aside; they go to nothing, and perish.

Job 6:19 The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them.

Job 6:20 They were confounded because they had hoped; they came thither, and were ashamed.

Job 6:21 For now ye are nothing; ye see my casting down, and are afraid.

Job continued, “You see my cast-down condition and are afraid of my circumstance.”

Job 6:22 Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give a reward for me of your substance?

“Did I ask you to come here to comfort me? Did I send out an invitation for you to come? Do

you not realize what you are doing to me?"

Job 6:23 Or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand? or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty?

Job 6:24 Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred.

Job 6:25 How forcible are right words! but what doth your arguing reprove?

Job 6:26 Do ye imagine to reprove words, and the speeches of one that is desperate, which are as wind?

Job 6:27 Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless, and ye dig a pit for your friend.

Job 6:28 Now therefore be content, look upon me; for it is evident unto you if I lie.

Job 6:29 Return, I pray you, let it not be iniquity; yea, return again, my righteousness is in it.

Job 6:30 Is there iniquity in my tongue? cannot my taste discern perverse things?

Job 7:1 Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? are not his days also like the days of an hireling?

Job 7:2 As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling looketh for the reward of his work:

Job 7:3 So am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me.

Job 7:4 When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day.

Job 7:5 My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome.

Job 7:6 My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope.

Job 7:7 O remember that my life is wind: mine eye shall no more see good.

Job 7:8 The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more: thine eyes are upon me, and I am not.

Job 7:9 As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more.

Job 7:10 He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more.

Job 7:11 Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.

Job 7:12 Am I a sea, or a whale, that thou settest a watch over me?

Job 7:13 When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint;

Job 7:14 Then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions:

Job 7:15 So that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life.

Job 7:16 I loathe it; I would not live always: let me alone; for my days are vanity.

“How forceful are right words, but cause me to understand where I err.” Job was saying, “Much that you say is true, but *not in this case*. All I want to know is *why* I am having this experience. If you can show me where I have erred, then your instruction will be helpful and valid. In searching my own heart, I cannot see where I have been unfaithful to my God. Your words are like desperate wind. In your desperation to help me, you are actually doing a destructive work and not helping at all. You overwhelm me with your criticism. I am now bereft of goods, cattle, children, health, etc., and am like a fatherless person and am in torment of mind. I would rather be strangled to death than to be subjected to the type of admonition you are giving me. Go away and leave me alone!”

Job 7:17 What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?

Job 7:18 And that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?

Job 7:19 How long wilt thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?

Job 7:20 I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself?

Verse 20 is sometimes misunderstood. Job was not admitting that he had sinned. He was saying, “According to you, I have sinned. You have been telling me over and over that I secretly sinned, so what is it you want to do to help me, O you who want to take the position of being spiritual doctors?” Job was being sarcastic. “Why have you set me as a target [mark]?” Just as one with a bow shoots arrows at a target, so the three were shooting arrows at Job and trying to penetrate him. He was being victimized by them.

“So that I am a burden to myself.” Job was saying, “Your type of help is bothering me so much, and going in on me so deeply, that I am even being a burden to myself. I am feeling so discomforted that I would almost like to be put out of my misery.”

Job 7:21 And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? for now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.

“You can see that I am just about ready to die. Can you not at least give me some words of comfort before I go to sleep in the grave?” With these words, Job finished his response to Eliphaz the Temanite.

Next Bildad the Shuhite offered counsel to Job.

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

Job 8:2 How long wilt thou speak these things? and how long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind?

Job 8:3 Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?

Job 8:4 If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their

transgression;

Job 8:5 If thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty;

Job 8:6 If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.

Bildad first talked about Job's children. "They must have sinned in order for them to die, so you should not express so much grief. God took them away because of what they did. Your children are guilty, and it appears that you are also guilty. As we look at your pitiful condition, it is apparent that you have sinned." Bildad agreed with Eliphaz.

Bildad continued, "If you were pure and just, this circumstance would be temporary. The fact that the circumstance is lasting some time proves you are guilty."

Job 8:7 Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase.

In other words, according to Bildad, had Job been faithful, his small beginning would have blossomed out into greatness. The Old Testament taught that those who were obedient prospered with fruitful fields, a number of children, good health, etc., but these were *general* conditions.

Job 8:8 For inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers:

Bildad said that Job should look back to the example of his forefathers.

Job 8:9 (For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow:)

Job 8:10 Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?

Job 8:11 Can the rush grow up without mire? can the flag grow without water?

Job 8:12 Whilst it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb.

Job 8:13 So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish:

Bildad drew a lesson from nature. "Reeds that grow in the marsh areas are abundant and green, but at a certain time, for some mysterious reason, they turn brown and wither—and not because a sickle has been put to them. They simply perish. The reeds are an example in nature of those who appear to worship God in their greenness, but they are really forgetting Him. Hence they are mystically, invisibly, cut off by God. Such are the paths of all who forget God and are hypocrites."

Job 8:14 Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web.

Job 8:15 He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.

Job 8:16 He is green before the sun, and his branch shooteth forth in his garden.

Job 8:17 His roots are wrapped about the heap, and seeth the place of stones.

Job 8:18 If he destroy him from his place, then it shall deny him, saying, I have not seen thee.

Job 8:19 Behold, this is the joy of his way, and out of the earth shall others grow.

Job 8:20 Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil doers:

“God will not cast away a perfect man or help evildoers.” Bildad’s opinion of Job was the same as that of Eliphaz.

Job 8:21 Till he fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing.

Job 8:22 They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame; and the dwellingplace of the wicked shall come to nought.

Bildad was saying, “If you had been faithful to God instead of just expressing distress and being mournful—a display that is disgusting us—you would be laughing and joyous.” What cruel words to cast at Job! He was undergoing a traumatic, emotional experience.

Our purpose is to extract *overall lessons* from the Book of Job. The semantics of the three supposed comforters and of Job in trying to combat their line of reasoning are one thing, but the overall lessons and experiences are more important. The *theme* should not be lost in pursuing detail.

Job began to reply to the reasoning of Bildad.

Job 9:1 Then Job answered and said,

Job 9:2 I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God?

Job 9:3 If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand.

“I know it is so of a truth.” In each case, Job admitted that the three possessed logic, but they were misjudging the situation. Not only did they lack the right disposition of heart, but they did not properly apply knowledge to his experience. If they could have told Job where his fault lay, what the wrong was, then all they were saying would have been right. They did not know the facts, yet they gave all kinds of advice. It would be like trying to present a sermon on principles without understanding them.

“How should man be just with God?” Job was not talking to God but to his own soul or emotion. When he questioned things that were happening, it was like the way we question things in our minds. We try to search out the meaning of an experience or trial we are going through. If Job were to audibly pray to God in front of the three, as they had suggested, then for everything that he might use to justify himself, the Lord might find 999 things against him. If he had only one fragment of truth to offer before Almighty God, he would be overwhelmed because God was too inscrutable to be reasoned with. Job was questioning *himself* inwardly, not God.

Job 9:4 He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?

Job 9:5 Which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his anger.

Job 9:6 Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble.

Job 9:7 Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars.

Job 9:8 Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea.

Job 9:9 Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south.

Job 9:10 Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number.

Job 9:11 Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not.

Job continued, “God moves mountains with earthquakes. Man does not see Him doing this, but the effects of His *great power* are seen. God, who originally made the heavens, can stop the sun and hide the stars. Why, He could go right by me, and I would not even know it.”

Job 9:12 Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou?

Job 9:13 If God will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him.

Job 9:14 How much less shall I answer him, and choose out my words to reason with him?

Job 9:15 Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my judge.

Job 9:16 If I had called, and he had answered me; yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice.

Job 9:17 For he breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause.

Job 9:18 He will not suffer me to take my breath, but filleth me with bitterness.

Job 9:19 If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong; and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead?

Job 9:20 If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.

Job 9:21 Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life.

Job was saying, “I do not question my own integrity, but even if I were perfect (which I am not), I still am only mortal man. I am no match for my God.” Job humbly recognized that he was of the dust.

Job 9:22 This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.

Job 9:23 If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent.

Job 9:24 The earth is given into the hand of the wicked: he covereth the faces of the judges thereof; if not, where, and who is he?

Job 9:25 Now my days are swifter than a post: they flee away, they see no good.

Job 9:26 They are passed away as the swift ships: as the eagle that hasteth to the prey.

Job 9:27 If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself:

Job 9:28 I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent.

In other words, if Job tried to justify himself, God could always find fault with him—but not with his heart intentions. His sincere desire was to serve God, even though he might fall on certain occasions. God could find fault with anyone in regard to infractions due to infirmities and weaknesses of the flesh, but intentional or purposed disobedience was another matter.

Job 9:29 If I be wicked, why then labour I in vain?

“If I were a wicked person, why did I try to serve my God, and why did I help and comfort other people, distribute my goods and benefactions, and witness on His behalf? Now that I am in this travail, did I labor in vain back there?” Job did not understand why he was having these afflictions. In searching his past, he could see that he had tried to serve his God.

Job 9:30 If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean;

Job 9:31 Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.

Job 9:32 For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment.

“For God is not a man that I should reason with Him.” A man is no match for God.

Job 9:33 Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.

“Neither is there any daysman between us.” If Job could communicate his grief and sorrow to another individual who would act as intermediary and take his case to God, then he would plead his cause. Jesus is the “daysman,” the “dayspring from on high” (Luke 1:78).

Job 9:34 Let him take his rod away from me, and let not his fear terrify me:

Job 9:35 Then would I speak, and not fear him; but it is not so with me.

Job was saying that if the trouble were removed from him, then perhaps he could reason and speak about why he had had the experience and what he had gone through—but not during the affliction. Under the present circumstance, he was in no condition to give a sermon, and he did not understand the reasons. But perhaps later, when the rod was removed, he could look back and trace God’s leadings. That was a wise remark, for the reasons for a trial are sometimes seen *afterward*. “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless *afterward* it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (Heb. 12:11). Of course the “*afterward*” may occur beyond the veil, for a severe experience may take the Christian’s life. This was even true with Jesus. “[*Afterward*] he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied” (Isa. 53:11). Jesus’ experience was so severe that he could not fully understand it in his grief and suffering, but when he was raised from death and in a more peaceful atmosphere, he could look back and see the philosophy of *why* certain things had to happen.

In answering Bildad, Job stated that he had not contacted God direct and tried to justify his

cause because he felt there was some reason for his experience, even though he could not understand it. He respected the majesty and power of God. Job said that God does mysterious things—things past finding out—as observed in nature. In verse 11, for example, Job said, “God can go right by me, and I do not see Him because He is a spirit being. How could I present my cause before the GREAT GOD? How could I choose my words? And even though I feel that I am righteous, I am still reluctant to discuss this matter with Him direct.”

In verse 20, Job said, “If I attempt to justify myself, my own mouth would condemn me.” In verse 22, he summed up, “But this one thing I do observe: that even in the present world, destruction comes upon both the perfect and the imperfect. The good and the bad all die.” The three felt that Job had sinned in order to have such calamities come upon him. One said, “Perhaps your children committed iniquity. Perhaps you did not pray enough.” Yet Job had prayed daily for his children and offered sacrifice for each of them. Therefore, Job did not think sin was the cause of his affliction. He concluded, “Do you not see that in nature, trouble comes on all alike? Man is born for trouble.”

Job is often misunderstood. Many of his statements seem to be criticizing God, but he was not. Here is the problem. In many of the prophetic books of the Old Testament, four different people were speaking in one or two verses without any introduction as to which one was actually speaking. The Second Psalm is a good example where the speaker switches from God to Jesus. Now in this book, when Job answered his comforters and their reasoning, we must remember that he was answering *them*, and not God. When he made certain statements, it sounded as if he was talking direct to God, but he was not—and he even said he would not do this. He was thinking out loud and presenting his case in the first person. Sometimes he even turned to the one who had been criticizing him and addressed him without any change indicated in the context. That is what causes the confusion. It seems as if he was saying one thing, whereas he was actually saying the opposite.

Job 10:1 My soul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.

Job 10:2 I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; show me wherefore thou contendest with me.

Job did not know why God was punishing him, for he did not understand the philosophy of the permission of evil. And that is what the Book of Job is about: *the permission of evil*. Job represents the Church, and even the consecrated do not know why they have certain trials and experiences. Christians often ask, “Have I done something wrong? Have I displeased the Lord?” Perhaps the purpose of a trial is just to discipline them for a future office so that they will be hardened, matured, and educated, through experience, to know how to deal with certain problems in the Kingdom. Of course it is true that a trial may be the result of a fault, so we are instructed to examine ourselves to see if in any way our words and/or actions have been amiss, but sudden and peculiar—sometimes *very peculiar*—experiences come upon us where we have great difficulty tracing God’s hand.

During the Harvest period, we have been enlightened with the philosophy of the permission of evil, but the Harvest is just a small portion of the Gospel Age. With the mere fragments of Scripture that many Christians had down through the age, there was not the understanding we are privileged to have now. Therefore, Job’s experience is the *general experience of the Church*. The fact the three “comforters” (critics) were companions of Job suggests they represent professing Christians with a similar background—neighbors or friends—who likewise cannot understand God’s dealings with the consecrated. Job was *highly favored* of the Lord, but the comforters interpreted his experiences as signs of *disfavor*. Similarly Jesus’ death on the Cross was a proof to the majority that he was in *disfavor* with God because “cursed is every one that

hangeth on a tree” (Gal. 3:13). If many can look at a *perfect* man and still misjudge him, how much more would they misjudge an *imperfect* man! Thus the three comforters represent the line of reasoning frequently used by others to criticize those who are at heart trying to serve and please the Lord.

Job 10:3 Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress, that thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands, and shine upon the counsel of the wicked?

Job was not having a direct confrontation with God. Rather, he was thinking out loud, so that the others could share his thinking. He was perplexed. God’s past dealings with him had been favorable, for God had worked in him prior to his affliction. Job was “the work” of God’s hands in that he was a judge; he was able to comfort others because of God’s instruction. But now the three critics, in their arguments and reasoning, seemed to be having God’s favor. God’s favor seemed to be shining “upon the counsel of the wicked.” Job was talking about the three men, not about the world, for he knew their backgrounds, as will be shown later on in the book. He had enough trouble with his own afflictions without stopping them in their tracks by exposing their problems. Here in verse 3, he was just thinking that the three were ostensibly being favored.

Job 10:4 Hast thou eyes of flesh? or seest thou as man seeth?

Job 10:5 Are thy days as the days of man? are thy years as man’s days,

All translators feel that Job is questioning God in these verses, but that is not the case for several reasons. One reason is that in the Hebrew, the wording in a question and a statement is often alike, so that one would not know, except by the context, which was intended. And sometimes it is impossible to know even from the context. An illustration would be when James and John wanted to sit on Jesus’ right and left hand in the Kingdom. (Although this was Greek, the principle would be the same.) Jesus replied, “Ye are able?” Later he said, “Ye are able.” Both would be literally stated the same way—the difference would be in the *intonation*. “Ye are able” can be both a statement and a question, the latter being, “Ye are *able?*”

Thus those who were listening to Job’s reasoning could tell the difference. For this reason and because of the limitation of their vocabulary, Jews, Arabs, and others often talk with their hands to show what they are trying to say, lest they be misunderstood.

Job was first musing that God seemed to be favoring the counsel of the wicked. Then he turned to them and said, “You have eyes of flesh. You are seeing me in my circumstance, but you cannot read my heart. You do not fully comprehend. You see as man sees, not as God sees. Your days are numbered as a man. A man is temporary, mortal; he is not in the same category as God.”

Job 10:6 That thou inquirest after mine iniquity, and searchest after my sin?

The three were trying to find out from Job what secret sin he had committed that caused these calamities to come upon him. They were searching diligently after his sin.

Job 10:7 Thou knowest that I am not wicked; and there is none that can deliver out of thine hand.

Now Job addressed God: “You know that I am not wicked, and there are none who can deliver out of your hand.” Frequently Job was musing *about* God and talking *to* the three comforters, and then he would revert back and address God. To properly understand Job’s character, we must understand this concept.

Job 10:8 Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me.

Job said that God's hand had fashioned him, not only with regard to his physical frame in the womb but spiritually speaking too. But he could not understand his afflictions: "yet thou dost destroy me." In other words, "You began this wonderful work in me, but now I am being destroyed."

Job 10:9 Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again?

Elsewhere in the book, Job said he knew that a man is made of clay and that he would return to the dust, but here he was asking, "Is this the case now? I was made of clay. Am I now going back into the dust whence I arose?"

Job 10:10 Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese?

Job was saying, "My shame is manifest to everyone, particularly these three. I am exposed and poured out and curdled as milk and like cheese."

Job 10:11 Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews.

Job 10:12 Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.

Job 10:13 And these things hast thou hid in thine heart: I know that this is with thee.

Job 10:14 If I sin, then thou markest me, and thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity.

Job 10:15 If I be wicked, woe unto me; and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head. I am full of confusion; therefore see thou mine affliction;

Job was "full of confusion" because of not understanding the permission of evil. "Therefore see thou mine affliction." Job was formed and fashioned as a man with noble stature. He was respected and was a comforter to others, and he recognized these qualities and abilities were the Lord's doing. But now the tables were turned, and he was reduced, as it were, to skin and bones. It seemed as if God was *defashioning* him. It was like a reverse process, and he could not understand, even though he searched his heart. He knew he was not perfect, but his heart intentions were.

"If I be wicked, woe unto me." He did not think he had been wicked. "And if I be righteous" should be "And I be righteous." The supplied "if" should be omitted.

Job 10:16 For it increaseth. Thou huntest me as a fierce lion: and again thou showest thyself marvellous upon me.

He was having a double experience—of first being wonderfully blessed by the Lord and then being severely afflicted. Of course God did not cause the affliction direct but was *allowing* Satan to reverse the process and to take away from Job everything that the Lord had previously given him. God *permitted* this in order to show the *true mettle of Job's character*. Satan was trying to get Job to curse God, but God knew that would not happen.

Job 10:17 Thou renewest thy witnesses against me, and increasest thine indignation upon me;

changes and war are against me.

Not only did Job experience the loss of family, goods, and health, but these three “comforters” were compounding his misery. Multiple witnesses (the three comforters) were taking advantage of his low circumstance.

Job 10:18 Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? Oh that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me!

Job 10:19 I should have been as though I had not been; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave.

Job would have preferred the grave to this particular experience.

Job 10:20 Are not my days few? cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little,

Job 10:21 Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death;

Job 10:22 A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.

Verses 20-22 are another change. Job again addressed his comforters. He was next to death—his days were numbered—and they were pushing him into the grave. They showed no mercy to a dying man. “Isn’t what I am suffering enough? Why do you have to, in addition, find fault with me? Let me have some peace before I go into the tomb of darkness.”

Earlier portions of Job demonstrate that “let me alone” is a diversion of thought. In Job 4:13-17, Eliphaz was trying to show Job that his attitude of wondering why God had afflicted him was completely wrong. The dream that Eliphaz had related was an attempt to put the fear of God into Job. Job answered Eliphaz, “Then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions” (Job 7:14). Job was not saying that God was scaring him with dreams, but was addressing Eliphaz. He was responding to what Eliphaz had said earlier. “Why do you scare me with these dreams?” In Job 7:18, Job said, “And that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?” Day after day, these three sat by his side as inquisitors. “How long wilt thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?” (Job 7:19). “Swallow down my spittle” referred to the death rattle; it would mean death. In Job 7:20, he said, “I have sinned.” But all along, Job had been stating that he had *not* sinned. The thought is, “Say that you are right. Suppose that I have sinned.” Job was clearly talking to the three comforters, not to God. “What shall I do now, O thou preserver of men?” Job was being sarcastic to Eliphaz the Temanite, who was supposed to be comforting him. “You are so solicitous for my soul and my welfare, yet look at what you are doing to me. Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself?” In other words, “Why don’t you pardon me, and at least give me a little comfort by being merciful to me?” Job wanted to die in peace. “So say I have sinned. Be merciful and leave me alone.”

Therefore, based on these other examples, Job was talking to his comforters, not to God, when he said, “Let me alone,” in Job 10:20. They were badgering him.

The third comforter, Zophar, started to speak.

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

Job 11:2 Should not the multitude of words be answered? and should a man full of talk be

justified?

Zophar said, “Job, you are a bag of wind. You try to justify yourself with a multitude of words, but your words are confusion. Your many words should be answered.”

Job 11:3 Should thy lies make men hold their peace? and when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed?

In answering Eliphaz, Job had been a little sarcastic in one verse. Now Zophar said, “Do you think you can keep us quiet with the multitude of your words and your mocking? Should it not be the other way around? Should you not be ashamed at our reasoning against you? Do you think that by your repeated declarations of innocence, you can pull the wool over our eyes without a rebuttal? Do you think we will listen to your great multitude of words without saying anything?”

Job 11:4 For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes.

Job 11:5 But oh that God would speak, and open his lips against thee;

Job 11:6 And that he would show thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is! Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.

In other words, “Oh, if only God could speak! Then you would see what He thinks about the matter. Even though you are in a miserable state, you deserve to suffer double [twice as much]. God exacts much less from you than your sins deserve.” The arguments of Zophar were the same as those of Bildad: “How long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind? If you would seek the Almighty and make supplication to Him, things might be different” (Job 8:2,5,6).

Job 11:7 Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?

Job 11:8 It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?

Job 11:9 The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.

Zophar was criticizing Job. All the words in verses 7-9 are true, but Zophar was finding fault with Job, who had a tremendous amount of wisdom. God revealed to Job things about science and nature that were far over the heads of his comforters. In his previous remarks, Job had mentioned something about the stars, but they thought he was talking nonsense and imagining things pertaining to God. This line of faultfinding will be repeated later because the three comforters became very critical about Job’s knowledge of the heavens, science, etc.

Job 11:10 If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him?

Job 11:11 For he knoweth vain men: he seeth wickedness also; will he not then consider it?

Zophar was saying that Job was a vain man. “God is so great and broad. Can anyone really understand Him? Do you not see what God is doing to you? And yet you still say that your doctrine is pure, and you are still trying to justify yourself. God knows vain men [the three thought Job was a vain man]. God sees the wickedness in you, Job.” Zophar’s object lesson was for Job’s benefit.

Job 11:12 For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass’s colt.

Zophar continued, “Job, you are like a wild ass’s colt [you do not know what you are talking about]. You are a real youngster as far as the things of God are concerned.”

In summarizing verses 7-12, Zophar was saying, “Job, do you expect God to come down from on high, from His lofty position of power, to answer your petition—the petition of a vain, sinful, wild, and asinine man? Not only are you vain and sinful and speaking empty words, but your wild statements in trying to justify yourself as innocent are like the braying of a jackass. The nature of your statements is asinine when God’s very silence toward you is, by inference, an implication of your guilt.” Job’s restored and increased blessings at the end of the book would be a great surprise to the three tormentors.

Job 11:13 If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him;

Job 11:14 If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles.

Wickedness was being imputed to Job. The word “if” in verse 14 means “since.” The three believed Job had sinned and felt he should confess.

Job 11:15 For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear:

“For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot.” In other words, “If you confess your sin, then you can lift up your face and the Lord’s favor will be on you.”

“Yea, thou ... shalt not fear.” Job had been expressing fear as to the reason for his afflictions. Zophar was criticizing Job’s moaning and groaning and lack of understanding, and saying, “Don’t you realize that God is punishing you? Why, you would not fear *anything* if you were as righteous as you declare yourself to be! Those who are without spot are bold and courageous. Nothing makes them fearful.”

Job 11:16 Because thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away:

What a foolish statement! Zophar said Job should *forget* his sufferings *in the midst* of the severe experience itself. Afterwards that would be possible, but how could Job forget when he was in pain from head to foot? A Christian who is seriously afflicted with pain and disease has difficulty even uttering an intelligent prayer with proper decorum. The mind is confused in such a circumstance. But Zophar was saying, “You would not be in this situation unless you had sinned.”

Job 11:17 And thine age shall be clearer than the noonday; thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning.

“Job, if you would confess your sin and forget your sufferings, these blessings would be your lot.” To the shame of the three comforters, the conditions in verse 17 did become Job’s circumstance later on—but not while he was *going through* the tribulation. Later God’s favor again shone on Job—and in a double fashion.

Job 11:18 And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope; yea, thou shalt dig about thee, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety.

Job 11:19 Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid; yea, many shall make suit unto thee.

“Many shall make suit unto thee.” Zophar was saying that many would come to Job with their problems if Job would get right with God. (That is what Job had done *prior* to his affliction when he had sat as a judge, comforting others.) The comforters had said to Job earlier, “You who comforted others cannot even comfort yourself!” Taunters spoke similarly to Jesus on the Cross: “You healed others. Come down from the Cross and heal yourself.”

A summary of verses 13-19: “Job, if you earnestly pray to God and confess your guilt and mend your ways, then your sufferings can be reversed, and you can return to God’s favor. You must confess your wrongdoing, and then you will cease to be afflicted.”

Job 11:20 But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.

“But the wicked will not escape, and their hope will shrivel up.” Zophar felt that Job would be strong and bold and would not talk about his illness if he were in favor with God. Zophar was judging matters according to the Law—that obedience brought health, prosperity, etc.—but God was not dealing with Job according to the Law. Not only did Job live prior to the Law, but he pictured the Church in these experiences.

“Job, if you continue on in your wickedness and do not heed my counsel, then your hope of salvation will be about as solid as the giving up of a belch of wind. That is how solid your hope is under your present condition because you have not really prayed earnestly to God and confessed your guilt. Not only is your salvation like a belch of wind, but your destiny is hopeless.” Note: The “giving up of the ghost” does not mean “dying” here.

Job 12:1 And Job answered and said,

Job 12:2 No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you.

Job began his reply to Zophar with sarcasm. “No doubt *you* are the class of people you are accusing *me* of being. Your wisdom and reasoning will perish with you.”

Job 12:3 But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these?

“But I have understanding as well as you.” In other words, “You are not talking to a nincompoop. I am a man of knowledge. You address me on things that are easy to understand. Do you not realize that *I* have some understanding?” Job was trying to show that their type of criticism was at such a low level that it implied he did not know anything. And it is a fact that many who do not understand the Bible will quote Scripture to try to ridicule a Christian.

In verses 1-3, Job said to Zophar, “What you have just said aptly applies to *you*, my comforters, rather than to me. I am equally aware of how God operates: of what He can do, of what He will not do, and of how He will treat the wicked. Your advice does not fit my circumstance.”

Job 12:4 I am as one mocked of his neighbour, who calleth upon God, and he answereth him: the just upright man is laughed to scorn.

Notice that in all his experiences, Job did not let loose one iota on his integrity. Faith should be an anchor to the soul. A *Manna* comment says that letting go of the anchor of faith—even for a moment—puts the Christian in great jeopardy. The anchor of faith was all that was sustaining Job.

Job 12:5 He that is ready to slip with his feet is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease.

In beholding Job in this pitiful state, men would consider him an unpleasant sight. We may know a person who is strong, good-looking, and wise, but when that person is on his deathbed (perhaps with senility), there is a drastic change. It is almost as if we are looking at a cadaver. *We should not judge that person's life by what we see of him at the end.* Many of the Little Flock die in shame and ignominy.

In verses 4 and 5, more was implied than just the mere statements. Evidently, the three comforters accompanied their statements with facial expressions and genuflections. Job continued, "You mock, you smirk and grin, and you feel that God answers your prayers but not mine, yet I am upright. I am innocent." Job's grit was apparent here. He refused to be beaten down because *he knew he was innocent* and he was completely unaware of anything he could have done to justify his experience. "In your self-confidence and conceit, you view my case with a prejudiced eye—plus the fact you are not suffering and in misery as I am. You find it easy to criticize and regard my reasoning as a flickering candle."

Job 12:6 The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly.

It was easy for the three comforters, who were not in agony and distress, to judge Job with contempt for his misfortune. To a casual observer, the three would seem to be correct in their criticism of Job.

The gist of verse 6 is, "You reason that the ways of a righteous man are pleasant and that the ways of a wicked man are troublesome." Under the Law, it was true that when the Israelites were obedient, they prospered in many avenues of life, and when they did evil, calamities came upon them. But the Book of Job was written *before the Law*, and since Gentile nations have never been under the Jewish Law, Job's type of advice is applicable to all but the Jew. "You reason that the ways of the good bring reward and the ways of the evil bring a corresponding reward of trouble. Is not this reasoning really a fallacy? Is it not apparent all around us, in many instances, that the tabernacles of robbers and the wicked actually prosper in the present life?"

What is interesting is that someone with a prejudiced, jaundiced viewpoint who wants to find fault with another—no matter who the person is, even Jesus Christ himself—will do so. This means that when any errant behavior occurs, we must carefully search our hearts to make sure that any criticism is in strict accordance with the Word of God, and not in accordance with our fallen human nature.

Job 12:7 But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee:

From verse 7 through the end of chapter 12, Job soliloquized, starting with the animal creation.

Job 12:8 Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.

Job 12:9 Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this?

Job 12:10 In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.

Job 12:11 Doth not the ear try words? and the mouth taste his meat?

Job 12:12 With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding.

Job 12:13 With him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding.

Verses 11-13 are a key part of the chapter. In these verses, Job said, “The one who analyzes matters and is of a discriminating mind discerns that the judgments we see in the earth, both favorable and unfavorable, come upon both the good and the bad.” In other words, the judgments are mixed, and we call these mixed judgments an “act of God.” Many insurance policies do not cover events or circumstances that are considered “acts of God” (catastrophic happenings that are not due to anyone’s fault but are acts of providence).

Job 12:14 Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again: he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening.

Job 12:15 Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up: also he sendeth them out, and they overturn [flood] the earth.

Job 12:16 With him is strength and wisdom: the deceived and the deceiver are his.

Job 12:17 He leadeth counsellors away spoiled, and maketh the judges fools.

Job 12:18 He looseth the bond of kings, and girdeth their loins with a girdle.

Job 12:19 He leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty.

Job 12:20 He removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged.

Job 12:21 He poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty.

Job 12:22 He discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death.

Job 12:23 He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again.

Job 12:24 He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way [out].

Job 12:25 They grope in the dark without light, and he maketh them to stagger like a drunken man.

From verse 7 through verse 25, Job was saying that the breath of all things in nature is in God’s hand—the animal creation and the human creation, the mighty and the weak, the deceiver and the deceived. From one standpoint, the life of all who have breath in their nostrils is from God. In witnessing the life each has, we see, in both nature and man, that there are obvious imperfections and aberrations, as well as good points. The good, the bad, and the indifferent are manifest in both the animal and the human creation.

Put in other words, Job’s thoughts in verses 7-25 were as follows: “Do we not observe mixed judgments in nature itself—in God’s animal and physical creation? The good and the evil come upon all ... just as God’s sun (favor) shines on the good and the evil alike. Therefore, we cannot necessarily judge a person’s character by a hasty appraisal of outward evidences of either

affliction or prosperity.” Job was building a case for the reasoning he would pursue a little later.

Chapter 13 is an artificial break and should just continue on as part of Job’s remarks in chapter 12.

Job 13:1 Lo, mine eye hath seen all this, mine ear hath heard and understood it.

In his lifetime, Job had observed nature with its complexity, and he had observed man’s aberrant behavior.

Job 13:2 What ye know, the same do I know also: I am not inferior unto you.

Job now returned to reasoning used earlier with the three comforters (Job 12:3), where he said he was not inferior to them. Job 12:7–13:1 was laying the groundwork to show he was a man of understanding and able to philosophize.

In verses 1 and 2, Job said, “I have gained considerable knowledge by viewing matters in the light that I just mentioned, that is, with a *discriminating* mind and not by jumping to hasty conclusions. I am not inferior to you three in my reasoning.” Job would not allow himself to be browbeaten. If a person were in front of a council of “wise” men, their browbeating could unnerve and cause fear in that person—even in a person with a discriminating mind. But to his credit, Job was standing staunch in saying that in searching his heart, he could find no justification for his calamities. (Of course, although Job did not know it, he was being tested to prove how *good* he was, rather than being punished.) Neither Job nor his comforters could explain the reason for his calamities.

Job 13:3 Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God.

Job was saying, “There is nothing wrong in reasoning with God.” To reason with God is much different than *accusing* Him. Job was trying to understand his dilemma. In his confused state, he was musing out loud, not directly accusing. It was a vastly different matter for Job to be honest and open in his thinking, and to direct a thought to God as a question in regard to His dealings with him. Stated another way, “If it were possible, I would like to reason with God, and this is not really a sinful thing to do.”

Job 13:4 But ye are forgers of lies, ye are all physicians of no value.

The three comforters had been acting as lawyers and physicians with regard to Job’s sufferings. Job said to them, “In setting yourselves up as God’s lawyers, you are manipulating your imaginations. You are trying to act like God’s lawyers, and at the same time, you are pretending to be my doctors. Actually, in both cases, you are misusing the office: as lawyers before God, you are forging lies in your reasoning with me, and as physicians, you are of no value.”

Job 13:5 O that ye would altogether hold your peace! and it should be your wisdom.

Job was more or less telling the three comforters that it would be better for them to keep quiet than to utter things they did not know. Withholding their statements would show wisdom. In verses 4 and 5, Job was saying, “But you, my physician friends, have completely misdiagnosed my affliction. It would be altogether wiser if you would just withhold your advice.”

Incidentally, the territory in which Job resided was known for wisdom. Therefore, whether the wisdom was right or wrong, the type of language used and the way the thoughts were couched are difficult for us to fully comprehend.

Job 13:6 Hear now my reasoning, and hearken to the pleadings of my lips.

Job began to plead his cause again.

Job 13:7 Will ye speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for him?

“Do you presume to be God’s lawyer, yet you speak untruths? You are speaking lies for God about me.”

Job 13:8 Will ye accept his person? will ye contend for God?

“What right do you have to presume to plead God’s case against me?”

In verses 6-8, Job said, “Now hear my reasoning. Instead of your acting as God’s lawyers, let me plead my own defense.”

Job 13:9 Is it good that he should search you out? or as one man mocketh another, do ye so mock him?

Job said, “Since you falsely judge my motives, might you not be doing the same with regard to God’s motives?”

Job 13:10 He will surely reprove you, if ye do secretly accept persons.

Job 13:11 Shall not his excellency make you afraid? and his dread fall upon you?

“If your judgment of others is according to personality, if you favor others not based on the Word or mind of God or on what He thinks of that individual, if you favor persons according to how they impress you and not upon truth—if you do these things rather than to judge according to God’s *true* judgment, are you not afraid to act in God’s stead?”

The reasoning of the three comforters in regard to Job was pure imagination, and they brought God into their criticism to justify that criticism. They were judging according to *their own* impressions of Job, who, being a sick man in deplorable condition, no longer looked like an upright, just, steadfast man of God. Job asked, “Are you not afraid to bring God into the type of judgment you are making?”

Job 13:12 Your remembrances are like unto ashes, your bodies to bodies of clay.

Job’s reasoning was as follows: “What you are doing is like the clay judging the potter’s workmanship.” The three comforters, the “clay,” were judging God’s workmanship in Job, rather than the other way around. The potter made the clay, not the clay the potter.

In verses 9-12, Job said, “In appointing yourselves as God’s representatives—as His prosecuting attorneys—are you not a little fearful of butting in? Cannot God judge this matter Himself without mortal man, *a mere lump of clay*, intervening on His behalf and actually impeding the meting out of true justice?”

Job 13:13 Hold your peace, let me alone, that I may speak, and let come on me what will.

Again Job said to the three, “Hold your peace; leave me alone! Let me present my own case.”

Job 13:14 Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in mine hand?

“Since it is my own life that is at stake, I am willing to die with my own conviction. I am willing to die thinking I have not done wrong.”

Job 13:15 **Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.**

“Even if God were to slay me, yet would I trust Him. Moreover, I do not doubt in the least that ultimately, in maintaining my integrity, I will be acquitted and vindicated.”

Job 13:16 **He also shall be my salvation: for an hypocrite shall not come before him.**

“Since I am not a hypocrite in stating my case, God will vindicate me. What I am saying is the truth. Therefore, the God of truth will vindicate me.”

Job 13:17 **Hear diligently my speech, and my declaration with your ears.**

“Hear now my case.” This verse ties in with verse 6, “Hear now my reasoning, and hearken to the pleadings of my lips.”

Before going directly into the case, beginning with verse 18, Job uttered verses 6-17 as a prologue.

Job 13:18 **Behold now, I have ordered my cause; I know that I shall be justified.**

“I have stated my case forthrightly, and I know that I will be justified.”

In verses 13-18, Job said, “I fully realize that in pleading my own case, I am taking my very life into my hands, yet I will plead my cause, fully convinced of my own innocence. True, I may not be successful in convincing you who act also as my jury, but should I die, and thus in your minds convince you of my guilt, yet somehow I will ultimately be exonerated by God, who is acting as my Judge and as my Deliverer.” Job was implying that should he die and the three comforters still be convinced of his guilt, then on the other side of death, God would somehow vindicate him. The principle Job was applying is similar to Abraham’s reasoning when he was preparing to offer up his son Isaac: “If God slays Isaac, yet will He raise up Isaac from the dead through the seed of promise.” Job was manifesting FAITH while being *fully* tested. Job is an example of the type of individual the Lord is especially looking for.

Job 13:19 **Who is he that will plead with me? for now, if I hold my tongue, I shall give up the ghost.**

“Who is going to plead my case? Certainly not you three. Therefore, I alone am left to plead my case. Should I not at least have the pleasure of stating my own case before I expire? I cannot go down into the grave without stating that I am not guilty. I would die even more quickly if I did not plead my case.” Job was summoning his strength to plead his cause. His dander was up with regard to how the three were badgering him.

In considering the three, Job was saying, “Who else is around to plead my cause if I do not do it myself? No one else is sympathetic. Therefore, if I do not plead my own cause, for no one else will, I might as well give up altogether. Because I am convinced of my innocence, I will be my best pleader.”

Job 13:20 **Only do not two things unto me: then will I not hide myself from thee.**

Job 13:21 Withdraw thine hand far from me: and let not thy dread make me afraid.

Job was still talking to the three comforters. “Do not do two things unto me: (1) Do not allow my current calamity to cause you to cease being my friends. I cherish our past relationship prior to my sufferings. (2) Do not scare me with all your false philosophy.”

Job 13:22 Then call thou, and I will answer: or let me speak, and answer thou me.

“If you three would do these two things—if you would *really be my friends*, not my enemies, and if you would not imagine false reasonings against me—then, under those conditions, we could reason together, all of us. With this attitude, I would listen to you and you would listen to me. It is a two-way street. If you have this attitude, I will accept your type of reasoning, but your very attitude is wrong.”

In verses 20-22, Job said, “Only two things do I ask of you as the jury listening to my case. What are they? First, do not attempt to menace and threaten me. Drop your hostile attitude. Second, let us reason in good faith and with goodwill, one with another. Under these circumstances, I will listen and respond to your queries, or, if you prefer, I will confide in you—make known to you my problems—and listen to your admonition.” Their hostile, prejudiced viewpoint produced a climate that was not conducive to a constructive conclusion. “If you can change your attitude, I will reply differently.”

Job 13:23 How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin.

“If we can have this friendly relationship and reasoning attitude, then be specific and tell me where I have sinned.” If the three could not tell Job where he had sinned, then why accuse him of sin?

Job 13:24 Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?

“The very attitude that you manifest toward me is unfriendly.”

Job 13:25 Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro? and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?

“Here in my present sorrow and poor health, when I am nigh unto death, would you scrunch me?” A dry leaf is fragile and will crush easily. “Will you hound me? Will you pursue a dying man into the grave? Before this calamity, I was green, but now I am dry. I have lost my vitality. Why do you try to hasten this dry situation—like chasing dry stubble before the wind?”

Job 13:26 For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.

“You search my whole life history in an attempt to find some flaws. You are not even trying to sympathize with me.”

Job 13:27 Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks, and lookest narrowly unto all my paths; thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet.

It is important to keep in mind that Job was addressing *his comforters*, not God. Job was either musing or directly talking to them.

He continued, “You do not permit me to plead my cause. You restrict and harass me. You

scrutinize the finest detail in my past to find where I have sinned, and then, imagining that you did find a sin, you brand me as a criminal.” A criminal’s foot was branded in the stocks to mark him as a guilty person.

Job 13:28 And he, as a rotten thing, consumeth, as a garment that is motheaten.

“Last of all, you dispose of me like a worthless garment ready for the refuse heap.”

In summary, Job maintained his integrity *throughout* his experience, and the three comforters *consistently* tried to tear down his convictions about his past. They did not think he was speaking honestly the thoughts of his heart but felt he was twisting the facts. They believed he had sinned and that he merited the affliction. The purpose of this study is to set up principles of interpretation and try to get the feel of the circumstances.

Summary of verses 23-28: “Here is what I would like you to do instead of regarding me as an enemy. Please make known to me *in a specific manner* what my transgression, my sin, is. Why should you beat me up in my already weakened condition? Why do you tally up from an out-of-date list of grievances from the distant past in the early days of my immaturity?” The three could not find something immediate that Job had done wrong, so they searched way back in his life for something errant he might have done—but that was not relevant to Job now as an adult. “Indeed you persecute me, and you put me in stocks and bonds, as it were. You despise me as one riddled with guilt and shame. Why, you even despise the garment, feeling that you dare not touch it.”

Job continued to speak in chapter 14 and made certain statements the comforters should have observed in generality.

Job 14:1 Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.

Job 14:2 He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.

The first statement was about man’s frailty. Man’s frailty should be an uncontested truth—not only his brevity of life and the troubles that come upon him but also his sinful condition. All mankind are frail as the results of sin working in their members.

Job 14:3 And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee?

Job was asking, “Do you criticize fallen man by focusing attention on me? You single me out in a special sense and concentrate your criticism on me when imperfection exists all around you. If this is your attitude and you continue to pursue this course, then consider that you yourselves are members of Adam’s race and that you also stand in judgment with me. If you are looking for imperfection in me, can you not see that the entire human family is guilty and that you are in this as well?”

Job 14:4 Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.

In verse 4, Job reiterated what was previously said: “The whole human race is tainted with sin.”

Job 14:5 Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;

“Man’s days are like those of a condemned criminal; they are numbered by the death sentence

until the person dies. You, my criticizers, should know this, for it is everywhere apparent. This testimony is with you—and to such an extent that it is within man’s power to compute actuarial tables of life expectancy of both male and female.”

Job was talking to the three comforters, *not to God*, as is usually assumed. If he were talking to God, his words would put God in a very unfavorable light.

Job 14:6 Turn from him, that he may rest, till he shall accomplish, as an hireling, his day.

“Why do you not desist from troubling me and consider me as a man, as a fellow human being? Grant me this decency: let me die in peace.”

Job 14:7 For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.

Job 14:8 Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground;

Job 14:9 Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant.

In verses 7-9, Job called attention to the fact that there is some hope of life when a tree is cut down and the stump remains.

Job 14:10 But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?

“But with man, it is different. When a man dies, where is he? He is put in a coffin or just buried in the ground and eaten by worms. He soon dissolves, or decomposes, into the elements of earth, and nothing is left.”

Job 14:11 As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up:

Next Job used illustrations to show that man evaporates at death. “Just as a lake can dry up, so man evaporates at death and is no more.” Note: Job was *not* saying there is no resurrection, so this statement does not contradict other statements in the Book of Job.

Job 14:12 So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

Job was saying in verses 11 and 12a, “When I am gone, you, my comforters, will no longer be troubled with my presence, and I will be relieved of my sufferings.”

He continued in verse 12b, “When the heavens are changed at a future date, then the dead will be resuscitated.”

Job 14:13 O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!

Job 14:14 If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.

Job 14:15 Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.

The thought in verses 13-15 is as follows. Job, being so confident of his innocence, said that

when he died, although he would have to wait until the dispensational change occurred, he would then be brought into favor with God. Job was applying restitution promises to his circumstance.

Job 14:16 For now thou numberest my steps: dost thou not watch over my sin?

Job 14:17 My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity.

In verses 16 and 17, Job took a different tack. He realized that his days were numbered, that he was a member of the fallen race. He was *not* saying that he was without sin, but that he had not committed a sin to justify the unusual experience he was having. He realized that, as a member of Adam's race, he was a sinner.

The end of verse 16 should be a statement, not a question: "Thou dost not watch over my sin." The question form would imply God was cruel and ruthless in His dealing with Job, but Job was saying the opposite. He was not questioning God's close scrutiny of him. "Thou dost not watch over my sin. My transgression is covered." Today we would say that the robe of Christ's righteousness covers Adamic sin but not willful sin. Job realized he was a member of Adam's race—from that standpoint he was not innocent—but God was not faulting him for *willful* sin. Willful sin must be expiated, and therefore, if Job had committed willful sin, he would not be trying to proclaim his innocence, and he would understand that his sufferings were punishment.

Job 14:18 And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place.

Job 14:19 The waters wear the stones: thou washest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth; and thou destroyest the hope of man.

Job 14:20 Thou prevailest for ever against him, and he passeth: thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away.

Job 14:21 His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.

Job 14:22 But his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn.

Job was aware of change and decay all about him in both animate and inanimate nature. He could see change and decay in rocks, humans, earth's soil, animals, etc. Therefore, he himself could not expect to escape discomfort and pain while he was in the flesh—and neither could anyone else. Man is born for trouble and affliction. Job did not expect to be relieved of that which was common to man, but, considering his original circumstance of wealth, health, etc., his sudden affliction and losses were extraordinary. He did not understand his very pointed experiences, which were beyond that which commonly befalls man. But even though his sufferings were extreme and he could not rejoice while experiencing them, nevertheless, he would bear them. The principle was, "Though God slay me, yet will I trust him."

In order to get in the mood, or atmosphere, of the circumstances that surrounded Job, we must review certain things before proceeding. The Book of Job opened with an allegorical scene in heaven where Satan was criticizing Job and accrediting his righteousness to the Lord's heaping favors on him. To prove Satan's reasoning was wrong, God allowed Satan to test Job to the utmost but not to take his life. Everything was taken away from Job: children, cattle, goods, wealth, and health (he was afflicted from the top of his head to the soles of his feet with sores).

Three “comforters” came from their respective locales to commiserate with Job. First, they sat down in silence beside him for seven days. Finally, Job broke the silence and stated his case and how he felt in this trial and circumstance. Then the three comforters took turns trying to analyze the situation. All three discredited Job’s reasoning and accused him of sinning. Job felt that he had been just and upright before God and that he had tried to serve God to the best of his ability, but he could not explain or fully understand why the trial had come upon him.

Throughout all of the affliction, Job was a righteous man. The Lord criticized Job a little but did not find any real fault in him. He knew Job was trying to serve Him with his heart. Job’s trial was not due to disobedience. For these reasons and others, Job represents the Little Flock.

Each of the three in turn answered Job, and after each spoke, Job replied to the reasoning. When the second round occurred, the three again spoke in the same order. Evidently this decorum was based on mutual respect. And all four stated their cases without interruption.

The study of Job continues from the standpoint of the *overall theme*. This is a very important point to grasp in order to understand why Job replied as he did to his tormentors. The statements should be considered in context.

The Book of Job is difficult to explain, but if it is rightly understood, the character of Job is fully appreciated. After all, God named Job in a particular sense as being on His honor roll (Ezek. 14:14,20).

Of the three comforters—Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar—Eliphaz was the most honored and perhaps the oldest. The other two recognized his leadership and allowed him the first opportunity of replying to Job. Zophar was the last to reply (starting with chapter 11), and then, after Job’s answer, a second round of comments began.

The statements in the Book of Job were the statements of sages. In other words, they were not just frivolous talk. Because they were couched in the Eastern idiom, they can be difficult to understand and must be studied carefully.

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

In chapter 15, Eliphaz the Temanite again spoke, beginning the second round of comments.

Job 15:2 Should a wise man utter vain knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind?

Job 15:3 Should he reason with unprofitable talk? or with speeches wherewith he can do no good?

Eliphaz professed surprise that such empty talk and shallow reasoning should come forth from one who had a previous reputation for great wisdom. “Job, your reasoning is not relevant to the issue.”

Job 15:4 Yea, thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God.

Job 15:5 For thy mouth uttereth thine iniquity, and thou chooseth the tongue of the crafty.

Job 15:6 Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I: yea, thine own lips testify against thee.

In verses 4-6, Eliphaz said, “Job, instead of confessing your sins openly before God (and us), to the contrary, you continually have the nerve to justify yourself with cunning words.” He used

an expression identified with the snake in the Garden of Eden, namely, “the tongue of the crafty.” He accused Job of trying to justify himself with sophistry. “Job, your very utterances in pursuing this course betray that you are guilty.”

Job 15:7 Art thou the first man that was born? or wast thou made before the hills?

Job 15:8 Hast thou heard the secret of God? and dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself?

Job 15:9 What knowest thou, that we know not? what understandest thou, which is not in us?

Job 15:10 With us are both the grayheaded and very aged men, much elder than thy father.

Job 15:11 Are the consolations of God small with thee? is there any secret thing with thee?

Job 15:12 Why doth thine heart carry thee away? and what do thy eyes wink at,

In verses 7-12a, Eliphaz was asking, “Where does all your secret knowledge come from [about the condition of the dead, restitution, etc.]? What do you know that we do not know? Did you get the knowledge from your father? Well, he was not that old, and we have living relatives who are much older. Does God keep you secretly informed? You are carried away with your own importance and self-esteem.” Actually, Job did have secret information because he mentioned many things in this book that are almost superhuman. Therefore, he was instructed in a way the three were not aware of.

Job 15:13 That thou turnest thy spirit against God, and lettest such words go out of thy mouth?

In verses 12b and 13, Eliphaz was saying, “You stubbornly remain blind to your own faults. You wink at your own sin.” And misunderstanding what Job had previously said in Job 14:3, Eliphaz further accused, “Instead, by your attitude and reasoning, you find fault with God.”

Job 15:14 What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?

Job 15:15 Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.

In verses 14 and 15, Eliphaz asked, “What is this line of reasoning you presented about fallen man, saying that a clean thing cannot come out of an unclean thing? Such reasoning does not apply, for God does not even trust his holy angels. Even the pure heavens are unclean in God’s sight.”

Job 15:16 How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?

“How much more abominable is common, ordinary man to whom you liken yourself!” Job had asked the three to consider him as just a fellow human—to consider him from a humanitarian standpoint—if they could not understand his sufferings. Now Eliphaz took that remark and gave it an evil slant.

Job 15:17 I will show thee, hear me; and that which I have seen I will declare;

Job 15:18 Which wise men have told from their fathers, and have not hid it:

Job 15:19 Unto whom alone the earth was given, and no stranger passed among them.

In effect, Eliphaz was saying in verses 17-19, “Let me tell you, Job, what I have gained from life’s experiences, the wisdom I have obtained from my forefathers, who openly explained these matters to me. Their testimony was united—without a voice of dissent by some stranger or intruder in their midst. The unanimous opinion of my forefathers is the wisdom I have obtained, and what you are saying, Job, is not true.” And so, many try to counteract truth by quoting authorities in the nominal system or other scholars as absolute proof to justify their wisdom, which can be a false premise.

Job 15:20 The wicked man travaileth with pain all his days, and the number of years is hidden to the oppressor.

Job 15:21 A dreadful sound is in his ears: in prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him.

Job 15:22 He believeth not that he shall return out of darkness, and he is waited for of the sword.

Job 15:23 He wandereth abroad for bread, saying, Where is it? he knoweth that the day of darkness is ready at his hand.

Job 15:24 Trouble and anguish shall make him afraid; they shall prevail against him, as a king ready to the battle.

Job 15:25 For he stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty.

Job 15:26 He runneth upon him, even on his neck, upon the thick bosses of his bucklers:

Job 15:27 Because he covereth his face with his fatness, and maketh collops of fat on his flanks.

Job 15:28 And he dwelleth in desolate cities, and in houses which no man inhabiteth, which are ready to become heaps.

Job 15:29 He shall not be rich, neither shall his substance continue, neither shall he prolong the perfection thereof upon the earth.

Job 15:30 He shall not depart out of darkness; the flame shall dry up his branches, and by the breath of his mouth shall he go away.

The net effect of what Eliphaz said in verses 20-30 is that trouble and anguish come upon the wicked.

Job 15:31 Let not him that is deceived trust in vanity: for vanity shall be his recompence.

“Job, you are deceived, and let not the one who is deceived trust in his own vanity.”

Job 15:32 It shall be accomplished before his time, and his branch shall not be green.

“Before you die, while you are still in the present life, something even worse will happen.”

Job 15:33 He shall shake off his unripe grape as the vine, and shall cast off his flower as the olive.

Job 15:34 For the congregation of hypocrites shall be desolate, and fire shall consume the

tabernacles of bribery.

Now Eliphaz was making nasty remarks: “The prosperity, peace, and reputation you had before your affliction were obtained by *bribery* and cunning. That is how you got rich. You did not get rich lawfully but through bribery.”

Consider how Eliphaz’s attitude changed. In his first discourse (Job 4:2), Eliphaz very gently approached Job: “Can we commune with you without offending you? Do you mind if we make some remarks?” It is a fact of life that many people who are gentle can be very cruel in their remarks. Gentleness is considered an evidence of Christlikeness, and strong or hard words are regarded as being of the Adversary. But that may or may not be the case—*the circumstances must be weighed!*

In chapter 15, at the time of the second round of comments, Eliphaz dropped his mask. No longer did he approach Job gently—his remarks were cutting and strong.

Job 15:35 They conceive mischief, and bring forth vanity, and their belly prepareth deceit.

“The wicked conceive mischief and bring forth vanity, and their belly is prepared for deceit.” Eliphaz stated this as a generality, but he was applying the criticism to Job. “Schemers cleverly obtain their wealth through bribery. What is done wrong in secret comes forth as vain statements, which try to cloak the misdeeds. The wicked hunger for and desire illegitimate reward, and they use cunning deception to obtain that which they lust after.”

Job 16:1 Then Job answered and said,

Job answered Eliphaz the Temanite the second time.

Job 16:2 I have heard many such things: miserable comforters are ye all.

“Miserable comforters are all three of you!” The three were faultfinders, not comforters, even though their original intention was to comfort Job (2:11).

Job 16:3 Shall vain words have an end? or what emboldeneth thee that thou answerest?

Job continued to speak, “When will your vain words end?” In other words, all the previous comments of the three were not pertinent to Job’s situation. “What prompts you to continue to give me advice?”

Job 16:4 I also could speak as ye do: if your soul were in my soul’s stead, I could heap up words against you, and shake mine head at you.

“If our positions were reversed, if you were in my stead and I were in your stead, I could find plenty of fault and shake my head at you.” The implication is that whenever one of the three replied critically, the other two nodded their heads in agreement. It also implies that if Job answered one of them, all three disagreed by shaking their heads. In other words, there was animated agreement for their own speaking and animated disagreement for Job’s words; it was not just a philosophical discussion back and forth. Job was saying, “I could shake my head at you too.”

Job 16:5 But I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage your grief.

Job said, “Although I could take this type of recourse if the roles were reversed, I would not,

for I would comfort you.”

Job 16:6 Though I speak, my grief is not assuaged: and though I forbear, what am I eased?

“In any event, whether I speak in rebuttal to you or I do not speak, my situation does not change—I am still suffering.”

Job 16:7 But now he hath made me weary: thou hast made desolate all my company.

Most translations give the thought that God made Job weary, but the “he” refers to Eliphaz and the statements he had just made. With his response, Eliphaz wearied Job, and all three were desolate companions. It would have been better for Job if the three had not attempted to be comforters because they just wearied him.

Job 16:8 And thou hast filled me with wrinkles, which is a witness against me: and my leanness rising up in me beareth witness to my face.

Job’s afflictions were taking a toll in both his face and his body. Certainly he was not eating full meals during the seven days of silence and now during the comments back and forth. Every criticism added to his misery and discomfort.

Job 16:9 He teareth me in his wrath, who hateth me: he gnasheth upon me with his teeth; mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me.

Job was saying that Eliphaz, as well as the other two, were tearing him apart with their comments. In fact, they manifested their dislike of him in this experience.

Job 16:10 They have gaped upon me with their mouth; they have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully; they have gathered themselves together against me.

Job 16:11 God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked.

Job 16:12 I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder: he hath also taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for his mark.

Job 16:13 His archers compass me round about, he cleaveth my reins asunder, and doth not spare; he poureth out my gall upon the ground.

Job 16:14 He breaketh me with breach upon breach, he runneth upon me like a giant.

Verses 10-14 remind us of Jesus and his sufferings on the Cross (see Psalm 22). The “he” in verses 12-14 is a personification of the wicked, who compassed him about and treated him in this manner. Job’s experiences were real, but his life as a whole is an allegorical representation of the sufferings of *The Christ*, Head and body members.

Job 16:15 I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin, and defiled my horn in the dust.

Job was saying that in his depression, he did not have to sit in sackcloth and ashes because he was already figuratively clothed in them. In his sad condition, the very skin of his body was like burlap. He had sat in ashes in order to comfort the itching of his body, which would have felt somewhat like a severe case of poison ivy (Job 2:8). His disease could not have been boils in the usual sense of open, running sores because to scratch such boils would have just intensified the pain. Rather, he was experiencing a tremendous disturbing of his body and bloodstream

from head to foot. To try to alleviate the dreadful itch, he had disfigured it with ashes.

Job 16:16 My face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death;

Job's eyes reflected the agony of his suffering, weeping, and depression.

Job 16:17 Not for any injustice in mine hands: also my prayer is pure.

Job again declared his innocence. His affliction was not due to any injustice on his part, and his prayer was pure.

Job 16:18 O earth, cover not thou my blood, and let my cry have no place.

Job pleaded to God that the earth would not cover his blood and that his cry would "have no place." In other words, when all was said and done, Job wanted the memory of his experience to be perpetuated. Usually as time goes on after someone is buried in the grave, people forget about the individual. Job wanted the memory of his experience to benefit others and not be localized in one place. Job repeated this theme later on.

Job 16:19 Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high.

Job felt that the true story of his innocence was being recorded in heaven, no matter how it might be distorted in men's eyes down here. The book of record in heaven recorded the truth.

Job 16:20 My friends scorn me: but mine eye poureth out tears unto God.

"Mine eye poureth out tears unto God." These inward groanings of his spirit manifested themselves emotionally through the tears in his eyes. Stated another way, the teardrops of his eyes were like a groaning prayer to his God for help.

Job 16:21 O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbour!

Instead of the three comforting Job, they did the opposite. Job was saying, "Oh for someone who would represent me as a lawyer and defend me before God!" Incidentally, this is what happened later on when Elihu came on the scene. Elihu, a fourth personality, was more or less a mediator.

Thus God answered these requests of Job. (1) The memory of his experience was not hidden in one locality but was made known when the Book of Job became part of Holy Writ. (2) Elihu represented Job.

Job 16:22 When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return.

"When a few years are come ... I shall not return." As Job said elsewhere, he would not return from the grave until the old heavens passed away (until the new heavens and the new earth were established—the Kingdom). Lest one think Job did not expect to come forth from the grave, verse 22 must be considered with his other statements that affirm a resurrection. He was saying that he would be in the grave for years and years.

Job 17:1 My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me.

The fact that the word "graves" is in the plural suggests Job was not talking so much about the hole in the ground but about the *grave diggers*. "The grave diggers are ready for me." His ill health was ominous, and he did not expect to live much longer.

Job 17:2 Are there not mockers with me? and doth not mine eye continue in their provocation?

Mockers surrounded him, and he could see their continuing hostility.

Job 17:3 Lay down now, put me in a surety with thee; who is he that will strike hands with me?

Job was hoping that God would be a surety for him, because who else would clasp hands with him? There was no one else to sympathize with him and give comfort and strength to uphold him in his trial.

Job 17:4 For thou hast hid their heart from understanding: therefore shalt thou not exalt them.

Since God had blinded the eyes of understanding of the three supposed comforters, they would not ultimately triumph. In the final analysis, they would not be exalted.

Job 17:5 He that speaketh flattery to his friends, even the eyes of his children shall fail.

“He who betrays his friends, the eyes of his children will fail.” The children of one who betrayed his friends would be adversely affected.

Job 17:6 He hath made me also a byword of the people; and aforetime I was as a tabret.

The King James is confusing. It sounds as if at one time, Job had been like a song or a musical instrument, and now he was a byword of the people—an opposite experience. But if this verse is considered with following verses, the thought would be, “I have become, as it were, a byword among the people, and one to be spit upon in the face.”

Job 17:7 Mine eye also is dim by reason of sorrow, and all my members are as a shadow.

“My sad countenance and my weakened body condition, which is a mere shadow of its former self, seem to bear evidence that I am guilty.” If we judge a Christian by the trial he or she is having, sometimes an innocent person appears guilty.

Job 17:8 Upright men shall be astonied at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite.

Job 17:9 The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.

In verses 8 and 9, Job was saying, “Instead of the righteous element in society being discouraged because of what they see I am going through, they will be strengthened.” Many have observed in history that in times of great suffering, true Christianity *prospered*. During times of real persecution and suffering, true Christianity did not diminish but flourished. In such times, the Christian was forced to take a positive step, and once having done that, the instruments of the wicked just made him grow stronger. The Christian became determined to take a stand in opposition to the wrong. Thus Job was saying, “The righteous minority, instead of further diminishing on account of my plight, are appalled at my experience and become more determined than ever to brace themselves against the ungodly—and they will grow stronger by doing so.”

Job 17:10 But as for you all, do ye return, and come now: for I cannot find one wise man among you.

“But as for you three comforters, come now and try again.” However, it was really useless, because up to that point, none of the three had manifested any real understanding.

Job 17:11 My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart.

Job was saying, “My days are past, and my previous plans and desires have been completely shattered by the experience I am going through.”

Job 17:12 They change the night into day: the light is short because of darkness.

“Night, they say, makes room for day.” Sometimes a hard experience ends up with a good experience.

Job 17:13 If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness.

Job 17:14 I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister.

Job 17:15 And where is now my hope? as for my hope, who shall see it?

Job 17:16 They shall go down to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is in the dust.

“If my only future residence is the grave, if I make my bed in *sheol*, and if I say to the pit ‘My father’ and to the worm ‘My mother,’ where then would be my hope?” If that were the case, then hope would descend into the grave and be buried there, as well as the body of Job. We find out later that Job did not accept this premise.

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

Bildad, the second comforter, now replied the second time.

Job 18:2 How long will it be ere ye make an end of words? mark, and afterwards we will speak.

“How long will you continue to vex us and try to break us down with your words? Why are you so obstinate about giving in to us, your comforters, who are trying to show you what your true situation is? How long will you resist by saying you are innocent?”

Job 18:3 Wherefore are we counted as beasts, and reputed vile in your sight?

“Why are we counted as beasts?” Bildad was answering Job’s previous response of feeling he was being torn to pieces by Eliphaz and the counsel of the three as a whole. Job had likened them to brute beasts in their attack on him. “Why are we considered vile in your sight?” Contrary to many Bible commentators, Bildad realized that Job previously (16:9) was not finding fault with God but was implicating the comforters.

Job 18:4 He teareth himself in his anger: shall the earth be forsaken for thee? and shall the rock be removed out of his place?

Bildad said that Job was tearing himself apart by his reasoning. Previously Job had said, “O earth, cover not my blood, and let my cry not be confined to a place” (Job 16:18 paraphrase).

Bildad was now saying, “Job, you attach a great deal of importance to yourself. You want your experiences recorded for posterity. You want the earth to not cover your blood. Just who do you think you are?”

Job 18:5 Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine.

In earlier arguments, the three were prodding Job to confess his guilt, using statements like, “You must have done something wrong for these experiences to come upon you. Come on now, confess. What have you done wrong?” But now they were incensed and saying Job was the wicked one. The statement in verse 5, “The light of the wicked shall be put out,” was talking about Job. They were saying that Job was wicked and that he was trying to hide his guilt from God and from them.

Job 18:6 The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him.

Bildad said, “Job and his dwelling will be removed from earth’s scene and go into oblivion.”

Job 18:7 The steps of his strength shall be straitened, and his own counsel shall cast him down.

Job 18:8 For he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he walketh upon a snare.

Just as a person who is trying to evade something eventually puts his foot in his mouth, so Bildad was saying that Job would entangle himself with his own argument. In the final analysis, all of Job’s reasoning would be like a net that would confine, restrain, and eventually entrap him in his guilt.

Job 18:9 The gin shall take him by the heel, and the robber shall prevail against him.

Job 18:10 The snare is laid for him in the ground, and a trap for him in the way.

Job 18:11 Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall drive him to his feet.

Bildad claimed that Job would be continually confronted with mishaps until he went into the grave.

Job 18:12 His strength shall be hungerbitten, and destruction shall be ready at his side.

Other translations give the following thought: “Calamity is hungry for him; destruction is awaiting the least stumbling.”

Job 18:13 It shall devour the strength of his skin: even the firstborn of death shall devour his strength.

Job 18:14 His confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to the king of terrors.

Verse 14 tells what the three thought was Job’s problem. “Job, your problem all along has been your confidence in your innocence and your wisdom. That is why God afflicted you with a skin disease. Confidence in your innocence and your wisdom has been leading you step by step to the grave, to the king of terrors.”

Job 18:15 It shall dwell in his tabernacle, because it is none of his: brimstone shall be

scattered upon his habitation.

“Doom inhabits your dwelling, and brimstone will fall upon your habitation.”

Job 18:16 His roots shall be dried up beneath, and above shall his branch be cut off.

“Nothing of your substance will remain. Your roots will perish below the ground, and your works above the ground will be lopped off.” Jude 12 describes Second Death as being “twice dead, plucked up by the *roots*.”

Job 18:17 His remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no name in the street.

Here Bildad said that the remembrance of Job would perish and that his name would be forgotten by both the contemporary generation and future posterity. Of course Job’s experience turned out to be the opposite. How shame-faced the three would have been to see Job’s reversal with *twice* as many blessings!

Job 18:18 He shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world.

Prior to his affliction, Job was quite well known. Here Bildad told him, “You will be chased out of the limelight into oblivion.”

Job 18:19 He shall neither have son nor nephew among his people, nor any remaining in his dwellings.

“You will be bereft of any posterity unto the third generation.”

Job 18:20 They that come after him shall be astonished at his day, as they that went before were affrighted.

Here Bildad contradicted his own argument. He had said that Job would not be remembered or have a grave site when he died. But in verse 20, Bildad said that Job would be an example of the wicked for both current and future generations.

Job 18:21 Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of him that knoweth not God.

Bildad summed up his thinking: “Job, you are a wicked person, and you do not even know God.”

Many feel that the Book of Job is human philosophy and that it is not profitable to the new creature. But the fact that there are more than 40 chapters and that God has recorded these conversations between Job and his “comforters” and Elihu means that the book is of value. It is helpful to be aware of the wrong thinking and reasoning of those who criticized Job.

Job 19:1 Then Job answered and said,

Job answered Bildad in chapter 19.

Job 19:2 How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words?

“How long will you continue to vex me and tear me apart with your words?”

Job 19:3 These ten times have ye reproached me: ye are not ashamed that ye make yourselves strange to me.

“You have reproached me ten times. Are you not ashamed of your critical attitude? Do you not realize what you are doing?” Actually, as recorded, Job had been reproached only five times: (1) Eliphaz, (2) Bildad, (3) Zophar, (4) Eliphaz, and (5) Bildad. The mention of “ten times” indicates the conversations were longer than recorded—about twice as long. Stated another way, about half of the Book of Job was not preserved.

Job 19:4 And be it indeed that I have erred, mine error remaineth with myself.

This verse is important. When we find that we cannot get our point across in trying to rebut an argument, we sometimes take the stand of the person who opposes us and say, “Let us assume that what you say is correct.” That is what Job did here—he took the comforters’ side of the reasoning. “Let me assume that you are correct and that I have erred (although I have not).” Job was setting up a proposition that must be kept in mind when reading succeeding verses. *He was not confessing his guilt.*

Job 19:5 If indeed ye will magnify yourselves against me, and plead against me my reproach:

Job 19:6 Know now that God hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me with his net.

Job 19:7 Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but there is no judgment.

Job 19:8 He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths.

Job 19:9 He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head.

Job’s position in society had been well recognized as a judge, a wealthy person, and a man of moral, upright character. Now, in his sufferings, his position of esteem had degenerated into one of abhorrence in the sight of the people.

Job 19:10 He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone: and mine hope hath he removed [uprooted] like a tree.

Job 19:11 He hath also kindled his wrath against me, and he counteth me unto him as one of his enemies.

Job 19:12 His troops come together, and raise up their way against me, and encamp round about my tabernacle.

Job 19:13 He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me.

Job 19:14 My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me.

Verses 13 and 14 show that relatives, friends, and acquaintances all despised Job. They no longer wanted to know him or be seen in his presence.

Job 19:15 They that dwell in mine house, and my maids, count me for a stranger: I am an alien in their sight.

Even Job's household servants had turned away from him.

Job 19:16 I called my servant, and he gave me no answer; I entreated him with my mouth.

When Job called his personal servant, the servant pretended not to hear him. Job had to *beg* the servant to hearken to his request.

Job 19:17 My breath is strange to my wife, though I entreated for the children's sake of mine own body.

Because of Job's disease, his breath was affected with halitosis. Having lost his children, he wanted to have more, but he was offensive to his wife and she would not allow him to get close.

This tells us several things. For one thing, Job's calamities did not come in one day but in a gradual crescendo. The initial physical illness got worse and worse and worse until eventually the three heard about his sufferings and came to comfort him. They found him sitting down bemoaning his afflictions. There followed the seven days of silence and then the conversations. Therefore, the troubles enumerated in verses 5-20 all occurred to Job *before the comforters came to him*.

Job 19:18 Yea, young children despised me; I arose, and they spake against me.

Job continued, "Whenever I come into the presence of children, they ridicule me."

Job 19:19 All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me.

"All my close, intimate friends abhor me. Those whom I love have turned against me." This happened before the comforters had come. Job was telling the comforters what had previously happened to him.

Job 19:20 My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.

Nearly all that was left was Job's body frame, for he was bereft of almost everything of value in life.

Verses 5-20 lead up to the point expressed in verse 21.

Job 19:21 Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me.

"If what you say is true and God has done all these things to me, *then have pity on me*, my friends!" Twice Job said, "Have pity on me!" In other words, "Suppose what you are saying is true. Then can you not have any compassion on me in my afflictions? Look at the series of troubles I am experiencing." The "O ye my friends" was sarcastic. The three originally came as comforters but ended up being his vicious accusers.

Job 19:22 Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh?

"Are you not satisfied with the calamities that have already befallen me? Do you have to add to my affliction? Are you not satisfied with the judgments that have already been pronounced?"

Job 19:23 Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book!

Job desired that a book be written about his experiences, and this is exactly what happened. Incidentally, Solomon had this desire too, and both individuals have books. God answered Job's and Solomon's inward desires.

Job 19:24 That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!

Job wanted his words to be recorded on a cuneiform tablet, a more durable substance, and not on a perishable skin or parchment reed. In effect, this happened, for even though the Bible is paper, it is reprinted over and over.

Job 19:25 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

Job 19:26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

“Though my skin is destroyed and I be reduced to bone, yet from out of my flesh shall I see God.” The KJV says “in my flesh,” but the Hebrew has “from my flesh,” that is, “*apart from, aside from, or outside of my flesh.*” This is the lot of the Ancient Worthies, who will eventually get a spiritual resurrection. Job will *literally see God* at that time.

Job 19:27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.

“Whom my eyes and not another's shall see, though my reins and my hopes and my desires now perish.” In other words, “I will see God at that time, even though my desires now perish.”

Job 19:28 But ye should say, Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me?

Job continued, “Those who criticize me should realize they could find faults in themselves that could be equated with my supposed guilt. Rather than persecute and so strictly judge me, they should personally examine themselves.”

Job 19:29 Be ye afraid of the sword: for wrath bringeth the punishments of the sword, that ye may know there is a judgment.

Job warned his comforters of a future judgment that would come upon them because of their persecuting spirit.

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

Zophar was the third to offer a second-round rebuttal.

Job 20:2 Therefore do my thoughts cause me to answer, and for this I make haste.

Job 20:3 I have heard the check of my reproach, and the spirit of my understanding causeth me to answer.

Zophar was still smarting from the answer Job had given him the first time he had uttered criticism. Now was Zophar's turn to speak again, and he wanted to get these matters off his chest. “Job, I heard your reproof that put me to shame.”

Job 20:4 Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth,

Job 20:5 That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment?

Job 20:6 Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds;

Job 20:7 Yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung: they which have seen him shall say, Where is he?

In verses 4-7, Zophar was talking about *Job*: “Though the excellency of the wicked rise up to heaven and his head reach unto the clouds, yet the wicked shall perish forever like his own dung.” He felt that Job had exalted himself and was so heady that his head was up in the clouds in his presumption and that he would perish like his own dung.

Job 20:8 He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found: yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night.

Job 20:9 The eye also which saw him shall see him no more; neither shall his place any more behold him.

Zophar continued to speak in verses 7b-9: “They who have seen Job shall say, ‘Where is he?’ He shall not be found but shall be chased away as a vision of the night. Those who saw him shall see him no more; neither shall his place behold him anymore.”

Job 20:10 His children shall seek to please the poor, and his hands shall restore their goods.

Job 20:11 His bones are full of the sin of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust.

Job 20:12 Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, though he hide it under his tongue;

Job 20:13 Though he spare it, and forsake it not; but keep it still within his mouth:

Job 20:14 Yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him.

Zophar felt that Job was guilty. He accused Job of hiding the sin under his tongue—that he did not want to confess the sin but kept professing his innocence. Job’s guilt was in his mouth rolling around, and no matter how he tried to hide it, the bitterness of his guilt would get into his bowels and come out.

Job 20:15 He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again: God shall cast them out of his belly.

Job had been the wealthiest man in the land of Uz. He had accumulated great riches in his “belly,” but (according to Zophar) because Job was guilty, he had been forced to vomit them out.

Job 20:16 He shall suck the poison of asps: the viper’s tongue shall slay him.

Job 20:17 He shall not see the rivers, the floods, the brooks of honey and butter.

“Job, because of your refusal to confess guilt, you will not again see material prosperity.”

Job 20:18 That which he laboured for shall he restore, and shall not swallow it down: according to his substance shall the restitution be, and he shall not rejoice therein.

Job 20:19 Because he hath oppressed and hath forsaken the poor; because he hath violently taken away an house which he builded not;

“God violently took your house and goods because you got that wealth by oppressing the poor.” (Actually Job had done the opposite: he had visited the sick and the afflicted.) Zophar was saying that Job’s house was not founded upon properly earned wealth but had been obtained through greed and oppression of the poor.

Job 20:20 Surely he shall not feel quietness in his belly, he shall not save of that which he desired.

Job 20:21 There shall none of his meat be left; therefore shall no man look for his goods.

Job 20:22 In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits: every hand of the wicked shall come upon him.

Job 20:23 When he is about to fill his belly, God shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him, and shall rain it upon him while he is eating.

Zophar was carried away. His philosophical argument became more and more animated, and since it was based upon wrong principles, he was uttering untruths. In the heat of the discussion, the poison in his heart was coming out in unjust accusations and judgments of Job.

Job 20:24 He shall flee from the iron weapon, and the bow of steel shall strike him through.

“Job, you will flee away from the short distance of a spear, but then a bow and arrow will pierce you through from a distance.”

Job 20:25 It is drawn, and cometh out of the body; yea, the glittering sword cometh out of his gall: terrors are upon him.

Job 20:26 All darkness shall be hid in his secret places: a fire not blown shall consume him; it shall go ill with him that is left in his tabernacle.

Zophar was saying, “When the arrow is withdrawn from your body, its point will rip out your liver. Terror will be upon you, and all darkness will be hidden in your secret places.”

Job 20:27 The heaven shall reveal his iniquity; and the earth shall rise up against him.

Job 20:28 The increase of his house shall depart, and his goods shall flow away in the day of his wrath.

Job 20:29 This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed unto him by God.

Zophar’s “comforting” message was *filled with terror and lies*. Job’s experiences and sufferings illustrate the battle of the new creature versus the arguments of the world, the flesh, and the devil that assail the Christian in the present life.

Some may get the impression from a previous remark that the various experiences which

came upon Job were not well known prior to the comforters' coming into his presence, the seven days of silence, and the long philosophical dissertations. That statement needs clarification, for everyone who reads the Book of Job is well aware that suddenly, in one day, he lost his property, sons, goods, and livestock. The point is that the attitude of the public toward Job was not recorded in the earlier chapters, so most people, in reading about his sudden losses in one day, think the next thing that happened to him was the *sudden* onset of boils from head to foot. But actually the experiences where others lost their respect for him, children mocked him, and his relatives did not want to be seen in his company all took place *prior* to the coming of the three comforters. So it was after Job had had the disease for a *period of time* and *after the disease had progressed* to an unbearable state that he sat down and the three comforters came to him.

There is a note of caution in studying the Book of Job. The RSV is good on some verses, and the Authorized KJV is definitely superior on other verses. However, on some verses, the RSV, in trying to aid understanding, presumes to add words that are not in the Hebrew and thus interjects a wrong thought.

As the study of the Book of Job continues, chapters 21-28 will be covered quickly in an attempt to give the overall gist of the remarks of the three comforters and Job. For the most part, the RSV will be used, with some of the corrections being offered.

Job 21:1 But Job answered and said,

Job replied to the last remarks of Zophar.

Job 21:2 Hear diligently my speech, and let this be your consolations.

“Listen carefully to my words, and let this be your consolation.” Earlier one of the comforters had said, “Listen to the consolations of God, how He blesses those who reverence and serve Him.” The implication was that Job was not in harmony with God and that the three were acting in the role of consolers. Job remembered these words and now began to reply.

Job 21:3 Suffer me that I may speak; and after that I have spoken, mock on.

“Bear with me, and I will speak, and after I have spoken, mock on.” Remember, Job had lost everything, was afflicted with a disease, and had a horrible appearance, yet he was very spirited, as we can tell by listening to his arguments. He was a forceful character.

Job 21:4 As for me, is my complaint to man? and if it were so, why should not my spirit be troubled?

“As for me, is my complaint against man? Why should I not be impatient?” Job was saying, “Anyone in my situation certainly would not act like one in good health.”

Job 21:5 Mark me, and be astonished, and lay your hand upon your mouth.

“Look at me, and be appalled, and lay your hand upon your mouth.”

Job 21:6 Even when I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold on my flesh.

“When I think of my condition, I am dismayed, and shuddering seizes my flesh.” Job next revealed his innermost thoughts.

Job 21:7 Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?

“Why do the wicked live, reach old age, grow mighty in power?”

Job 21:8 Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes.

“Their children are established in their presence, and their offspring before their eyes.”

Job 21:9 Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them.

“Their houses are safe from fear, and no rod of God is upon them.”

Job 21:10 Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf.

“Their bull breeds without fail; their cow calves and does not cast her calf.” Their cows had no stillborn calves.

Job 21:11 They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance.

Job 21:12 They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ.

“They sing to the tambourine and the lyre, and rejoice to the sound of the pipe.”

Job 21:13 They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave.

“They spend their days in prosperity, and in peace they go down to *Sheol*.”

Job 21:14 Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.

Job 21:15 What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?

“They say to God, ‘Depart from us! We do not desire the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? And what profit do we get if we pray to Him?’”

Job 21:16 Lo, their good is not in their hand: the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

“Behold, is not their prosperity in their hand? The counsel of the wicked is far from me [that is, far from Job].”

Job 21:17 How oft is the candle of the wicked put out! and how oft cometh their destruction upon them! God distributeth sorrows in his anger.

“How often is it that the lamp of the wicked is put out?” That was the advice the three comforters had given Job; namely, “The reason you are having all these afflictions is that you have sinned, and God snuffs out the lamp of the wicked.” Job was trying to show that such reasoning was not true, generally speaking. “Why do you single me out as an exception when all around you are many examples of the wicked not suffering affliction?” Job had just said, “The wicked reach old age and their children with them, and they die in peace,” yet the three claimed he was being afflicted because he was wicked.

Another important point: At the end of the Gospel Age, we have been blessed with present truth, in which we see many things in a broad perspective. However, the great majority of

God's children never saw this perspective because the time was not then due for understanding. An example is the philosophy of the permission of evil. Except for the Harvest, the history of the Church has been a questioning of the permission of evil. One example is Revelation 6:10, "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" This text reveals a relative impatience. The saints back there could not understand why a God of Justice would allow gross injustice to prevail for such a long period of time. Daniel 7:25 tells that during the Dark Ages, the patience of the saints of the Most High was almost worn out by the persecutions of Papacy. Matthew 24:12 states that the love of many waxed cold. The faithfulness of the saints depended upon their acquiescence to their consecration to God, but nevertheless, the question arose. Today we should not question the permission of evil because the plan of God has been laid out before us and we understand the philosophy. The Book of Job is a description of the experiences of The Christ, Head and body; some portions apply particularly to Jesus, and other portions are more pertinent to the Church.

Moreover, the Book of Job includes some of Jesus' thinking prior to his baptism. Prior to age 30, Jesus lived as a *natural* man. Not until Jordan and his baptism were the heavens opened to him. He did not have the knowledge of his prehuman existence from the time he was born up until his baptism. Therefore, at that time, he desired to know the reason for some of his experiences. This desire led him to study the Old Testament diligently.

"How often is the lamp of the wicked put out? That their calamity comes upon them? That God judges or punishes the wicked in His anger?"

Job 21:18 They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away.

How often are they "like straw before the wind [like stubble blown in the desert away from God's presence], and like chaff that the wind carries away?"

Job 21:19 God layeth up his iniquity for his children: he rewardeth him, and he shall know it.

The RSV takes liberty with this verse: "You say, 'God stores up their iniquity for their sons.'" The Bible does say in regard to certain ones who disobeyed that judgments would be visited more particularly on their children of succeeding generations. Job was not finding fault with this principle, but it did not really apply to him. The comforters were saying his children died because of what he had done, but Job was on the scene, the children were dead, and the comforters were criticizing him.

"Let Him recompense it to themselves, that they may know it." Job was looking for the time when judgment would be visited upon the head of the wicked, upon the one who had given birth to the wickedness. Ezekiel said the time would come when the father who had eaten the sour grape would die for his *own* iniquity, rather than for the iniquity to be visited on his children.

Thus there are two applications and two periods of time when each principle would be true. But God *will requite* the ones who are responsible for wrongdoing, even if they go peacefully into the grave. Job longed for this time, although he had little knowledge of the divine plan. (His knowledge was along other lines.)

Job 21:20 His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty.

Job said, "Let their own eyes see their destruction, and let them [the ones who perpetrated the evil deeds, and not so much their children] drink of the wrath of the Almighty."

Job 21:21 For what pleasure hath he in his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst?

“For what do they care for their houses after them, when the number of their months is cut off?” In other words, “When they are in the tomb, what care do they have if their children suffer? In the grave, they are unaware if their sons come to honor or dishonor.”

Job was looking forward to the time when the perpetrator would get punishment.

Job 21:22 Shall any teach God knowledge? seeing he judgeth those that are high.

“Will any teach God knowledge, seeing that He judges those that are on high?”

Job 21:23 One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet.

Job 21:24 His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow.

“One dies in full prosperity, being wholly at ease and secure, his body full of fat and the marrow of his bones moist.”

Job 21:25 And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure.

“Another dies in bitterness of soul, never having tasted the good.”

Job 21:26 They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them.

“They lie down alike in the dust, and the worms cover them.” Once animals or persons (good or bad) are dead and in the grave, they are equalized. They are all in oblivion, at least temporarily.

Job 21:27 Behold, I know your thoughts, and the devices which ye wrongfully imagine against me.

Job continued, “Behold, I know your thoughts, and your schemes to wrong me.” In other words, the moralizing of the three comforters was all slanted with innuendos that Job was wicked. They philosophized and gave moral lessons, but the gist of the philosophizing was to show Job that he had a problem.

Job 21:28 For ye say, Where is the house of the prince? and where are the dwelling places of the wicked?

“For you say, ‘Where is the house of the prince? [This is sarcasm, for Job was the prince. He had a house and influence and was well known.] Where is your house? Where is the tent in which the wicked dwell?’” They had said Job was the wicked one.

Job 21:29 Have ye not asked them that go by the way? and do ye not know their tokens,

Job 21:30 That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.

“Have you not asked those who travel the roads, and do you not accept their testimony that the wicked man is spared in the day of calamity?” Job was saying, “You are ignoring the facts as they really are. God does not necessarily visit punishment upon the head of the sinner in this

life. In fact, have you not listened to the travelers who pass by, going from town to town with the news? They testify that many of the very wicked die in luxury and in peace.”

“Do you not accept their testimony that the wicked man is rescued in the day of wrath?” Sometimes calamities befall good people and the wicked are spared.

Job 21:31 Who shall declare his way to his face? and who shall repay him what he hath done?

“Who declares his way to his face, and who requites him for what he has done?”

Job 21:32 Yet shall he be brought to the grave, and shall remain in the tomb.

“When he is borne to the grave, watch is kept over his tomb.” In death, the wicked who are rich have mausoleums, fences, guards, gardeners, etc.; they are protected and memorialized.

Job 21:33 The clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him, and every man shall draw after him, as there are innumerable before him.

“The clods of the valley are sweet to him; all men follow after him.” Seeing the honor that comes after death, others follow the example of the wicked person in the present life. Thus the wicked become an example to others. Incidentally, despite Job’s calamities and disease, his mind was active and clear.

“Men follow the example of the wicked, and those who go before him are innumerable.” The wicked person has predecessors, as well as successors, who pursue the same evil course.

Job 21:34 How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing in your answers there remaineth falsehood?

Job continued to address the comforters: “How then will you comfort me with empty nothings? There is nothing left of your answers but falsehood.” The three had implied that God visits punishment upon the head of iniquity and, therefore, because Job was being punished, he must have done something wrong. That was their philosophy, but Job was saying, “Look about you. Judgments fall on both the good and the evil.”

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

Eliphaz again replied to Job.

Job 22:2 Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself?

“Can a man be profitable to God? Surely he who is wise is profitable to himself.”

Job 22:3 Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?

“Is it any pleasure to the Almighty if you are righteous, or is it gain to Him if you make your ways blameless?” Job was continually saying he could not understand what was happening to him because he had not done anything wrong. The three continually tried to break him down. After a while, they went a step further and told him what he had done wrong. They fabricated a whole scenario about what he had done to his servant and to his neighbors, about how he took bribes, etc.

Job 22:4 Will he reprove thee for fear of thee? will he enter with thee into judgment?

“Is it for your fear of Him that He reproveth you, and enters into judgment with you?” In other words, “Are you trying to tell us that you are suffering because you are doing *good*?” Eliphaz was trying to show the foolishness of Job’s reasoning. “You are trying to maintain your innocence, yet the facts show you must have done something wrong. Look at your condition, and your children are dead and your flocks are gone.” The arguments of the three were powerful from the standpoint of onlookers. And that is how the world has viewed the Church in some instances. Christians profess to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, yet the world sees that calamities befall them. To the world, this is incongruous. What they do not comprehend is that the Church is called to suffer.

Job 22:5 Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite?

“Is not your wickedness great? There is no end to your iniquities.” Eliphaz was saying, “If you are suffering this much, your sins must be proportionately numerous and grievous.”

Job 22:6 For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing.

“For you have exacted pledges from your brothers for nothing, and stripped the naked of their clothing.”

Job 22:7 Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry.

“You have given no water to the weary to drink, and you have withheld bread from the hungry.” Eliphaz was now issuing a detailed indictment, which was a *complete falsehood*.

Job 22:8 But as for the mighty man, he had the earth; and the honourable man dwelt in it.

Job 22:9 Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken.

“The man with power possessed the land, and the favored man dwelt in it. You have sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless were crushed.” Eliphaz was accusing Job of getting riches by taking advantage of widows and orphans through seizure of their properties.

“The favored man dwelt in it” is, in principle, something like Naboth and his vineyard. King Ahab wanted the property, but Naboth was not interested in selling. Therefore, to get the property, Jezebel manipulated Naboth’s death through falsehoods. In that account, Naboth was the “favored man,” the one who originally had the vineyard. The king and queen wickedly connived to get the property.

Job 22:10 Therefore snares are round about thee, and sudden fear troubleth thee;

“Therefore snares are round about you, and sudden terror overwhelms you.” Eliphaz was saying that Job’s fears were the result of a guilty conscience.

Job 22:11 Or darkness, that thou canst not see; and abundance of waters cover thee.

“Your light is darkened, so that you cannot see, and a flood of water covers you”; that is, “Job,

you are overwhelmed in this experience.”

Job 22:12 Is not God in the height of heaven? and behold the height of the stars, how high they are!

Job 22:13 And thou sayest, How doth God know? can he judge through the dark cloud?

Job 22:14 Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not; and he walketh in the circuit of heaven.

In verses 12-14, Eliphaz began to pursue another tack: “Is not God *high* in the heavens? See the highest stars, how *lofty* they are! Therefore you say, ‘What does God know? Can He judge through the deep darkness? Thick clouds enwrap Him, so that He does not see, and He walks on the vault of heaven.’”

There are people who magnify extremes. They take a person’s testimony and twist the words to give them a connotation that was not intended. After thus exaggerating certain statements into a falsehood, they then try to pursue another, more magnanimous, broad, and honorable position for themselves in contrast with the individual’s meanness. While deprecating the person and emphasizing his lowly stature, they honor their own nobility of thought.

Just as the three had fabricated lies concerning Job’s personal life, so now they were beginning to get sarcastically visionary. “Perhaps God has gone on an errand!”

Job 22:15 Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden?

Job 22:16 Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood:

“Will you keep to the old way which wicked men have trod? They were snatched away before their time.” Eliphaz went back to the old theme that the wicked are judged in the present life. The logical conclusion to such faulty reasoning is, “If you die in prosperity, you are not wicked.”

“Their foundation was washed away”; that is, “Their rug was pulled out from under their feet.”

Job 22:17 Which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them?

“They said to God, ‘Depart from us,’ and ‘What can the Almighty do to us?’”

Job 22:18 Yet he filled their houses with good things: but the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

“Yet He filled their houses with good things—but the counsel of the wicked is far from me.”

Job 22:19 The righteous see it, and are glad: and the innocent laugh them to scorn.

Job 22:20 Whereas our substance is not cut down, but the remnant of them the fire consumeth.

“The righteous see it and are glad; the innocent laugh them to scorn, saying, ‘Surely our adversaries are cut off, and what they left the fire has consumed.’” Eliphaz was saying that while there was a time when Job had peace and prosperity, the sufferings came on him because God punishes the wicked. The “righteous” who saw Job’s change in circumstances were the three comforters; they could “see” his problem. In saying they wanted to help him, they were

sure that they and their philosophy were right and that Job was entirely wrong.

Job 22:21 Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee.

“Agree with God, and be at peace; thereby good will come to you.” Eliphaz was saying that Job was stubborn and not being guided by the providential afflictions. “Just admit you are guilty, and God will deal with you in a different way. If you make peace with God by confessing, good will come to you.”

Job 22:22 Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart.

“Receive instruction from His mouth, and lay up His words in your heart.”

Job 22:23 If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles.

Job 22:24 Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks.

Job 22:25 Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver.

Job 22:26 For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God.

“If you return to the Almighty and humble yourself, if you remove unrighteousness far from your tents, if you lay gold in the dust, and gold of Ophir among the stones of the torrent bed, and if the Almighty is your gold, and your precious silver, then you will delight yourself in the Almighty, and lift up your face to God.”

Eliphaz was accusing Job of greed and of being a miser. “Instead of laying up gold, bury that gold and make God your gold.” Sarcastic! “Why do you not center your love and affections on heavenly things, on the Almighty, instead of on greedy gain down here?”

Job 22:27 Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows.

“If you do these things, you will make your prayer to Him, and He will hear you; and you will pay your vows.”

Job 22:28 Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee: and the light shall shine upon thy ways.

“And you will decide on a matter, and it will be established for you, and light will shine on your ways.”

Job 22:29 When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up; and he shall save the humble person.

“For God abases the proud, but He saves the lowly.”

Job 22:30 He shall deliver the island of the innocent: and it is delivered by the pureness of thine hands.

“He delivers the innocent man; you will be delivered through the cleanness of your hands.” The three brought in partial truths, some of which apply to the next age. Their counsel was a jumble of *partial truths mixed in with false reasoning*.

Job 23:1 Then Job answered and said,

Job 23:2 Even today is my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning.

Job began his reply to Eliphaz: “Today also my complaint is bitter, His hand is heavy in spite of my groaning.”

Job 23:3 Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!

“Oh, that I knew where I might find God, that I might come before His judgment seat to plead my cause and get a direct answer from Him!”

Job 23:4 I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.

“I would lay my case before Him and fill my mouth with arguments.”

Job 23:5 I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me.

“I would learn what He would answer me, and understand what He would say to me.”

Job 23:6 Will he plead against me with his great power? No; but he would put strength in me.

“Would He contend with me in the greatness of His power? No; He would give heed to me.” God had nothing to fear from Job. Job just wanted to present his cause.

Job 23:7 There the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered for ever from my judge.

“There an upright man could reason with Him, and I should be acquitted for ever by my judge.” God is approachable under certain conditions: “Come now, and let us reason together” (Isa. 1:18).

Job 23:8 Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him:

“Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him.”

Job 23:9 On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him:

“On the left hand I seek Him, but I cannot behold Him; I turn to the right hand, but I cannot see Him.”

Some Christians are so open and guileless that they confess their character flaws even to a stranger. They do not realize that the stranger may look upon the confession as weakness, whereas a confession can show strength of character—it can show humility and contrition. Such a Christian is expressing a desire for purity and nobility, but has found that the imperfect flesh cannot live up to the standard of the heart.

Job 23:10 But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

While Job admitted he could not understand the reason for his afflictions, even though he desired to know, he realized by *faith* that God was there and did have reasons. “But He knows the way that I take; and when He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold.”

Job 23:11 My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined.

“My foot has held fast to His steps; I have kept His way and have not turned aside.”

Job 23:12 Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

“I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured in my bosom the words of His mouth.” Earlier Eliphaz had said, “If you would only lay up heavenly treasure.” Job replied, “I have been doing that all my life.”

Job 23:13 But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.

“But He is unchangeable and who can turn Him? What He desires, that He does.”

Job 23:14 For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him.

“For He will complete what He appoints for me; and many such things are in His mind.”

Job 23:15 Therefore am I troubled at his presence: when I consider, I am afraid of him.

“Therefore I am awed in His presence; when I consider God, I am in dread of Him.” God’s thinking and dealing with Job were so high that he could not grasp them. He was puzzled and confused as to the purpose of his sufferings.

Job 23:16 For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me:

Job 23:17 Because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither hath he covered the darkness from my face.

“God has made my heart faint; the Almighty has terrified me; for I am hemmed in by darkness, and thick darkness covers my face in this experience.” This is also the experience of The Christ. On the Cross, Jesus asked, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Some professed Christians erroneously teach that to be faithful, one must at all times have close communion with God. In their opinion, a Christian who manifests a weakness in going through a trial is below standard, yet the Bible indicates that even the most stalwart Christians have some shaky moments during trials. Jesus also said, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death” (Matt. 26:38). Thus there are moments in a Christian’s life that may appear to be weakness but are actually designed to be, in the final analysis, a bedrock of faith. It may momentarily seem to the Christian that he is going down into a bottomless pit, but one who is delivered from such a circumstance walks in *renewed strength*, as though on a rock. One who is tried deeply and/or to the core but continues to cling to the Lord will be rewarded.

Job 24:1 Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days?

“Why are not times of judgment kept by the Almighty, and why do those who know Him never see His days?”

Job 24:2 Some remove the landmarks; they violently take away flocks, and feed thereof.

Job 24:3 They drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow’s ox for a pledge.

“Men remove landmarks; they seize flocks, they pasture them, they drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow’s ox for a pledge.”

Job 24:4 They turn the needy out of the way: the poor of the earth hide themselves together.

“They thrust the poor off the road; the poor of the earth all hide themselves.”

Job 24:5 Behold, as wild asses in the desert, go they forth to their work; rising betimes for a prey: the wilderness yieldeth food for them and for their children.

“Behold, like wild asses in the desert they go forth to their toil, seeking prey in the wilderness as food for their children.”

Job 24:6 They reap every one his corn in the field: and they gather the vintage of the wicked.

“They gather their fodder in the field and they glean the vineyard of the wicked man.”

Job 24:7 They cause the naked to lodge without clothing, that they have no covering in the cold.

“They lie all night naked, without clothing, and have no covering in the cold.”

Job 24:8 They are wet with the showers of the mountains, and embrace the rock for want of a shelter.

“They are wet with the rain of the mountains, and cling to the rock for want of shelter.”

Job 24:9 They pluck the fatherless from the breast, and take a pledge of the poor.

“(There are those who snatch the fatherless child from the breast, and take in pledge the infant of the poor.)”

Job 24:10 They cause him to go naked without clothing, and they take away the sheaf from the hungry;

Job 24:11 Which make oil within their walls, and tread their winepresses, and suffer thirst.

“They go about naked, without clothing; hungry, they carry the sheaves; among the olive rows of the wicked they make oil; they tread the wine presses, but suffer thirst.”

Job 24:12 Men groan from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded crieth out: yet God layeth not folly to them.

“From out of the city the dying groan, and the soul of the wounded cries for help; yet God pays no attention to their prayer.” This is the permission of evil. Prior to the Harvest period,

the Lord's people did not understand this philosophy. We should empathize with their feelings and questions.

The permission of evil has been a test for mankind, and Satan used it as a lever in the first dispensation. Those of the angels who began to waver in their trust of God deflected and followed Satan because there was no punishment. As their disobedience increased, there was still no punishment—until the Flood.

Job was not saying he was perfect, but he knew he had *always loved God* and treasured His commandments and principles, and he had justly treated his fellow man.

Job 24:13 They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof.

“There are those who rebel against the light, who are not acquainted with its ways, and do not stay in its paths.”

Job 24:14 The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief.

“The murderer rises in the dark, that he may kill the poor and the needy; and in the night he is as a thief.”

Job 24:15 The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me: and disguiseth his face.

“The eye of the adulterer also waits for the twilight, saying, ‘No eye will see me’; and he disguises his face.”

Job 24:16 In the dark they dig through houses, which they had marked for themselves in the daytime: they know not the light.

“In the dark they dig through houses; by day they shut themselves up; they do not know the light.”

Job 24:17 For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death: if one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death.

“For deep darkness is morning to all of them; for they are friends with the terrors of deep darkness.” In other words, the wicked like darkness and regard it as their friend. In contrast, the righteous like the light. The Apostle Paul told us to “walk as children of the light” (Eph. 5:8). Job could not understand why the wicked prospered.

Job 24:18 He is swift as the waters; their portion is cursed in the earth: he beholdeth not the way of the vineyards.

Job 24:19 Drought and heat consume the snow waters: so doth the grave those which have sinned.

Job 24:20 The womb shall forget him; the worm shall feed sweetly on him; he shall be no more remembered; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree.

“You say, ‘They are swiftly carried away upon the face of the waters; their portion is cursed in the land; no treader turns toward their vineyards. Drought and heat snatch away the snow

waters; so does *Sheol* those who have sinned. The squares of the town forget them; their name is no longer remembered; so wickedness is broken like a tree.’”

Here Job was answering the comforters’ line of reasoning that the wicked are judged in the present life. According to the three, the wicked are carried away swiftly by the current and punished when God is angry with them.

Job 24:21 He evil entreateth the barren that beareth not: and doeth not good to the widow.

“They feed on the barren childless woman, and do no good to the widow.”

Job 24:22 He draweth also the mighty with his power: he riseth up, and no man is sure of life.

“Yet God prolongs the life of the mighty by His power; they rise up when they despair of life.”

Job 24:23 Though it be given him to be in safety, whereon he resteth; yet his eyes are upon their ways.

“He gives them security, and they are supported; and His eyes are upon their ways.”

Job 24:24 They are exalted for a little while, but are gone and brought low; they are taken out of the way as all other, and cut off as the tops of the ears of corn.

“They are exalted a little while, and then are gone; they wither and fade like the mallow; they are cut off like the heads of grain.”

Job 24:25 And if it be not so now, who will make me a liar, and make my speech nothing worth?

“If it is not so, who will prove me a liar, and show that there is nothing in what I say?” In other words, whether Job took the viewpoint of the three comforters or gave his own slant, he was trying to say that the facts were on his side. He said the three were changing the rules when it came to him. “All around us partiality is not necessarily shown. God does not discriminate against the wicked as you would seem to indicate.”

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

Job 25:2 Dominion and fear are with him, he maketh peace in his high places.

“Dominion and fear are with God; He makes peace in His high heaven.”

Job 25:3 Is there any number of his armies? and upon whom doth not his light arise?

“Is there any number to His armies? Upon whom does His light not arise?”

Job 25:4 How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?

“How then can man [like you, Job] be righteous before God? How can he who is born of woman [like you, Job] be clean?”

Job 25:5 Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight.

Job 25:6 How much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, which is a worm?

“Behold, even the moon is not bright and the stars are not clean in His sight; how much less man, who is a maggot, and the son of man, who is a worm!”

Bildad was getting fictional. He was dreaming. In writing about deceased people, some novelists fabricate conversations and even write what the person was (supposedly) thinking about. People get so carried away in their reasoning that they become visionary. Bildad was trying to show how much he knew and, by implication, how little Job knew. However, Job later made some startling revelations.

Job 26:1 But Job answered and said,

Job 26:2 How hast thou helped him that is without power? how savest thou the arm that hath no strength?

“How you have helped him who has no power!” Job was being sarcastic. “With all your noble and magnanimous thoughts, you have not been of any help or profit to me.”

“How you have saved the arm that has no strength!” Job was saying, “Here I am in a weakened condition, and with all your greatness, you are not even able to give me some help.”

Job 26:3 How hast thou counselled him that hath no wisdom? and how hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?

“How you have counseled him [me] who has no wisdom, and plentifully declared sound knowledge!” Job’s sarcasm continued.

Job 26:4 To whom hast thou uttered words? and whose spirit came from thee?

“With whose help have you uttered words, and whose spirit has come forth from you?”

Job 26:5 Dead things are formed from under the waters, and the inhabitants thereof.

“The shades below tremble, the waters and their inhabitants.”

Job 26:6 Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.

“*Sheol* is naked before God, and Abaddon has no covering.”

Job 26:7 He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.

“He stretches out the north over the void, and hangs the earth upon nothing.” What startling revelations for that day! Job had a lot of scientific and astronomical knowledge.

Job 26:8 He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them.

“God binds up the waters in His thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them.” In other words, God takes water from the oceans, puts it in a skin, and carries it through the heavens, sometimes for thousands of miles. No water drops out of the skin unless He wants it to rain. This is the greatness of God. The water can come down gently or suddenly and inordinately, causing a flood and destruction.

Job 26:9 He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it.

“God covers the face of the moon, and spreads over it His cloud.”

Job 26:10 He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end.

“He has described a circle upon the face of the waters at the boundary between light and darkness.” Because of its revolutions, one half of the earth is dark, and the other half is light at any given time. The earth turns and turns, and there is a constant turning point of darkness and light. When we see the sun go down, it is on the turning point of light and darkness on the horizon, and darkness is the result. Although, from our perspective, there is only one horizon, that horizon is moving all the time because the earth revolves. The line of demarcation between light and darkness constantly changes.

Job 26:11 The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at his reproof.

“The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astounded at His rebuke.”

Job 26:12 He divideth the sea with his power, and by his understanding he smiteth through the proud.

“By His power He stilled the sea; by His understanding He smote Rahab [Egypt].” This was prophetic—an allusion to the Exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt. “Rahab” is likened to Egypt, the kingdom of darkness, but is actually Satan in the final analysis. Satan has dominion over the kingdom of darkness and slavery in the large sense, and he and all of his followers will eventually be thrown into the depths of the sea, as it were, and drowned. The destruction of Pharaoh and his host at the time of the Exodus was a prototype of the yet future destruction.

Job 26:13 By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent.

“By His wind the heavens were made fair.” Ill weather can suddenly be followed by the most serene and beautiful weather, as if the Lord has drawn aside the curtain that was beclouding the earth and brought in a peaceful aftermath. “His hand pierced the fleeing serpent [Rahab, Satan].” This panorama is dramatized in the heavens. God set the stars in the heavens as signs, as well as for times and seasons.

Job 26:14 Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?

“Lo, these are but the outskirts of His ways; and how small a whisper do we hear of Him! But the *thunder* of His power who can understand?” We see only ethereal, ephemeral evidence of God’s power. Imagine hanging the earth upon nothing! And even this is but a whisper of His real power. If we cannot understand the whisper, how could we understand the “thunder” of His power?

Job 27:1 Moreover Job continued his parable, and said,

Job continued his discourse.

Job 27:2 As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul;

Job 27:3 All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils;

Job 27:4 My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.

“As God lives, who has taken away my right, and the Almighty, who has made my soul bitter [who has permitted this bitter experience to come upon me]; as long as my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils; my lips will not speak falsehood, and my tongue will not utter deceit.”

Job 27:5 God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me.

“Far be it from me to say that you are right; till I die I will not put away my integrity from me.”

Job 27:6 My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.

“I will hold fast my righteousness, and will not let it go; my heart does not reproach me for any of my days.”

Job 27:7 Let mine enemy be as the wicked, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous.

“Let my enemy be as the wicked, and let him that rises up against me be as the unrighteous.”

Job 27:8 For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?

“For what is the hope of the godless when God cuts him off, when God takes away his life?”

Job 27:9 Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?

“Will God hear his cry, when trouble comes upon him?”

Job 27:10 Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?

“Will he take delight in the Almighty? Will he call upon God at all times?”

Job 27:11 I will teach you by the hand of God: that which is with the Almighty will I not conceal.

“I will teach you concerning the hand of God; what is with the Almighty I will not conceal.”

Job 27:12 Behold, all ye yourselves have seen it; why then are ye thus altogether vain?

“Behold, all of you have seen it yourselves; why then have you become altogether vain?”

Job 27:13 This is the portion of a wicked man with God, and the heritage of oppressors, which they shall receive of the Almighty.

Job 27:14 If his children be multiplied, it is for the sword: and his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread.

“This is the portion of a wicked man with God, and the heritage which oppressors receive from

the Almighty. If his children are multiplied, it is for the sword; and his offspring have not enough to eat.” This thinking seems to be exactly the opposite of Job’s earlier line of reasoning, but he was saying his faith was such that *in spite of all evidence to the contrary*, not only his integrity but also the integrity of God *MUST REQUIRE* the evil. If evil is not requited in the present life, the implication is that it will be in the future.

Job 27:15 Those that remain of him shall be buried in death: and his widows shall not weep.

“Those who survive him the pestilence buries, and their widows make no lamentation.”

Job 27:16 Though he heap up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay;

Job 27:17 He may prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver.

“Though he heap up silver like dust, and pile up clothing like clay; he may pile it up, but the just will wear it, and the innocent will divide the silver.” Again notice that Job did not reason this way earlier. By *faith*, he knew justice would prevail eventually. The scales would be reversed, and that which the wicked accumulated would be given to the poor, the fatherless, and the widow. Those of a contrite spirit would be blessed ultimately. As Jesus promised, “The meek ... shall inherit the earth” (Matt. 5:5).

Job 27:18 He buildeth his house as a moth, and as a booth that the keeper maketh.

“The house which the wicked build is like a spider’s web, like a booth which a watchman makes”; that is, the house was seasonal, temporary, not meant to last. And so the wicked are ephemeral; they will pass away.

Job 27:19 The rich man shall lie down, but he shall not be gathered: he openeth his eyes, and he is not.

“He goes to bed rich, but will do so no more; he opens his eyes, and his wealth is gone.”

Job 27:20 Terrors take hold on him as waters, a tempest stealeth him away in the night.

“Terrors overtake him like a flood; in the night a whirlwind carries him off.”

Job 27:21 The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth: and as a storm hurleth him out of his place.

“The east wind lifts him up and he is gone; it sweeps him out of his place.”

Job 27:22 For God shall cast upon him, and not spare: he would fain flee out of his hand.

“It hurls at him without pity; he flees from its power in headlong flight.”

Job 27:23 Men shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place.

“It claps its hands at him [the wicked], and hisses at him from its place [saying, ‘Get out!’].” Because Job changed his line of reasoning, this book can be very confusing if the different dispensations are not understood. Here, at the end of the age, we have been marvelously blessed with understanding.

Job 28:1 Surely there is a vein for the silver, and a place for gold where they refine it.

“Surely there is a mine for silver, and a place for gold which they refine.”

Job 28:2 Iron is taken out of the earth, and brass is molten out of the stone.

“Iron is taken out of the earth, and copper is smelted from the ore.”

Job 28:3 He setteth an end to darkness, and searcheth out all perfection: the stones of darkness, and the shadow of death.

“Men put an end to darkness, and search out to the farthest bound the ore in gloom and deep darkness.”

Job 28:4 The flood breaketh out from the inhabitant; even the waters forgotten of the foot: they are dried up, they are gone away from men.

“They [miners] open shafts in a valley away from where men live [in search of gold, silver, etc.]; they are forgotten by travelers.” A miner digs so deep in search of gold, silver, and other types of ore that people can almost walk into his hole without knowing activity is taking place under their feet.

“They hang afar from men, they swing to and fro.” Job was telling the technique that miners use. They dig a hole, and after a while, the hole is so deep that they cannot use a ladder, so they use a rope. They are lowered down on a rope, and they swing into horizontal passages in search of the ore. This technique was used in making tombs in Egypt. A shaft was dug straight down for perhaps 200 feet before it branched off in a horizontal shaft that led to a room with a sarcophagus. This technique was an attempt to keep the tomb intact by thwarting grave robbers.

Job 28:5 As for the earth, out of it cometh bread: and under it is turned up as it were fire.

“As for the earth, out of it comes bread [the ore was turned into money to buy food and goods]; but underneath it is turned up as by fire.”

Job 28:6 The stones of it are the place of sapphires: and it hath dust of gold.

“Its stones are the place of sapphires, and it has dust of gold.” Many minerals are igneous; that is, they were produced by fire and crystallized into beautiful jewels as they cooled. Miners go below ground to get these jewels. Job was specifically describing lapis lazuli, the “sapphire” of that day.

Job 28:7 There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture’s eye hath not seen:

Job 28:8 The lion’s whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it.

“That path no bird of prey knows, and the falcon’s eye has not seen it. The proud beasts have not trodden it; the lion has not passed over it.”

Job was saying that while man is looking for this “bread” (livelihood) deep in the earth, the falcon, with its sharp eyes capable of seeing perhaps 20-30 miles, does not see the miners underground. Even though the falcon has keen vision, it is limited to an aerial perspective. And the “proud beasts,” some of whom have a keen sense of smell, touch, taste, and/or sight, are completely unaware of what is happening below their feet. Job’s spontaneous dramatization was strong! He was leading up to a certain point.

Job 28:9 He putteth forth his hand upon the rock; he overturneth the mountains by the roots.

“Man puts his hand to the flinty rock, and overturns mountains by the roots.” Man sometimes tunnels into the foot of a mountain—way down deep underneath the mountain.

Job 28:10 He cutteth out rivers among the rocks; and his eye seeth every precious thing.

“He cuts out channels in the rocks, and his eye sees every precious thing.”

Job 28:11 He bindeth the floods from overflowing; and the thing that is hid bringeth he forth to light.

“He binds up the streams so that they do not trickle, and the thing that is hid he brings forth to light.”

Springs sometimes flood the place where miners are working. When water began to trickle out of the rock, miners applied a type of cement to try to prevent a flood. Job had a considerable knowledge about mining—in addition to being approved of God and being the wealthiest man in the world (prior to his affliction)—yet the three comforters were trying to advise, instruct, and admonish him.

Job 28:12 But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?

“But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding?” These questions were the *crux* of the matter, the *purpose* of Job’s dramatization.

Job 28:13 Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living.

“Man does not know the way to it, and it is not found in the land of the living.”

Job 28:14 The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me.

“The deep says, ‘It is not in me,’ and the sea says, ‘It is not with me.’”

Job 28:15 It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.

“Wisdom cannot be gotten for gold, and silver cannot be weighed as its price.”

Job 28:16 It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire.

“Wisdom cannot be valued even in the gold of Ophir, in precious onyx or sapphire.”

Job 28:17 The gold and the crystal cannot equal it: and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold.

“Gold and glass cannot equal it, nor can it be exchanged for jewels of fine gold.”

Job 28:18 No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies.

“No mention shall be made of coral or of crystal; the price of wisdom is above pearls.”

Job 28:19 The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold.

“The topaz of Ethiopia cannot compare with it, nor can it be valued in pure gold.” Now Job’s knowledge of jewels becomes apparent. Some individuals have profound wisdom, but because they do not have college degrees, they can sit unnoticed in a group of people who are engaging in idle chatter. Job was one such individual. The three judged that his wealth was ill-gotten; they ascribed wrong motives of self-aggrandizement. However, he had obtained wealth through *wisdom*, and wisdom cannot be purchased.

Job 28:20 Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?

“Whence then comes wisdom? And where is the place of understanding?” Job repeated the questions for emphasis.

Job 28:21 Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air.

“It is hid from the eyes of all living, and concealed from the birds of the air.”

Job 28:22 Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.

“Abaddon and Death say, ‘We have heard a rumor of it with our ears.’” This powerful dramatization helped to bring out Job’s point about wisdom.

Job 28:23 God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof.

“God understands the way to it, and He knows its place.” In other words, “God knows where wisdom is. Wisdom is not hidden from Him.”

Job 28:24 For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven;

“For He looks to the ends of the earth, and sees everything under the heavens.”

Job 28:25 To make the weight for the winds; and he weigheth the waters by measure.

Job 28:26 When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder:

Job 28:27 Then did he see it, and declare it; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out.

“When He gave to the wind its weight, and meted out the waters by measure; when He made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder; then He saw it and declared it; He established it, and searched it out.”

Job 28:28 And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

“And God said to man, ‘Behold, the *fear of the Lord*, that is wisdom; and *to depart from evil*, that is understanding.’” The point of the entire dramatization was, “Man cannot see wisdom—whether he is down in the mine, up in the air, on land, or on the horizon of the sea. God diligently weighed out the winds and microscopically meted out the planets and the earth, so one should ask Him, the *One who has the wisdom*. Therefore, reverence God! He is not only the fount of all blessing but also the fount of wisdom, light, love, etc. These qualities are resident in Him. God will teach wisdom to those who acknowledge Him and look to Him by faith.” The Apostle James tells us to ask for wisdom: “If any of you lack *wisdom*, let him ask of God, that

giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and *it shall be given him*. But let him ask *in faith, nothing wavering*" (James 1:5,6a). Man looks everywhere else for wisdom, whereas he could cry to *God* at any time. A good example is the nation of Israel today. Although the nation is in a precarious position, its leaders and people do everything but look to God for answers and help. "The [reverential] fear of the Lord ... is wisdom" is the climax.

Job 29:1 Moreover Job continued his parable, and said,

In chapters 29-31, Job continued his concluding statements in presenting his case before the Lord and his thoughts to the three comforters. Some translators who do not like the word "parable" use the word "discourse," but actually there is a lesson beyond a lesson here. Job's experience, being natural and physical, had a practical benefit that can be received by observing his experience and the conclusion with God's remarks. The Book of Job is also an allegory and, therefore, is to be viewed from more than one standpoint. With any book or parable of that nature, it is of primary importance to understand the natural picture before considering the spiritual application.

Job 29:2 Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me;

Job 29:3 When his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness;

It is apparent from this statement alone that the Book of Job did not take place in one, two, or three days. In fact, earlier in the book, mention was made of a seven-day period of complete silence, during which the three comforters were present. And before that, an allegorical contest took place between Satan and God, after which multiple severe losses and illness came upon Job.

"Oh that I were as in *months past*" shows that some time had elapsed since the beginning of Job's afflictions. The light of God's favor was on Job's head prior to his afflictions. At that time, he was respected by the community, and he also had the blessing of his family and fellowship with God. Job wished the former days would return.

This particular chapter shows the happiness of Job *in the past*, chapter 30 describes Job's *present* sufferings, and chapter 31 gives concluding remarks.

Job 29:4 As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle;

The RSV has the clause "when the friendship of God was upon my tent."

Job 29:5 When the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me;

Job 29:6 When I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil;

Job 29:7 When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street!

The implication is that Job had a special relationship with God in which information was imparted to him above that given to ordinary men. Some of his earlier discourses also reveal this special relationship. For example, Job's knowledge that the earth was a sphere had come from God. He also knew of a future resurrection and of an age to look forward to and that he would sleep in the grave until an appointed time. He had knowledge that superseded even that of others in his day who were in relationship with the Lord. The first chapter showed that Job was the most important man on the earth in that day.

Job wanted to return to his days of communing with God, having a family, being respected in society, and possessing wealth. It was not wrong for him to wish to return to wealth because one with riches and goods who has the proper heart condition can be a blessing to other people. Wealth affords opportunities to extend benefactions to others.

Job lived in the city of Uz in the area of Arabia. In the past, as he was going through the city en route to the marketplace gate where judgment took place and preparing himself for the court decisions of the day, he noticed certain things (verses 8-10).

Job 29:8 The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up.

The young men, being more timid, felt uneasy when Job approached, and they withdrew themselves to a discreet distance. On the other hand, the “aged” (those of Job’s age and older) stood up out of deference or respect; they recognized that he was indeed a man of God and lived according to his profession.

Job 29:9 The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth.

“Laid their hand on their mouth” means they stopped talking and became nervous as they saw Job approach. In awe and confusion, they felt the inappropriateness of carrying on their normal conversation in the presence of such an important person. Obviously, Job was a very unusual man prior to his affliction.

Job 29:10 The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth.

Because of Job’s great knowledge and honorable and pure character, even the nobles, who were respected in other matters, did not know what to say when they saw him coming. As they saw him coming to the gate and preparing himself for the day’s decisions, they were at a loss for words.

Job 29:11 When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me:

They could see that Job’s comments were appropriate for the occasion, and they saw also that his life was a testimony to his words; in other words, they saw that he spoke from experience. The principles enunciated were practiced in his own life and behavior.

Job 29:12 Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him.

Job 29:13 The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy.

Job’s ministry and judgment were a blessing to those who were desperately in need. However, he did not wrest judgment in giving ear to the poor. He was not biased in rendering his decisions but was solicitous of their welfare, not merely in connection with the matter immediately at hand but also subsequently. When a husband died and left a widow, Job kept her circumstance in mind both in the court and afterward, and surely he helped her personally. Thus the result of his ministry was wholesome, practical, and sincere—as well as wise.

Job 29:14 I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem.

Those who went to Job appreciated how he could unravel difficult, complex matters. He gave helpful explanations and instruction and a way out.

Job 29:15 I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame.

Job 29:16 I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out.

Some matters were so complex—and could even be so emotional—that it was not possible to fathom from the statements of the disputants, or of those involved in the litigation, enough sense and facts upon which to base a proper decision. In such cases, Job searched out the matter either there in the court or later. If necessary, he suspended judgment until he could look into the matter in more detail. In other words, he did not render hasty or unwise decisions.

Job 29:17 And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.

Job 29:18 Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand.

In cases that came before Job in which he could see that greed and/or power had resulted in the victimization of others, he was not afraid to render a stern reprisal and make sure that such individuals were not successful in court decisions. He saw to it that a person was not victimized through a technicality of the law. This principle is shown in Amos 3:12, which says that a good shepherd will take the lamb out of the jaws of the lion and come back with a leg or other body part to show he risked his life in trying to save the lamb. Job was saying he would break the jaws of the wicked in order to effect the deliverance of the victim. He was happy that he was providentially put in a position where he could render such judgments. His happiness was based on the principle that those who do good to others multiply their own days—they prolong their life. Job was confident that obeying God's will and doing good would work a blessing for him. The Law, which was given later, stated this principle, and the Israelites were naturally blessed when they obeyed God's commands and lived proper lives (Deut. 4:40).

Job 29:19 My root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch.

Job 29:20 My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand.

Job 29:21 Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel.

Job 29:22 After my words they spake not again; and my speech dropped upon them.

Men who heard Job's wisdom were so in awe of how he straightened out matters that they did not speak but were silent. It was like hearing the wisdom of Solomon.

“My speech dropped upon them.” Job's words of wisdom distilled upon them. Not only was Job blessed, but he blessed others by his wisdom.

Job 29:23 And they waited for me as for the rain; and they opened their mouth wide as for the latter rain.

Job 29:24 If I laughed on them, they believed it not; and the light of my countenance they cast not down.

In other words, Job was so respected and so dignified that if he laughed, the people felt the laughter was incongruous and did not fit his deportment. (A similar rule is taught in business courses: management should keep their distance and not fraternize too much with the employees.) Job was not a backslapping type of personality given to levity, so when on occasion, he genuinely laughed, the beholders were a little nervous as to the motivation. They

felt he was too noble for laughter.

“The light of my countenance they cast not down.” Job was not discouraged in judgment by the gloom and oppression of the circumstance. He gave the impression that he wanted to see *proper* judgment rendered for *both* sides of the issue, for *both* the claimant and the defendant. He approached cases from this constructive standpoint, and the people sensed that his judgment was meant to be right, that he was careful not to be prejudiced in judgment.

Job 29:25 I chose out their way, and sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, as one that comforteth the mourners.

In other words, Job’s being the chief of the judges came about naturally. When he spoke, others hung on every word because they so respected his judgment.

He was like “a king in the army.” To be the king of an army in ancient times, one had to be superior to almost everyone else in that army. That is why some of the greatest generals and army commanders excelled physically and mentally. Those underneath rallied around such a general and obeyed, being willing to risk their lives, because they could see his superiority—his fearlessness and good judgment.

Job 30:1 But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.

In chapter 29, Job told how happy and blessed he had been *prior* to his affliction. Chapter 30 is the opposite—Job started to tell of his *present* suffering condition.

“Now they that are younger than I have me in derision.” These words show that Job’s malady *persisted*. The very ones who had formerly been in awe of him, now withdrew themselves at his presence and boldly ridiculed him, making him a laughing stock.

“Whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.” Job was referring to a very debased element of society. The progeny were the product of the debased parents—people with *very low standards*.

Job 30:2 Yea, whereto might the strength of their hands profit me, in whom old age was perished?

Job 30:3 For want and famine they were solitary; fleeing into the wilderness in former time desolate and waste.

Those who mocked him were the derelicts of society, a low element physically, mentally, and morally.

Job 30:4 Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper roots for their meat.

This low element had a meager sustenance, wandering around and eating roots. Today’s equivalent would be the homeless alcoholic, who eats the barest minimum of food and just desires more and more drink.

Job 30:5 They were driven forth from among men, (they cried after them as after a thief;)

Job 30:6 To dwell in the cliffs of the valleys, in caves of the earth, and in the rocks.

Job 30:7 Among the bushes they brayed; under the nettles they were gathered together.

Job 30:8 They were children of fools, yea, children of base men: they were viler than the earth.

Job 30:9 And now am I their song, yea, I am their byword.

Job 30:10 They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face.

Job 30:11 Because he hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me, they have also let loose the bridle before me.

Previously this low element of society was careful not to interfere with Job in any way, but now that God had loosed the cord of communication and relationship with Job and afflicted him, the “bridle” that was formerly on their mouths was removed and they abused him with unrestrained liberty.

Job 30:12 Upon my right hand rise the youth; they push away my feet, and they raise up against me the ways of their destruction.

Job 30:13 They mar my path, they set forward my calamity, they have no helper.

In trying to demean Job during his illness, they slandered him, spat upon him, poked him with a stick, etc.

Job 30:14 They came upon me as a wide breaking in of waters: in the desolation they rolled themselves upon me.

Job 30:15 Terrors are turned upon me: they pursue my soul as the wind: and my welfare passeth away as a cloud.

Job felt overwhelmed by the unexplainable providences in this new experience. The cloud of protection that had previously shrouded him in his communal affairs and associations now seemed far away, and he was exposed to unbridled insults and dangers.

Job 30:16 And now my soul is poured out upon me; the days of affliction have taken hold upon me.

Job 30:17 My bones are pierced in me in the night season: and my sinews take no rest.

Job’s illness and pain discomforted him so much that he could not sleep or rest properly.

Job 30:18 By the great force of my disease is my garment changed: it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat.

In one way, his bones were exposed through want of proper nutrition, but in another way, he felt bloated and constricted. In time of famine, youngsters and adults can have legs and arms that are thin like sticks and yet have swollen and bloated bellies. Those beholding Job’s abnormal appearance, or personage, felt that God had cursed him.

Job 30:19 He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes.

Job 30:20 I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me: I stand up, and thou regardest me not.

Job 30:21 Thou art become cruel to me: with thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against

me.

“Cruel” should be “stern.”

Job 30:22 Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my substance.

Like tumbleweed in the desert that is blown hither and yon in the wind because of its frailty and lightness, Job had physical and mental problems, and terrors besieged him, yet he could reason with his three opposers.

Job 30:23 For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.

Job knew that he would eventually die, for everybody dies.

Job 30:24 Howbeit he will not stretch out his hand to the grave, though they cry in his destruction.

Job 30:25 Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor?

Job 30:26 When I looked for good, then evil came unto me: and when I waited for light, there came darkness.

With his former blessings, Job had benefited the widow, the fatherless, the poor, the sick, and the afflicted, but now his opposite experience was like light changing to darkness. He was completely bewildered. Had he known of the allegory between God and Satan in the beginning of the book, he would have understood the permission of evil. He would have realized his sufferings were a contest, or test, of his fealty and trust in God. The purpose was to *prove that Job loved God.*

Job 30:27 My bowels boiled, and rested not: the days of affliction prevented me.

The end of verse 27 in the RSV reads, “Days of affliction come to meet me.”

In his turmoil and confusion of mind, not only was Job continually mentally and physically distressed, but even his vital organs were adversely affected by his traumatic experience. In his distress, he talked to himself and made comments that would not ordinarily be normal for a man of his position.

Job 30:28 I went mourning without the sun: I stood up, and I cried in the congregation.

He went mourning “without the sun,” that is, outside. He stood up and “cried in the congregation.” He had distress whether he was home by himself or out in public.

Job 30:29 I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls.

As in a ghost town, no one wanted to communicate with him. Even when he was in society, it was like being in the wilderness because of lack of communication and association with others.

Job 30:30 My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat.

Job 30:31 My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep.

In chapter 29, Job enumerated all the joys of his earlier life. In chapter 30, he described all the sorrows of his current experience. In chapter 31, he justified his integrity and openly and candidly explained his purposes in life. Chapter 31 would be his last lengthy defense.

Job 31:1 I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?

In their previous discourses, the three comforters implied that Job had committed all kinds of secret sins. Even fornication and adultery were implied. Here Job was saying, “When I consecrated to God, I made a vow that I would not look on a maiden from the standpoint of lust.” The reason follows.

Job 31:2 For what portion of God is there from above? and what inheritance of the Almighty from on high?

In other words, “If I made such a vow and then went ahead and broke it, could I expect anything special from God? I have been faithful in these matters.”

Job 31:3 Is not destruction to the wicked? and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity?

Had Job been unfaithful, he would expect judgment. Earlier he had said that the wicked flourish, but he knew that ultimately the wicked would be cut off—if not in the present life, then in the next life. A day of judgment *was coming*.

Job 31:4 Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps?

Job 31:5 If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hastened to deceit;

Job 31:6 Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity.

Job was still addressing the three comforters. “Does not God see all my ways? If I have walked hypocritically, let me be judged justly by Him.” Despite their innuendos, they could not name any specific sins Job had committed; they had no creditable evidence. Therefore, Job wanted God to judge him.

Job 31:7 If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to mine hands;

Job 31:8 Then let me sow, and let another eat; yea, let my offspring be rooted out.

Job felt that if he had been unfaithful to God, then the very things which had befallen him should be expected. But he knew he had not willfully sinned.

Job 31:9 If mine heart have been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door;

Job 31:10 Then let my wife grind unto another, and let others bow down upon her.

“If I have been unfaithful in matters of lust, then let my own wife become a slave and a concubine to another party.”

Job 31:11 For this is an heinous crime; yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges.

Job 31:12 For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and would root out all mine increase.

The Apostle Paul and Jesus alluded to many statements in the Book of Job, but not in an obvious way. Some of their thinking about judgment, judges, Gehenna, etc., came from this book, and these references were *God's* thinking in the matter.

Job 31:13 If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me;

Job 31:14 What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?

If a problem occurred in his own household with regard to his servants, Job did not just brush them aside, which he could have done in his position of wealth and authority. He heard the matter and reasoned on it because he felt the servants were on a par with him in matters of judgment. They were as entitled to their rights as he was to his.

“When God visits judgment, what shall I answer him?” In other words, “If God in subsequent judgment calls attention to some way I have wronged my servants, I will have to answer for the unfaithfulness.”

Job 31:15 Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?

“Did not God, who made me, also make the servants I deal with? Were we not both alike fashioned in the womb?”

Job 31:16 If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail;

Job 31:17 Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof;

Job 31:18 (For from my youth he was brought up with me, as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother's womb;)

To his knowledge, Job could not think of any particular instance in which he had not manifested largesse and favor to those who were in positions of want and need. This attitude had been instilled in him from his youth. Very early in life, he had recognized the need to consider other people, and in fact, it seemed to be part of his genetic makeup to be considerate and solicitous for the welfare of both male and female.

Job 31:19 If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering;

Job 31:20 If his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep;

Job 31:21 If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate:

Job 31:22 Then let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone.

“When I sat in the gate, if I saw an opportunity to help others and did not do so, then let my arm fall from my shoulder blade and be broken from the collar bone.”

Job 31:23 For destruction from God was a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure.

Job had a healthy respect for the God of judgment and justice. If he had violated these himself, he realized he would receive retribution. Therefore, he would not do the things the three had accused him of doing.

Job 31:24 If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence;

Job 31:25 If I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much;

Job did not have the *love* of money and wealth. Yes, he had possessed money and wealth, but they were not his goals in life.

Job 31:26 If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness;

Job 31:27 And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand:

Job 31:28 This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above.

In ancient times, solar and lunar worship was practiced, as well as the worship of Cybele, Diana, and others. Such worshippers were foreign to Job's thinking because he realized that one cannot worship two Gods. God alone is God! No man can serve two masters!

“My mouth hath kissed my hand” has a religious signification. In worshipping the sun or the moon, most people had a statue or image or other representation that they kissed or genuflected to in trying to communicate with the false idol. Another illustration of sun or moon worship was like blowing a kiss to a beloved person who is departing on a train. As the train gets farther away, one shows endearment by kissing his hand and blowing the kiss toward that person. And so those who worshipped the sun or the moon, because they could not touch it, kissed their own hand and blew the kiss heavenward. Job was saying, “When I was out in the sun at noontime or admired the sunrise or the clearness of the night, I did not deviate to the practice of sun or moon worship.”

In Egypt, the god of the noonday sun was Ra, and “Ra” was incorporated into all the pharaohs' names.

Job 31:29 If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him:

Job 31:30 Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul.

Job did not hate his *personal* enemies. He had no malice in his heart toward them. (Enemies of God were another matter.)

Job 31:31 If the men of my tabernacle said not, Oh that we had of his flesh! we cannot be satisfied.

Job 31:32 The stranger did not lodge in the street: but I opened my doors to the traveller.

It could not be said that someone outside Job's door was hungry, starving, or crying out, “Oh

that I had something to eat!” Job made sure he was looking out the window, as it were, to see if such a one was in want. His door was open to receive the unfortunate.

Job 31:33 If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom:

Job 31:34 Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me, that I kept silence, and went not out of the door?

Job had no fear of disclosing the thoughts of his heart to his fellow man. He did not fear what others might think of him. If he had sinned, he would confess. He would not hide behind a tree as Adam did following his transgression.

Job 31:35 Oh that one would hear me! behold, my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me, and that mine adversary had written a book.

Job 31:36 Surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me.

“Oh that ... mine adversary had written a book.” In other words, if those who were charging Job with wrongdoing would write an indictment with specifics, he would appreciate it. He was so convinced of his innocence that he was willing to be exposed. He felt that instead of convicting him, an indictment would requite and honor him. Therefore, he would take that indictment and wear it like a crown, and he would rejoice and dance and present it to the true Judge, who would see the falsity of the accusations.

Job 31:37 I would declare unto him the number of my steps; as a prince would I go near unto him.

Job would go before the Judge with no shame or guilt.

Job 31:38 If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain;

The land could be abused by growing crops on it during the seventh or sabbath year. Therefore, even the land could figuratively cry out against Job if he had abused it.

Job 31:39 If I have eaten the fruits thereof without money, or have caused the owners thereof to lose their life:

Job 31:40 Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley. The words of Job are ended.

If Job had offended man, beast, or land, he was willing to suffer the consequences, but he rested his case in the confidence that he was not guilty of the accusations of the three comforters.

Job 32:1 So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

The three comforters, who had each taken approximately three turns, ceased to converse on the subject of Job’s trials because he was thoroughly convinced he had not sinned and there was no way to change his mind.

Job 32:2 Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God.

Elihu, who had been present listening to the comforters’ speeches and Job’s remarks, now felt

constrained to speak. He was angry that Job “justified himself rather than God,” and there is a measure of truth in this statement. Job had spent a lot of time speaking of his own righteousness, but of those who were on the scene, it was *Job* who was having the trial and suffering—and for some time—and had lost all that he had except his wife. Therefore, we must consider his replies from *his* standpoint, for in severe suffering and sickness, one is not as careful in making statements as he or she would be in a healthy state. From this perspective, Job stood head and shoulders higher than any of the other four, including Elihu—in spite of the eloquence of the latter.

Job 32:3 Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.

Elihu was also angry at the three comforters because their remarks had not been particularly pertinent, yet they had assumed Job was guilty.

Job 32:4 Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken, because they were elder than he.

The three comforters and Job were all older than Elihu; that is, Elihu was the youngest.

Job 32:5 When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, then his wrath was kindled.

Job 32:6 And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not show you mine opinion.

“I am young, and ... therefore I was timid and afraid to declare my opinion to you.”

Job 32:7 I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.

“I said, ‘Let days speak, and many years teach wisdom.’” In other words, all things being equal, an older person is more mature in his judgment and thinking than a younger person. It was proper decorum for Elihu to wait.

Job 32:8 But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

“But it is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that makes him understand.”

Job 32:9 Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment.

“It is not necessarily true that the old are wise and the aged understand what is right.”

Job 32:10 Therefore I said, Hearken to me; I also will show mine opinion.

“Therefore, listen to me, and let me declare my opinion.”

Job 32:11 Behold, I waited for your words; I gave ear to your reasons, whilst ye searched out what to say.

“Behold, I waited for your words, I listened for your wise sayings, while you searched out what to say.”

Job 32:12 Yea, I attended unto you, and, behold, there was none of you that convinced Job, or that answered his words:

“I gave you my attention, and, behold, none of you refuted Job’s claims of innocence or answered his words.”

Job 32:13 Lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom: God thrusteth him down, not man.

“Beware lest you say, ‘We have found wisdom; God may vanquish him, not man.’” Elihu was saying, “Do not use the excuse ‘Since we cannot convince Job with our arguments, God is the only One who can.’”

Job 32:14 Now he hath not directed his words against me: neither will I answer him with your speeches.

“He has not directed his words against me, and I will not answer him with your speeches.” In other words, “I am not personally involved as you three were. As a bystander listening to all of the comments, I am in a position to rationalize this matter without getting too personally involved with either side of the issue.”

Job 32:15 They were amazed, they answered no more: they left off speaking.

“They are discomfited, they answer no more; they have not a word to say.”

Job 32:16 When I had waited, (for they spake not, but stood still, and answered no more;)

“And shall I wait, because they do not speak, because they stand there, and answer no more?”

Job 32:17 I said, I will answer also my part, I also will show mine opinion.

“I also will give my answer; I also will declare my opinion.”

Job 32:18 For I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me.

“For I am full of words, the spirit within me constrains me.”

Job 32:19 Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles.

“Behold, my heart is like old wine in a new vessel [or new wine in an old vessel]; it is ready to burst.”

Job 32:20 I will speak, that I may be refreshed: I will open my lips and answer.

“I must speak, that I may find relief; I must open my lips and answer.”

Just as wine ferments, or bubbles, so Elihu, in listening to the long, extensive arguments, had thoughts fermenting in him. He wanted to get involved, but due to politeness and decorum, he held back. In the meantime, his words were bubbling and bubbling, and now he had to speak to get relief.

Notice the way Elihu’s words were written. The method shows us that *Elihu wrote the Book of Job*. He was there and heard all of the arguments, and he wrote the Book of Job like a historian informing his readers as to what was occurring within him. *He was not uttering these words aloud to Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar*. Rather, he was soliloquizing and, as a historian, relating his mixed feelings in listening to the three and Job.

Job 32:21 Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man.

"I will not show partiality to any person or use flattery toward any man."

Job 32:22 For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my maker would soon take me away.

"For I do not know how to flatter, else would my Maker soon put an end to me."

Job 33:1 Wherefore, Job, I pray thee, hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words.

"But now, hear my speech, O Job, and listen to all my words." Notice the liberty that Elihu, a *young* man, took in addressing Job by name, whereas the three, who were more or less equal to Job in age and were mature individuals, had not taken that liberty. They had accused him but had not used his name. This familiarity, along with Elihu's lineage (verse 2), indicates that he was a fairly close relative of Job. He was "the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram." Buz was a nephew of Abraham, and Job was from the land of Uz. "And it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold, Milcah, she hath also born children unto thy brother Nahor; Huz his firstborn, and Buz his brother" (Gen. 22:20,21).

Job 33:2 Behold, now I have opened my mouth, my tongue hath spoken in my mouth.

"Behold, I open my mouth; the tongue in my mouth speaks."

Job 33:3 My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart: and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly.

"My words declare the uprightness of my heart, and what my lips know they speak sincerely."

Job 33:4 The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.

Job 33:5 If thou canst answer me, set thy words in order before me, stand up.

"Answer me, if you can; set your words in order before me; then take your stand." In other words, "When I begin to make my remarks, you will have opportunity for rebuttal. I am trying to be impartial, I want to be fair, and I am honest in heart. The Almighty made me just as He made you, so there is a certain equality between us."

Notice that Elihu thought a great deal of himself. As his discourse proceeds, his high opinion of himself will become even more apparent. Job was wiser than Elihu and had more intimate knowledge about God. However, it will be seen that Elihu was far above the other three in certain respects and that he certainly had some inside information, but not of the scope and breadth of Job.

Job 33:6 Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead: I also am formed out of the clay.

"Behold, I am toward God as you are." Elihu was saying, "At the end of your discourse, you stated how your life was dedicated to the Lord and what you did in your private life with regard to your family, your servants, and your vows. I also am consecrated to the Lord like you."

Job had said in his remarks, "Oh, that someone could take my case before God. He is so great

that I am too timid to speak to Him direct, yet I feel justified in my cause that I am indeed righteous. I have not compromised my integrity.” Now Elihu was saying, “According to your wish, I am in God’s stead.”

“I too was formed from a piece of clay.” Some have mistakenly concluded that Elihu was an angel or Jesus in a mysterious form, but he was formed of human clay. Moreover, verse 2 gave his lineage: he was the son of Barachel the Buzite and a Ramite.

Job 33:7 Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee.

“Behold, no fear of me need terrify you; my pressure will not be heavy upon you.”

Job 33:8 Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words, saying,

“Surely, you have spoken in my hearing, and I have heard the sound of your words.”

Job 33:9 I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me.

Job 33:10 Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy,

Job 33:11 He putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths.

“You say, ‘I am clean, without transgression; I am pure, and there is no iniquity in me. Behold, He finds occasions against me, He counts me as His enemy; He puts my feet in the stocks, and watches all my paths.’” Elihu was not accurately presenting Job’s argument. Job did not say that he had not in any sense sinned, for he was born of Adamic stock just like everyone else. He knew that he had faults. What he meant was that he could not find any lack of integrity in his life to merit or explain the experience he was undergoing. Thus Elihu took Job’s words and gave them an intonation he did not intend. However, some of Job’s statements could be taken two different ways.

Sometimes during suffering and nervous disorders, Christians say something which does not have the intent in back of it that the hearer might assume. And so, some of Job’s statements could be misunderstood, but if his *line of reasoning* were followed, the intention would be plain.

To sum up, Elihu repeated some of Job’s words but put an unintended connotation on them. However, these statements were still not quite right. Had Job been in good health and able to think them out, he would have phrased some things differently. And so, as a general principle, it is good for someone to correct another party, even though that party’s intent was right, *if the meaning can be misunderstood*. And that party should not be offended. Elihu was justified in the sense that certain statements Job made needed clarification.

Job 33:12 Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man.

“Behold, in this you are not right. I will answer you. God is greater than man.”

Job 33:13 Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters.

“Why do you contend against Him, saying, ‘He will answer none of my words?’”

Job 33:14 For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not.

“For God speaks in one way, and in two, though man does not perceive it.”

Job 33:15 In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed;

Job 33:16 Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction,

Job 33:17 That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.

Job 33:18 He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.

“In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls upon men, while they slumber on their beds, then He opens the ears of men, and terrifies them with warnings, that He may turn man aside from his deed, and cut off pride from man; He keeps back his soul from the Pit, his life from perishing by the sword.”

Elihu was definitely implying that Job might very well be guilty. He was saying, “Job, you are asking God to speak. He does speak sometimes, but you do not hear Him. He speaks in various ways. You cannot say to God, ‘Answer me now,’ as you would another man.” Elihu was right—we cannot tell the great Jehovah to answer us on *our* terms. Elihu said that God does answer but in various ways, such as in a dream at night or through sickness. But in both instances—the one who gets the dream and the one who is sick—the person is terrified and warned against the evil deed. The implication was that Job was guilty of wrongdoing and that God was answering him through sickness and suffering.

Elihu was trying to steer a middle line, but he did give some credibility to the remarks of the three supposed comforters. He quoted many of their arguments verbatim and presented them as his own thoughts. It takes time to analyze Elihu. The Oriental frame of thinking employed is foreign to our thinking.

Elihu said that God warns through dreams at night, and the purpose of the warnings is to awaken the party in a terrified state so that he will reform and thus be spared death.

Job 33:19 He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain:

Job 33:20 So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat.

“Man is also chastened with pain upon his bed, and with continual strife in his bones; so that his life loathes bread, and his appetite dainty food.” In other words, “God answers one way, two ways, three ways. Here is another way: man is chastened with pain upon his bed.”

Job 33:21 His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen stick out.

“His flesh is so wasted away that it cannot be seen; and his bones which were not seen hitherto stick out.”

Job 33:22 Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers.

“His soul draws near the Pit, and his life to those who bring death.”

Job 33:23 If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness:

Job 33:24 Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.

Job 33:25 His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth:

Job 33:26 He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness.

“If there be for him an angel, a mediator, one of the thousand, to declare to man what is right for him; and he is gracious to him, and says, ‘Deliver him from going down into the Pit, I have found a ransom; let his flesh become fresh with youth; let him return to the days of his youthful vigor’; then man prays to God, and He accepts him, he comes into God’s presence with joy.”

The previous two suggested warnings against wrongdoing were (1) a dream, or vision, and (2) sickness. Another method now suggested by Elihu was a mediator, one who would mediate between God and the sinner. Elihu had a lot of information, for he evidently had beliefs similar to those of Job: a belief in a coming Messiah, a belief that redemption through a Savior would take place in the future, and an abiding faith. The other three had faith too, but in a way that tended toward infidelism, that is, not a revealed God. They had criticized Job: “What do you know more than we know?” Job had told them about the earth being a sphere and hanging upon nothing, and he had talked about the Kingdom of the future. They had replied, “Our father is older than your father. Where did you get this information? You are talking through your hat.”

“I have found a ransom.” Elihu showed there was a possibility of restoration for the one who was so sick that his bones protruded. The doctrine of repentance and restoration was clearly taught by Elihu based on the “ransom.”

Job 33:27 He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not;

Job 33:28 He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.

“He recounts to men his salvation, and he sings before men, and says: ‘I sinned, and perverted what was right, and it was not requited to me. He has redeemed my soul from going down into the Pit, and my life shall see the light.’”

But Elihu was not properly representing Job. The implication continued to be that Job had sinned. Job’s transgression was along another line but not the type of sin that would explain his affliction.

What Elihu was saying will be true in the Kingdom. When sinners—those who did not really follow God in the present life—are resuscitated from the tomb and told the conditions for obtaining everlasting life, they will rejoice to have a fresh start and to see that it will result in physical, mental, and moral healing. In their joy, they will sing and praise God for their merciful deliverance, recognizing that they are not worthy. These beautiful thoughts are the doctrine of restitution, but they do not explain Job’s affliction.

Job 33:29 Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man,

Job 33:30 To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.

“Behold, God does all these things, twice, three times, with a man, to bring back his soul from the Pit, that he may see the light of life.”

Job 33:31 Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I will speak.

“Give heed, O Job, listen to me; be silent, and I will speak.”

Job 33:32 If thou hast any thing to say, answer me: speak, for I desire to justify thee.

“If you have anything to say, answer me; speak, for I desire to justify you.”

Job 33:33 If not, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I shall teach thee wisdom.

“If not, listen to me; be silent, and I will teach you wisdom.” Elihu had a high opinion of himself. He was a brilliant man, and some of his ideas were good, but not all. Sometimes knowledge and education make one high-minded.

Job 34:1 Furthermore Elihu answered and said,

Job 34:2 Hear my words, O ye wise men; and give ear unto me, ye that have knowledge.

In chapter 33, Elihu addressed Job more direct. Now he was turning to the three comforters.

Job 34:3 For the ear trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meat.

“For the ear tests words as the palate tastes food.” In other words, the ear is a symbol of discrimination. Ears can hear and disregard advice, but when one hears and hearkens, he is exercising discrimination.

Job 34:4 Let us choose to us judgment: let us know among ourselves what is good.

“Let us choose what is right; let us determine among ourselves what is good.”

Job 34:5 For Job hath said, I am righteous: and God hath taken away my judgment.

Job 34:6 Should I lie against my right? my wound is incurable without transgression.

“For Job has said, ‘I am innocent, and God has taken away my right; in spite of my right I am counted a liar; my wound is incurable, though I am without transgression.’”

Job 34:7 What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning like water?

Job 34:8 Which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men.

“What man is like Job, who drinks up scoffing like water, who goes in company with evildoers and walks with wicked men?”

Job 34:9 For he hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God.

“For he has said, ‘It profits a man nothing that he should take delight in God.’” Elihu misconstrued Job’s words by taking them out of context. Job’s line of reasoning was otherwise.

Job 34:10 Therefore hearken unto me, ye men of understanding; far be it from God, that he should do wickedness; and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity.

“Therefore, hear me, you men of understanding, far be it from God that He should do wickedness, and from the Almighty that He should do wrong.” Elihu was still addressing the three.

Job 34:11 For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways.

“For according to the work of a man He will requite him, and according to his ways He will make it befall him.”

Job 34:12 Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment.

“Of a truth, God will not do wickedly, and the Almighty will not pervert justice.”

Job 34:13 Who hath given him a charge over the earth? or who hath disposed the whole world?

“Who gave Him charge over the earth and who laid on Him the whole world?”

Job 34:14 If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath;

Job 34:15 All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.

“If He should take back His spirit to Himself, and gather to Himself His breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust.”

God is the Creator; all things were done through His power and breath; all things are sustained either directly or indirectly by Him. Therefore, if He should cut off His spirit, the human race would perish. We are wholly dependent on God’s character and determination for our destiny.

Job 34:16 If now thou hast understanding, hear this: hearken to the voice of my words.

“If you have understanding, hear this; listen to what I say.”

Job 34:17 Shall even he that hateth right govern? and wilt thou condemn him that is most just?

Job 34:18 Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked? and to princes, Ye are ungodly?

Job 34:19 How much less to him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor? for they all are the work of his hands.

“Shall one who hates justice govern? Will you condemn Him who is righteous and mighty, who says to a king, ‘Worthless one,’ and to nobles, ‘Wicked man’; who shows no partiality to princes, nor regards the rich more than the poor, for they are all the work of His hands?”

Job 34:20 In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and pass away: and the mighty shall be taken away without hand.

“In a moment they die; at midnight the people are shaken and pass away, and the mighty are

taken away by no human hand.” Elihu was saying, “Jehovah is greater than we are, more noble, more wise, more loving.” That argument was used in the beginning of the *First Volume* to show there is a beneficent Creator.

Elihu was on the right track with this exalted line of reasoning. We cannot question God in that way. However, do we not sometimes wonder why certain things happen? Why do we pray for help and deliverance and understanding in difficult trials? How can our faith be tested unless we have trials? The testing of faith does bring forth questions. In fact, how can faith develop without questioning? Doubt is involved in the development of faith—where we cannot trace God, we bridge that gap with perseverance of faith. A confrontation begins to develop faith if we are properly exercised. Thus we can ask God certain questions. For example, “Have I done something amiss? Please reveal to me where I have erred.” Through Christ, we can talk with the Heavenly Father about our troubles and doubts and fears, and in this private manner seek help. Even Jesus asked, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Nevertheless, there should be a measure of decorum and reserve. It is permissible to ask why, but we should give God the benefit of the doubt when we do not know the answer.

Job 34:21 For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings.

“For His eyes are upon the ways of a man, and He sees all his steps.”

Job 34:22 There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.

“There is no gloom or deep darkness where evildoers may hide themselves.” Actually, Job believed and had stated this principle very beautifully. No matter where one is, God can see him, and He can hear the feeblest cry. Elihu had said, “Hear the wisdom I am telling you.” Job already knew these things, but he declined the opportunity to speak when Elihu offered because he realized he had bemoaned his troubles a little inordinately and had not properly balanced the bemoaning by expressing complete confidence in God (Job 33:31-33). He would have changed some of his words had he reflected more, prior to their utterance, and therefore, he felt a little guilty. In fact, several times Elihu gave Job a chance to respond, but Job would not. Elihu was trying to be sincere, honest, and fair, but his statements must be analyzed because they did not square in all details.

Job 34:23 For he will not lay upon man more than right; that he should enter into judgment with God.

“For He has not appointed a time for any man to go before God in judgment.”

Job 34:24 He shall break in pieces mighty men without number, and set others in their stead.

“He shatters the mighty without investigation, and sets others in their place.”

Job 34:25 Therefore he knoweth their works, and he overturneth them in the night, so that they are destroyed.

“Thus, knowing their works, He overturns them in the night, and they are crushed.”

Job 34:26 He striketh them as wicked men in the open sight of others;

Job 34:27 Because they turned back from him, and would not consider any of his ways:

Job 34:28 So that they cause the cry of the poor to come unto him, and he heareth the cry of

the afflicted.

“He strikes them for their wickedness in the sight of men, because they turned aside from following Him, and had no regard for any of His ways, so that they caused the cry of the poor to come to Him, and He heard the cry of the afflicted.”

Job 34:29 When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him? whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only:

“(When He is quiet, who can condemn? When He hides His face, who can behold Him, whether it be a nation or a man?)” This verse is parenthetical. Verse 28 continues with verse 30.

Job 34:30 That the hypocrite reign not, lest the people be ensnared.

“That a godless man should not reign, that he should not ensnare the people.” In the case of a ruthless king who oppresses his subjects, Elihu said that God would hear their cries for deliverance and relief, and would stop the reign so that the people would not be ensnared. In other words, Elihu said God would chastise such a king, but this is not really true, for many wicked kings have reigned for a long time and died uncorrected. In some respects, Elihu pursued the arguments of the three comforters, who had said that those who do evil suffer for it and those who do righteously are rewarded. Therefore, the logical(?) conclusion was that Job was suffering for sins he had committed. In the long term, in the Kingdom Age, the righteous will prosper and evildoers will be requited, but not now.

Job had said that the arguments of the three were not valid, for in many instances, the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer. Job was not blaming God but was just explaining the situation as it existed.

Although Elihu agreed somewhat with the reasoning of the three, he did not condemn Job the way they did, for they lost their heads entirely, accusing Job of having immoral relations, of abusing his servants with low wages, of taking bribes, etc. They accused him but had no credible evidence for their statements. Elihu implied that Job had sinned, but to his credit, he did not make accusations in specific areas.

Job 34:31 Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more:

Job 34:32 That which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.

“For has anyone said to God, ‘I have borne chastisement; I will not offend any more; teach me what I do not see; if I have done iniquity, I will do it no more?’”

Job 34:33 Should it be according to thy mind? he will recompense it, whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose; and not I: therefore speak what thou knowest.

“Will he then make requital to suit you three, because you reject it? For you must choose, and not I; therefore declare what you know.”

Job 34:34 Let men of understanding tell me, and let a wise man hearken unto me.

Job 34:35 Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom.

“Men of understanding will say to me, and the wise man who hears me will say: ‘Job speaks without knowledge, his words are without insight.’” Elihu was still speaking to the three, not to

Job.

Job 34:36 My desire is that Job may be tried unto the end because of his answers for wicked men.

“Would that Job were tried to the end, because he answers like wicked men.”

Job 34:37 For he addeth rebellion unto his sin, he clappeth his hands among us, and multiplieth his words against God.

“For he adds rebellion to his sin; he claps his hands among us, and multiplies his words against God.” Job was vindicated in the final analysis, so what Elihu was saying must be taken with a big dose of salt. Elihu did not like the way the comforters accused Job of sins in the past, so he was trying to judge Job by his *current* attitude. In some instances, he was misjudging that attitude.

Job 35:1 Elihu spake moreover, and said,

Job 35:2 Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God’s?

Job 35:3 For thou saidst, What advantage will it be unto thee? and, What profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?

“Do you think this to be just? Do you say, ‘It is my right before God,’ that you ask, ‘What advantage have I? How am I better off than if I had sinned?’”

Job 35:4 I will answer thee, and thy companions with thee.

“I will answer you and your friends with you.” Now Elihu would pursue another line of reasoning. Job admitted he could not understand why God did not answer his prayer. How could he understand? He was suffering a fate that might be worthy of someone who had committed grievous sin, but he had not so sinned. His puzzlement was legitimate—any sane person would want to know why—but the three plus Elihu, who were not in the trial themselves and thus were not emotionally involved, could give cool, dispassionate reasoning. Under certain conditions, this would be appropriate, but they were judging the *character of a person*, not the details of a crime. The circumstances under which Job was making his statements should have been taken into consideration.

Job 35:5 Look unto the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds which are higher than thou.

“Look at the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds, which are higher than you.”

Job 35:6 If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him?

“If you have sinned, what do you accomplish against Him? And if your transgressions are multiplied, what do you do to Him?”

Job 35:7 If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?

“If you are righteous, what do you give to Him; or what does He receive from your hand?” In other words, “God is so great and so high that what you, Job, do for good or evil does not add or detract from His domain.” This is true from a technical standpoint but not in other ways.

Job 35:8 Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art; and thy righteousness may profit the son of man.

“Your wickedness concerns a man like yourself, and your righteousness a son of man.” Elihu was saying, “What you do affects *you*. You are the one who suffers for wrongdoing.” That is true, especially in the long term.

Job 35:9 By reason of the multitude of oppressions they make the oppressed to cry: they cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty.

“Because of the multitude of oppressions people cry out; they call for help because of the arm of the mighty.”

Job 35:10 But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night;

Job 35:11 Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven?

“But none says, ‘Where is God my Maker, who gives songs in the night, who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth, and makes us wiser than the birds of the air?’”

Job 35:12 There they cry, but none giveth answer, because of the pride of evil men.

“There they cry out, but He does not answer, because of the pride of evil men.” In other words, there are evidences all around of a Creator, but in all the sorrows and pains that men suffer—and express audibly—they do not ask God for help in prayer. This is true; because of innate pride, man does not get down on his knees and seek divine help.

Job 35:13 Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.

“Surely God does not hear an empty cry, nor does the Almighty regard it.” Just crying out for help does not bring an answer—the crying must be to *God*.

Job 35:14 Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him, yet judgment is before him; therefore trust thou in him.

“How much less when you say that you do not see Him, that the case is before Him, and you are waiting for Him [waiting for His answer]!”

Job 35:15 But now, because it is not so, he hath visited in his anger; yet he knoweth it not in great extremity:

Job 35:16 Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain; he multiplieth words without knowledge.

“And now, because His anger does not punish, and He does not greatly heed transgression, Job opens his mouth in empty talk, he multiplies words without knowledge.” Elihu was speaking of Job’s *present* circumstances, not of his earlier blessed days. He accused Job of empty talk based on what he had been hearing. This summation of Job’s words was inappropriate. True, he had spoken a lot, but the three had given a lot of criticism, and he was replying to each in turn—while he was sick and in pain. Thus there was a reason for Job to speak many words; his *character* was being questioned and judged. He did not have full knowledge, but he was like one out of a billion in character. In fact, *God* certified him as one of

the top ten Ancient Worthies (Ezek. 14:14).

Principle: We should always keep in mind that it is very easy to criticize and rationalize when we are not the person going through the trial.

Job 36:1 Elihu also proceeded, and said,

Job 36:2 Suffer me a little, and I will show thee that I have yet to speak on God's behalf.

“Bear with me a little, and I will show you, for I have yet something to say on God's behalf.”

Job 36:3 I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.

“I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and ascribe righteousness to my Maker.”

Job 36:4 For truly my words shall not be false: he that is perfect in knowledge is with thee.

“For truly my words are not false; one who is perfect in knowledge is with you.” Elihu was saying that he was perfect in knowledge but implied that Job was not.

Job 36:5 Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any: he is mighty in strength and wisdom.

“Behold, God is mighty, and does not despise any; He is mighty in strength of understanding.”

Job 36:6 He preserveth not the life of the wicked: but giveth right to the poor.

“He does not keep the wicked alive, but gives the afflicted their right.”

Job 36:7 He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous: but with kings are they on the throne; yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted.

“He does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous, but with kings upon the throne He sets them for ever, and they are exalted.”

Job 36:8 And if they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction;

Job 36:9 Then he showeth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded.

“And if they are bound in fetters and caught in the cords of affliction, then He declares to them their work and their transgressions, that they are behaving arrogantly.”

Job 36:10 He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.

“He opens their ears to instruction, and commands that they return from iniquity.”

Job 36:11 If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures.

“If they hearken and serve Him, they complete their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasantness.”

Job 36:12 But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge.

“But if they do not hearken, they perish by the sword, and die without knowledge.” Elihu was saying that if a king is reigning and he does wickedly, God punishes him. In the overall view, that is true, but not necessarily in the present life. An example of judgment in the present life is when Nebuchadnezzar was punished for his haughtiness in saying, “Behold all that *I* have done”; he was made to eat grass for seven years. He received punishment in the present life because he was a picture, but that is not the usual case.

Elihu was following some of the arguments of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar.

Job 36:13 But the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath: they cry not when he bindeth them.

“The godless in heart cherish anger; they do not cry for help when He binds them.”

Job 36:14 They die in youth, and their life is among the unclean.

“They die in youth, and their life ends in shame.” Elihu was saying that the godless die at a young age because they are too proud to ask God for forgiveness. And he said their lives end in shame. This also is not necessarily true.

Job 36:15 He delivereth the poor in his affliction, and openeth their ears in oppression.

“He delivers the afflicted by their affliction, and opens their ear by adversity.” Elihu was saying that by their affliction, wrongdoers are made to know they did something amiss—but do not the godly suffer too? And the godly can suffer because they did something *right* that another party did not like.

Job 36:16 Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait into a broad place, where there is no straitness; and that which should be set on thy table should be full of fatness.

“He also allured you out of distress into a broad place where there was no cramping, and what was set on your table was full of fatness.”

Job 36:17 But thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked: judgment and justice take hold on thee.

“But you are full of the judgment on the wicked; judgment and justice seize you, Job.”

Job 36:18 Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.

“Beware lest wrath entice you into scoffing; and let not the greatness of the ransom turn you aside.”

Job 36:19 Will he esteem thy riches? no, not gold, nor all the forces of strength.

“Will your cry avail to keep you from distress, or all the force of your strength?”

Job 36:20 Desire not the night, when people are cut off in their place.

“Do not long for the night when people are cut off in their place.”

Job 36:21 Take heed, regard not iniquity: for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.

“Take heed, do not turn to iniquity, for this you have chosen rather than affliction.” Job was very sorrowful, for he had lost everything, as it were, except the little thread of life. Then he wished that he had not been born and that he could die, but that is understandable. Elihu could talk big and grand and nobly because he was *not the one* going through the affliction.

Job 36:22 Behold, God exalteth by his power: who teacheth like him?

“Behold, God is exalted in His power; who is a teacher like Him?”

Job 36:23 Who hath enjoined him his way? or who can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity?

“Who has prescribed for Him His way, or who can say, ‘Thou hast done wrong?’” Elihu stated that Job had said God was punishing him unjustly. Job, in great anguish, could not understand why he was being afflicted when he so loved God, yet he had said, “Though He slay me, I will trust Him.” His good statements, like this one, were forgotten.

When someone is undergoing a severe experience, we should not judge his life by isolated words uttered under extreme pressure. A person should be judged by his or her *heart intention*.

Job 36:24 Remember that thou magnify his work, which men behold.

“Remember to extol His work, of which men have sung.”

Job 36:25 Every man may see it; man may behold it afar off.

“All men have looked on it; man beholds it from afar.”

Job 36:26 Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out.

“Behold, God is great, and we know Him not; the number of His years is unsearchable.”

Job 36:27 For he maketh small the drops of water: they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof:

Job 36:28 Which the clouds do drop and distil upon man abundantly.

“For He draws up the drops of water, He distils His mist in rain which the skies pour down, and drop upon man abundantly.”

Job 36:29 Also can any understand the spreadings of the clouds, or the noise of his tabernacle?

“Can anyone understand the spreading of the clouds, the thunderings of His pavilion?”

Job 36:30 Behold, he spreadeth his light upon it, and covereth the bottom of the sea.

“Behold, He scatters His lightning about Him, and covers the roots of the sea.”

Job 36:31 For by them judgeth he the people; he giveth meat in abundance.

“For by these He judges peoples; He gives food in abundance.”

Job 36:32 With clouds he covereth the light; and commandeth it not to shine by the cloud

that cometh betwixt.

“He covers His hands with the lightning, and commands it to strike the mark.”

In the last few verses, Elihu was saying that God can throw lightning bolts like a dart wherever He wants, and He can suck up the water of the sea through evaporation. Consider the Hudson River, which starts as a stream and ends with a great volume of water pouring constantly into the Atlantic Ocean. That volume of water is made possible by rain falling and draining into it. And the rain is produced by the evaporation process, which goes on continually, silently, and invisibly. This process, whereby the water is gathered up into clouds, is tremendous.

Elihu was speaking here with the tongue of an angel, as it were. He had great capability, but some of his analyses were faulty.

Job 36:33 The noise thereof showeth concerning it, the cattle also concerning the vapour.

“Its crashing declares concerning Him, who is jealous with anger against iniquity.”

Job 37:1 At this also my heart trembleth, and is moved out of his place.

“At this also my heart trembles, and leaps out of its place.” Sometimes in a thunderstorm, Elihu’s heart leaped because of the majesty and power manifested in that storm.

Job 37:2 Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth out of his mouth.

“Hearken to the thunder of His voice and the rumbling that comes from His mouth.” At times, the thunder will rumble for a while and then crash.

Job 37:3 He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth.

“Under the whole heaven He lets it go, and His lightning to the corners of the earth.”

Job 37:4 After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of his excellency; and he will not stay them when his voice is heard.

“After it His voice roars”; that is, after lightning flashes, the thunder is heard, for from man’s perspective, sound travels a little more slowly than the light.

“He thunders with His majestic voice, and He does not restrain the lightnings when His voice is heard.”

Job 37:5 God thundereth marvellously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend.

“God thunders wondrously with His voice; He does great things which we cannot comprehend.”

Job 37:6 For he saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth; likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength.

“For to the snow He says, ‘Fall on the earth’; and to the shower and the rain, ‘Be strong.’”

Job 37:7 He sealeth up the hand of every man; that all men may know his work.

“He seals up the hand of every man, that all men may know His work.” When the God of nature speaks in a mighty rain or sirocco or monsoon, man stops. Man may have been laboring, but when God speaks with majesty, the labor stops and man is put in his place.

Job 37:8 Then the beasts go into dens, and remain in their places.

“Then the beasts go into their lairs, and remain in their dens.”

Job 37:9 Out of the south cometh the whirlwind: and cold out of the north.

“From its chamber comes the whirlwind, and cold from the scattering winds.”

Job 37:10 By the breath of God frost is given: and the breadth of the waters is straitened.

“By the breath of God ice is given, and the broad waters are frozen fast.”

Job 37:11 Also by watering he wearieth the thick cloud: he scattereth his bright cloud:

“He loads the thick cloud with moisture; the clouds scatter His lightning.”

Verses 8-11 contain several thoughts. What God does affects both animals and man; for example, some animals go into hibernation in the winter months. What seems little in God’s sight is so *powerful* that animals and man react and find they are constrained to do certain things.

Job 37:12 And it is turned round about by his counsels: that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth.

“They turn round and round by His guidance, to accomplish all that He commands them on the face of the habitable world.”

Job 37:13 He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy.

“Whether for correction, or for His land, or for love, He causes it to happen.” In other words, storms happen for several reasons; three are given here: (1) for correction, (2) to benefit the land, and (3) for love.

Job 37:14 Hearken unto this, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.

“Hear this, O Job; stop and consider the wondrous works of God.”

Job 37:15 Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused the light of his cloud to shine?

“Do you know how God lays His command upon them, and causes the lightning of His cloud to shine?”

Job 37:16 Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge?

Job 37:17 How thy garments are warm, when he quieteth the earth by the south wind?

“Do you know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of Him who is perfect in

knowledge, you whose garments are hot when the earth is still because of the south wind?" When it rains, clothing gets wet. When the earth is still and hot because of a south wind, clothing feels too hot. The dry, hot wind creeps in and brings everything to a standstill because animals and man feel exhausted. This is especially true in certain areas of the earth.

Job 37:18 Hast thou with him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten lookingglass?

"Can you, like Him, spread out the skies, hard as a molten mirror?" The "molten mirror" refers to a cloudless day in the desert when the sun is so blinding in its brightness that the eyes must be shielded.

Job 37:19 Teach us what we shall say unto him; for we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness.

"Teach us what we shall say to Him; we cannot draw up our case because of darkness."

Job 37:20 Shall it be told him that I speak? if a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up.

"Shall it be told Him that I would speak? Did a man ever wish that he would be swallowed up?" In referring back to Job's lamentation "I wish I were dead," Elihu was saying, "Look at all the great things God does. Your wishing to die is foolish talk." Maybe Job was talking foolishly under that circumstance, but his sufferings must be taken into consideration.

Job 37:21 And now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds: but the wind passeth, and cleanseth them.

"And now men cannot look on the light when it is bright in the skies [in the desert], when the wind has passed and cleared them."

Job 37:22 Fair weather cometh out of the north: with God is terrible majesty.

"Out of the north comes golden splendor; God is clothed with awesome majesty."

Job 37:23 Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict.

"The Almighty—we cannot find Him; He is great in power and justice, and abundant righteousness He will not violate."

Job 37:24 Men do therefore fear him: he respecteth not any that are wise of heart.

"Therefore men fear Him; He does not regard any who are wise in their own conceit."

This verse completes the words of Elihu, and we see that he was not quite as impartial as he had purported to be. He was a young man, and he attributed some inaccuracies to Job. Although Elihu wrote this portion of the Book of Job, his honesty and sincerity of heart were one thing, and his ability to discriminate and judge was another. In honesty of heart, he recorded for future generations to see—unabridged and without alteration, as it were—his own arguments as well as those of the three supposed comforters. But the facts went towards Job, as we shall see, for *God did intervene and answer Job*. And God's answer came after Elihu had told Job, "You are presumptuous to think that God will answer you."

Also, in the allegory in the beginning of the book, Satan had said to God, "No wonder Job

serves you when he receives so many temporal benefits. It pays him to give you that reverence. Take away his benefits and possessions, and then see what he does.” Job’s experience was a contest between God and the Adversary. The point is that originally, as with Job, Elihu did not know about this allegory. Otherwise, he would not have talked the way he did. Instead the allegory of the contest between God and Satan is the *explanation of why Job suffered*. That introduction to the book explains that Job was *innocent* of the charges hurled against him. His testing was permitted to show *his faithfulness* and *God’s wisdom* in honoring Job with wisdom, wealth, etc. The allegory was revealed later, and may have been personally revealed to Elihu to humble him. One thing for sure, Elihu was present when God answered Job, and this helped him to come to his senses.

The question to be eventually answered is, Whom do the three comforters and Elihu represent? On the one hand, the three were reprimanded, and Elihu was just brushed aside and ignored. On the other hand, Job was answered, honored, and vindicated. Elihu definitely wrongly accused Job of things he had not done.

Job 38:1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,

The Lord now began to answer Job. First, it is very unusual for *God Himself* to speak in great detail to a member of the human family. Jesus, of course, had direct communion with Him in prayer. Moses was the other exception, for God gave him instructions on how to build the Tabernacle with its measurements and on the rituals, ceremonies, and moral obligations of the Law. Moses recorded God’s statements to him and repeated them to the children of Israel, but the emotional impact of God’s conversation was largely absent in the recording because of the nature of the communion, which was in the form of instruction. In the Lord’s response to Job, however, we are given perspectives with regard to God’s thinking on certain subjects, and these perspectives are extremely important. The uniqueness of the experience should cause us to go over and over God’s words in this book.

God’s answering Job “out of the whirlwind” calls attention to how He communicated with the Prophet Ezekiel. In the first chapter, a cloud came from the north, and then Ezekiel was given a pictorial vision of Jehovah with the living cherubim. Here in the Book of Job, God spoke out of a *power* picture, out of a whirlwind. The whirlwind added to the majesty of God’s voice, and the cloud enshrouded Him, giving the impression that He was actually in that cloud. The cloud was like His garment, or cloak, and out of its midst, He spoke.

A mixture of the King James and the Revised Standard Version, plus some words for clarification, will be used to narrate the Lord’s response.

Job 38:2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?

We know that God was directing His words to Job because of verse 1, but it seems that the words were uttered to particularly benefit Elihu, even though he was not named. Elihu also had a multitude of words; he continually spoke for six chapters. When he paused, Job remained silent and did not interrupt him. This was a different reaction than with the three comforters, for after each of them spoke (and several times), Job offered a rebuttal. Therefore, verse 2 applies to all of them but especially to Elihu.

While Elihu was giving his long discourse to Job, he noticed a storm gathering in the distance. As the storm approached, he described the majesty of God as seen in that storm. The lightning and thunder caused his heart to tremble. In other words, the storm was actually a *living experience* at the time. Sequence: the storm came, there was silence, the Lord answered Job out of the cloud.

Job 38:3 Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.

“Stand up, pay attention, and listen to my charges concerning you.”

Earlier Job had stated that he wished he could have an audience with God, but such an audience seemed unlikely because of God’s majesty and Job’s being a human being—and especially in view of God’s silence toward Job. Therefore, the very fact that this communication took place is significant.

Job 38:4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.

The Lord began His response by referring to planet Earth (verses 4-7). God was putting Job in his place. Because Job was limited in time, place, and circumstance, he was unaware of many things.

Job 38:5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?

“Who determined or thought out architecturally the measurements of planet Earth?” Of course Job knew God had created the earth, and he had even stated this fact in one of his discourses. Nevertheless, God wanted to state things in His own way and format, despite any repetition. In fact, some of what He said even echoed certain remarks the three comforters had made. (Of the five individuals, Job was the most eloquent and intelligent.)

“Who stretched the line upon the earth?” Not only did God theoretically envision the earth and how it should be made, but He performed it exactly as planned.

Job 38:6 Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;

“Where are the foundation bases of the earth fastened or sunk?” Earlier Job had properly said that God “hangeth the earth on nothing” (Job 26:7). But even though the earth hung upon nothing, it was more secure than if all the concrete of the world were poured in a pit to make a foundation. It was more secure than any man-made structure could ever be. Therefore, the earth had *invisible* “foundations.”

The thought of foundation bases being sunk reminds us of the Great Pyramid, for in geometric form, it is a symbol of the earth expressed mathematically. Nevertheless, the *invisible* part of the earth was the main part of this argument. We gain tremendous information from what God said to Job. Later the philosophical approach will be taken.

Job 38:7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

The “morning stars” would be the Logos and Lucifer. All of the angels shouted for joy at the unique creation of a physical universe, out of which God paid particular attention to the earth, small as it was. It was *here* that God made man. The angels were very much interested in this new physical creation with the formation of continents, seas, green trees, etc.

Job 38:8 Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?

Verses 8-11 describe how God formed the seas and oceans. Previously the earth was without form and entirely covered with water. No solid land appeared until the Creative Days when

order was being established.

Job 38:9 When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it,

The analogy of an infant is used. The newly created earth was like a little infant in God's hands, and the swaddling band, or wrapping, was the water above the earth. This verse helps to substantiate the Vailian theory.

Job 38:10 And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors,

“And set bounds and limitations for it”; that is, limitations were set for the oceans. Each ocean had a prescribed boundary: the Atlantic Ocean, the Indian Ocean, and so forth.

Job 38:11 And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?

“And said, Thus far shalt thou come, but no farther; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?” Those who live near the shore with a pounding surf realize the great power of water. Especially during a storm, the water crashes against rocks, but even then, the water goes just so far and no farther. Thus not only can the power of the water be seen but also the power of the decree “thus far and no farther.”

Job was much like Solomon in observing nature (physical things) as well as moral laws.

Job 38:12 Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place;

Verses 12-15 give another aspect of the earth: light and darkness, which are peculiar to planet Earth. Daylight and darkness alternate.

“Have you commanded the dawning of the morning in your lifetime?” God was putting Job in his place. Not only did He ask, “Where were you when the earth was founded?” but “Where were you when the sun was established in its course?” A strategy was involved here.

“Have you ... caused the dayspring on high to know its place?” In other words, who determines that the sun comes up the same place each day (relatively speaking)? God was saying, “You were not even here when this was ordered, and you cannot change this.” It is inevitable that the sunrise comes.

Job 38:13 That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it?

“That it might take hold of the end of the earth's night bed cover?” In other words, when the sun comes up in the morning, the night blanket is lifted up at its corners, and certain peculiar things occur. This is highly poetic and figurative language. When God takes hold of the night blanket, the wicked are shaken out of it. In past ages, without modern conveniences, evil men were especially active at night. God was saying that in the past, thieves and wicked ones operated at night. As soon as daylight came—when daylight ruled—the wicked went back into their holes, as it were. The darkness hated the light. (Of course this is a general statement, for wickedness occurs in the daytime too.) Just as at nighttime, the nocturnal animals come out and do their feeding and then recede in the daylight, so the wicked operate similarly.

Job 38:14 It is turned as clay to the seal; and they stand as a garment.

“The earth is changed like clay under the seal, so that things now stand forth like one arrayed in a garment.” When the seal is down in the clay, the image is covered—like at nighttime—but as soon as the seal is lifted, we see all the impressions. Form, sense, and order are seen in the design of that seal. And so, when the night blanket is lifted up, that which before was blurred in darkness and without form or shape is now glorious and beautiful before us. Mountains, plains, and rivers can all be seen. A beautiful picture is before us like a seal. When the seal is down, man cannot see under it, but when the seal is lifted, man can see the beauty of nature.

Job 38:15 And from the wicked their light is withholden, and the high arm shall be broken.

“From the wicked, their light is withheld, and their uplifted arm is broken.” To the wicked, darkness is light. When the wicked are deprived of darkness, they are being deprived of their “light.” When nighttime is removed, the power and success of the nefarious deeds of the wicked are stopped. Their wicked deeds are stopped by daylight—the uplifted arm of the wicked is put down by daylight. It is just the opposite with the righteous. To the righteous, light is truth and joy.

Next, starting with verse 16, God talked to Job about the height, breadth, and depth of earth’s domain.

Job 38:16 Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?

“Have you entered into the springs of the sea? or have you walked through the recesses of the deep?”; that is, “Do you know much about the ocean floor? Do you know how deep it is?” In some places, the ocean is nine miles deep, and there are underwater sources in the seabed; water is supplied to the oceans from underwater springs. “Do you know much about these underwater springs in the ocean?” In Job’s day, it was beyond man’s capability to know such things. Scuba divers can go down only about 30 feet.

Job 38:17 Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?

“Have the gates of death been revealed to you? or have you seen the doors of the shadow of death?” In other words, “Do you know the mechanics of death? have you gone to the doors of death and seen them?” Again this language is high imagery, but this is God’s language and we want to know His thinking, which differs from our customary thinking. The philosophy as to why God responded this way becomes more and more important because this is how He answered Job, who did not understand the reason for his affliction and suffering. God is on an elevated plane and does not stoop down to our level on certain things. He must answer in His own sedate, sublime manner.

Job 38:18 Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare if thou knowest it all.

In olden times, one might go on a long journey, but when he reached his destination, what lay ahead looked just as far away. Today we know the earth is 25,000 miles in circumference, but back there man was limited to just the Middle East.

“Declare if you know.” God was challenging Job. There was a motivation behind this challenge.

Job 38:19 Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof,

“Where is the way to the dwelling of light? where is the place of darkness?” In other words, “Where is the home, or dwelling, of light?” Even today not too much is known about the phenomenon of light. It is still a mystery, like electricity. Much is known about mechanics, but much remains to be known.

Job 38:20 That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof, and that thou shouldest know the paths to the house thereof?

“That you should travel to its territory and discern the path thereof [the path leading to that destination]?” In other words, “Where is the dwelling of light that you can now travel to that place?” We know the sun is 92-plus million miles away, but the fact that it is ever burning and never seems to be consumed is a mystery.

Job 38:21 Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born? or because the number of thy days is great?

Now God used sarcasm toward Job. “You know because you were born then? and the number of your days is great?” Remember, the three comforters and Elihu were listening.

Job 38:22 Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail,

Job 38:23 Which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?

“Have you entered into the treasures of the snow? have you seen the treasures of hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble and the day of battle and war?” God was not asking, “Have you looked under a microscope and seen the intricate variety of patterns?” Rather, the questions pertained to where snow and hail come from, where they are formulated, but there is also a suggestion of a symbolic nature. The symbolic aspect will not be covered at this time, however, because these discourses are concentrating on Job’s affliction.

“*Treasures of the snow*” indicate Noah’s Ark is buried in snow. Possibly the Ark will be discovered as we near the Time of Trouble. As we get to those days, certain things will be revealed. The “hail” will particularly be revealed in God’s judgment against Gog when Gog and Magog go down against Israel. Thus the “day of battle and war” for which the hail has been reserved is the deliverance of the Holy Remnant out of Jacob’s Trouble. Thus the treasures (“storehouses”—RSV) of snow and hail are oriented to the end of the age.

Job 38:24 By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth?

Verses 24-30 have to do with the source of light and of rain.

“What is the way to the place where light is distributed, or where is the east wind scattered upon the face of the earth?” Previously God had said, “You do not know much about the *source* of light and darkness.” Now He added, “You do not even know the destination?” The pathway to the dwelling is one thing, but now the question was, “How far does this light go?” Today, through science, we know that half the earth is illuminated with sunlight at any given time, and half is under darkness, but back there such a definition could not have been given. “Where are the defining marks? Where do both light and darkness end at one time?” One who was up in the sky in Job’s day (God) could have looked down and seen the definition. Man down here was very limited as to the breadth and scope of the earth, as well as to the extremities of light and darkness.

Job 38:25 Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder;

“Who has cleft a channel for torrential rain, or a way for thunder’s lightning?” When lightning goes forth, it follows a path, but the intricacy of that path is not well understood. For one thing, the path can be very irregular or very direct depending upon the type of storm. There is a purpose in lightning, but man knows little about it. There is a science to weather, but weather is so fickle that man does not know it is a science.

“Who determines the pathway of lightning? What are the mathematics of lightning? What about the rain down here? It follows wadis or ravines and thus goes in certain areas and paths.” One who was in the heavens (God) could see the whole pathway down and where it leads. God had a strategy in calling attention to these happenings in nature.

Job 38:26 To cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein there is no man;

In other words, God has purposed that even the most arid places on earth will, in due time, receive rain. There is an appointed time for rain. The suggestion is that in spite of the irregularity of light and its mathematics, in spite of the seeming waste of water that rushes like an express train down wadis and disappears in the desert, there is an underlying purpose. Even though the water goes on desert wasteland, it has a purpose. For example, great reservoirs of water are deep underneath the desert (such as Sinai).

Job 38:27 To satisfy the desolate and waste ground; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth?

“To *satisfy* the desert and the wasteland.” Verse 27 proves there is a purpose to rain falling on the desert, namely, “to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth.” It is now known that when water goes forth in the wadis, beautiful flowers grow and bloom for a short time.

Job 38:28 Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew?

Job 38:29 Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?

Job 38:30 The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen.

“Out of whose womb is ice? who gendereth the hoary frost of heaven?” In other words, God was using a mother and a father relationship in regard to nature. “Who is the father of rain and ice?” The implication is that God is *both* the Father and the Mother.

Job 38:31 Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?

The Lord now introduced the subject of the constellations and the heavens. We know that God’s throne is in the Pleiades, but here the Pleiades is mentioned from the standpoint of Job’s incapability of power and imagination and control. The Pleiades is the celestial throne of the physical universe and the seat of divine authority; all universes circumnavigate the Pleiades, even though the movement is very slow from our perspective. No one can curb the “sweet influences” of the Pleiades, the ultimate purposes of the God of Love, not only with regard to planet Earth but also with regard to other universes and other beings in the future. *All* come from that one source, and no one can curb those “sweet influences.”

The same is true of the “bands of Orion.” Some heavenly constellations remain “fixed”; they

may move, but they move as a panorama, or picture, and are coordinated together. Orion is a giant hunter in chains, as it were. “Can you loose that imagery in the sky?” The gospel is in the stars, but that subject is usually not discussed because it can lead to speculation. Nevertheless, the constellations and stars were made as “signs” and “wonders,” to be revealed ultimately, in due time.

Job 38:32 Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?

Mazzaroth is the 12 signs of the zodiac, and it is known that they change. A complete cycle, called the precession of the equinoxes, takes 25,000 years. Thus the movement of the constellations comprising the zodiac is extremely slow. God was asking, “Can you thwart the movement of the constellations, which I have preordained?” Arcturus is a giant fixed star of the first magnitude in the constellation Boötes.

Job 38:33 Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?

“Do you know the ordinances of heaven? can you set their dominion from the earth?” In other words, “You are on earth. What can you say or do?” The heavenly bodies are so far off that man stands in awe and looks at what the God of the universe has done. Man has no influence or power over them.

Job 38:34 Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee?

God started far, far away in the heavens with Pleiades, Orion, Mazzaroth, and Arcturus. Now He was saying, “From down on earth, can you even lift up your voice to the clouds in *earth's* atmosphere?” God started with examples way in the distance and came closer and closer to earth.

Job 38:35 Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?

“Can you send a message or a thought to the lightnings so that they will come to you and say, ‘Here we are. What do you want us to do?’ Do you have any control over lightnings?” As with the clouds, the lightning is in earth’s atmosphere, closer to man.

Job 38:36 Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart?

The “inward parts” would be the inner parts of the *clouds*. There is a purpose, or strategy, with the clouds: they take up water, go to certain destinations, and drop the water. They follow a path, just as trade winds do. Today trade winds can be mapped so that we can see the customary wind flow of the earth, which influences rain and other things.

Job 38:37 Who can number the clouds in wisdom? or who can stay the bottles of heaven,

“Who can number the droplets in a cloud by wisdom? Who can either hold up or tilt the water skins that are on high?” In other words, “Not only can you not call the clouds to come over here and dump their water on you, but you cannot even tilt the cloud to start with.” The clouds were being likened to a water skin.

Job 38:38 When the dust groweth into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together?

In time of drought, the ground gets rock hard. In other words, “You cannot even tilt the cloud wine skins and make it rain when the dust of the earth hardens like rock and clods cleave together.” Of course today clouds are seeded with iodide crystals to try to cause showers, but this is minimally effective and very costly.

Job 38:39 Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? or fill the appetite of the young lions,

Job 38:40 When they couch in their dens, and abide in the covert to lie in wait?

“Can you hunt the prey for lions, or satisfy the hunger of young lions, when they crouch in their dens or lie in wait in the covert?”

Job 38:41 Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat.

This verse provides an unusual ending to chapter 38. “Who provides food for the raven when its young ones cry unto God and wander about for lack of food?” This verse shows that the God of nature has an *immense multitude* of projects, and they *all* have a purpose. In spite of Job or anyone else, God has *reasons* for doing things, even though they are very, very perplexing to understand. God has a MUCH higher level of thoughts and plans than man. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:9).

Notice that in His discourse, God did not give Job one iota of information as to why he was suffering. He did not answer that question at all in His entire discourse, but He did inferentially, slowly, lead Job in this intellectual fashion to realize that the Great Being, who had done all these marvelous things, probably had a sensible reason if Job could only understand it. “Therefore, Job, who are you—you who are so limited in comprehension by time and space—to even doubt that there is a reason?” God was leading Job to think that his sufferings had a reason, but He did not tell him what that reason was. However, God did finally, *after Job’s sufferings were over*, reveal the information contained in the first chapter about the confrontation with Satan. In allegory, God had asked, “Do you see my righteous servant Job down there?” Satan replied, “Yes, but look what you are doing for him. Let me remove his blessings and then he will curse you.” The great God of the universe purposely did not stoop down to Job’s level and give this information until afterwards. Man should not get too chummy or familiar with the great Jehovah, for to do so would be dangerous. “*Hallowed be thy name!*” Not in His discourse but in His *own* time and way God revealed information to Job. Therefore, Job did get an answer—but much later.

Now God paused, as it were, before His discourse resumed in the next chapter.

Job 39:1 Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve?

“Do you know when the mountain goats bring forth?” God’s questioning of Job went from the farthest heavens (Pleiades) to earth’s atmosphere (clouds) to right here on terra firma (wild goats, hinds, etc., in verses 1-4). “Do you observe the calving of the hinds?”

Job 39:2 Canst thou number the months that they fulfil? or knowest thou the time when they bring forth?

“Can you number the months of pregnancy and birth that they fulfill? or do you know the time when they bring forth?”

Job 39:3 They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones, they cast out their sorrows.

“They [the wild goats and the hinds] bow themselves in labor and bring forth their young ones, and they cast out their sorrows [give birth relatively easily].” In the wild, the calf just drops out, as it were, whereas domestic animals (horses, cows, etc.) have to be carefully watched lest birth complications develop. The suggestion is that God has His own methods and that Divine Providence is watching over this universe, even though very perplexing things seemingly happen.

Job 39:4 Their young ones are in good liking, they grow up with corn; they go forth, and return not unto them.

“When the young ones grow up in the wild, they do not return to their mothers.” For example, a young wild goat becomes part of the pack; the relationship between the newborn and the mother is lost, for they are both part of the herd.

Job 39:5 Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass?

Verses 5-8 pertain to the wild ass. “Who has left the wild ass free? or loosed the bonds of the swift ass?” By nature, wild asses have a different temperament so that it is unimaginable to tame them.

Job 39:6 Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings.

“To whom have I given the steppe [the plateau for grazing] for his home?” The wild animals do not want to get too familiar with man. In ancient times, generally speaking, man resided in valleys with the rivers and verdure and more shelter from the wind, but the wild animals dwell higher and in more remote conditions.

“To whom have I given ... the salt land for his dwelling place?” For example, much of the borax in our supermarkets comes from Death Valley. Also, a horse would not last long in the extreme heat conditions, so 20-mule teams were used in Death Valley because mules can survive the tremendous heat. Moreover, by instinct, mules can find the least blade of grass.

Job 39:7 He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver.

“He scorneth the tumult of the city, and neither does He regard the crying of the driver.” Trying to harness a wild ass would cause complete disorder, for wildness is ingrained in them. And there is a reason for this! *All* animals and insects will have a pictorial lesson for man in the distant future. After the Millennial Age is complete, in the countless ages beyond, God’s wisdom will be seen in *all* of these creatures, for *God* created them with their idiosyncrasies and odd or unique behavior. Some even look quite disgusting when they are seen under a magnifying glass, but if the symbolic imagery were seen, every little component part would have a lesson. There are reasons for the great variety, but the explanation is reserved for the future.

Job 39:8 The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing.

“The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searches for every green thing.”

Job 39:9 Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib?

Verses 9-12 pertain to the wild ox. (The “unicorn” is the wild ox; a one-horned animal is not

indicated here.) “Is the wild ox willing to serve you? Will he spend the night at your crib?”

Job 39:10 Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee?

“Can you bind him in the furrow with ropes, or will he harrow the valleys after you?”

Job 39:11 Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great? or wilt thou leave thy labour to him?

“Will you depend on him because his strength is great, and will you leave to him your labor?” The thought is, “Can you capitalize on the potential strength of this animal and make it plow for you?”

Job 39:12 Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn?

“Do you have faith in him that he will return, and bring home your grain and gather it into your barn?”

Job 39:13 Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks? or wings and feathers unto the ostrich?

Next to be considered are the peacock and the ostrich in verses 13-18. “Gavest thou goodly wings unto the peacocks? or ... unto the ostrich?” Peacocks spread their plumage in a semicircle with a beautiful array of colors. Here was a contradiction: On the one hand, the peacock appears to be a useful bird because its gorgeous display delights the beholder with beauty and pleasure. On the other hand, the gangly ostrich appears ungainly, and its wings, feathers, and pinions do not seem to be of much value. After all, the ostrich has such a heavy body that its wings could never lift it off the ground, so one might ask, “Why does the ostrich have useless wings?” True, the wings are useless for flying above the ground, but they do have a function. Therefore, God was suggesting that there *is a reason* for the wings of both birds.

Job 39:14 Which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in dust,

Job 39:15 And forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them.

The female ostrich lays her eggs together, arranges them for the new progeny to come forth, and then ignores them. But she does have a purpose, or strategy. When the young come forth from the centralized eggs, they feed on the outer eggs. This enables them to survive out in the open, barren land exposed to the elements. Gaining sufficient strength from feeding on the outer eggs, the little ones go forth on their own.

In the future, the wondrous lessons illustrated by all of God’s creatures will be revealed to the world.

Job 39:16 She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers: her labour is in vain without fear;

The female ostrich is without fear with regard to what will happen to her eggs.

Job 39:17 Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding.

Notice that *God* deprived the female ostrich of wisdom, not Satan. God, the Creator, purposely did this. He has a reason for everything. “Neither hath He imparted to her understanding.” The element of understanding and memory is absent in the ostrich and other similar birds.

Job 39:18 What time she lifteth up herself on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider.

With regard to the peculiar wings of the ostrich, “when she rouses herself to flee, she laughs at the horse and his rider.” These wings, which cannot lift the bird into flight, help her accelerate so rapidly that a man on a horse cannot catch her, and she seems to laugh at the rider as if it is a game. Although a horse is swift, it is no match for the ostrich.

In all of these examples, God was implying to Job, “Although you do not understand something, *there is a reason.*” Without directly answering Job as to the reason for his suffering, God gave him small bits of information about the heavens, animals, birds, etc. With the ostrich, God said, “The wings of the female ostrich are beneficial when she lifts herself up and runs to escape.”

Job 39:19 Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?

Verses 19-25 pertain to the horse. “Have you given the horse his strength? have you clothed his neck with thunder?” Since Job did not have any horses (just camels, sheep, etc.), the reference was probably to horses used for warfare. The horse, being somewhat dexterous and flexible in motion, is better for warfare than other animals.

How is the horse’s neck “clothed with *thunder*”? The horse has a long and powerful neck. (In fact, people can even ride the neck.) When a horse is angry or obstreperous, its neck is alarming to look at. Not only is the neck powerful, but a horse is emotional. When it is agitated, its neck vibrates, shaking the mane. Also, the neighing sound of an angry horse is powerful—like “thunder,” as it were.

Job 39:20 Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? the glory of his nostrils is terrible.

Grasshoppers are easily agitated as a person walks through a field. God was asking, “Is the horse afraid as the timid grasshopper?” From a side view, a grasshopper resembles a horse in some respects.

“The glory of his nostrils is terrible.” An angry horse can open its nostrils to look dreadful. However, a short man who knows how can control a large horse, for the horse’s eyes magnify a person to a size much greater than he actually is. Thus a horse thinks he is meeting his match. Nevertheless, if a horse thinks it can intimidate a person, it will. A horse can smell if a person is afraid.

God was asking, “Can you make a horse afraid?” A warhorse, realizing its master wants it to go fearlessly into battle, is only too happy to perform.

Job 39:21 He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men.

Opposite the enemy and ready for battle, the warhorse paws the ground impatiently. The horse “rejoiceth in his [own] strength.” When the charge takes place, the horse with its rider is eager to comply, even though mortal combat is involved.

Job 39:22 He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword.

A sword would mean nothing to the horse. Today, in fact, gifted riders in Spain use their knees to steer a horse in connection with bullfighting or to show their dexterity. The horse runs directly at the bull, and at the last minute, the rider guides the horse with his knee to just miss the bull's horns. The well-trained horse obeys with absolute fearlessness because of the rider. It does not deviate one iota unless the rider gives the signal.

Job 39:23 The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield.

The rattling of a quiver, spear, or shield against the horse tends to magnify its enthusiasm, rather than strike fear in the animal. The sound and clatter of clanging weapons excite the horse.

Job 39:24 He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet.

The horse swallows the ground with fierceness and rage, and cannot stand still at the sound of the trumpet. It is trained to know that the sound of a trumpet or bugle means to *charge*. Therefore, once the signal is given, even the rider cannot stop the horse, who is impatient to run.

Job 39:25 He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.

When the trumpet sounds the charge, the horse is happy, saying, as it were, "At last! Aha!" The horse loses *all fear of danger*. These qualities are bred into the warhorse.

Job 39:26 Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings toward the south?

Verses 26-30 concern the hawk and the eagle.

"Does the hawk fly by your wisdom, and stretch her wings toward the south?" In traveling in ancient times, people had to cross certain barriers. Sometimes a person could save several hundred miles by going through an arid desert to get from one town to another, but there were risks and dangers. Animals and human beings could meet with tragedy in the desert—losing their sense of direction or running out of water, for example. Meanwhile, hawks and buzzards would fly and wheel around in the sky toward the "south" (the desert), for they could sense when one was near death. Stretching "wings toward the south" pertains to the buzzard family's sensitivity to potential carrion.

Job 39:27 Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high?

The eagle habitually flies higher than any other bird. The heights of the air and mountain ranges are its realm.

Job 39:28 She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place.

The eagle dwells on pinnacles and crags in the rock.

Job 39:29 From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off.

Job 39:30 Her young ones also suck up blood: and where the slain are, there is she.

Verse 30 is very informative with regard to Matthew 24:28. In the present life, the Lord's

people feed on the dead humanity of Christ. The philosophy of the death of Christ is now available to them; the *reason* can be understood, whereas Christians of past ages proceeded on just plain faith.

Notice, eagles do not prefer carrion that has been dead long enough to stink. When an animal is weakened or freshly dead, the eagle pounces on its prey. For the young eaglets to “suck up blood” means that the animal could not have been dead long, or the blood would have clotted. Thus the difference between an eagle and a vulture is apparent, for the vulture likes carrion dead for some time.

As the next two chapters are considered, continuing with God’s response to Job and the technique used in communicating with him, we will understand how His reasoning affected Job. Job was an extremely strong character, but we will see how God approached him and broke him down and softened him with words. Job had true integrity, but it was off-balance and egocentric. He became malleable in God’s hands and, as a result of this experience, even more mature in character.

Job 40:1 Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said,

The Lord now brought His response down to a more personal level.

Job 40:2 Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.

“Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty? He that casts aspersions on God, let him answer it.” A pause would have followed in which God waited for Job to reply.

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

Job now briefly answered the Lord.

Job 40:4 Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.

Here we see Job’s reaction. “Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I lay my hand upon my mouth.”

Job 40:5 Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.

“I have spoken once, and I will not answer; twice, but I will proceed no further.” This was Job’s reply to the question directed to him by God in verse 2, when He described Job as a faultfinder. God requires *perfect* obedience, normally speaking. Therefore, when He found fault with Job, it was on a certain technical level, for He had to keep His office on a dignified stratum. When we take into consideration Job’s circumstances and the duress he was under, he behaved admirably as an imperfect human being. Nevertheless, with God’s standard being *perfect*, Job’s questioning as to why he was experiencing this evil cast aspersion or reflection upon God’s character.

Having heard God’s testimony in the previous two chapters, Job was breathless. He held his hand on his mouth in astonishment and perplexity as to what he could now say. He did not admit that he had done some peculiar wrong to make him culpable for the disease and sufferings that afflicted him, but he admitted that he was “vile”; that is, he admitted that as an imperfect human being, he was but of clay.

Job spoke “once” after each of the supposed comforters criticized him and offered advice. But

he also replied after a second round of criticism and advice. Therefore, Job spoke “twice” after each of the second series of discourses when he again offered rebuttal and defended his integrity. Thus the “once” and the “twice” refer to the two series of replies that Job had previously uttered in his defense.

“I will proceed no further.” Job had no further comment to make after hearing God’s words, but the words had not yet produced the effect God intended. Job had been humbled in the sense that he now admitted he should not have questioned God, for he was defenseless as a clay human being.

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

Still speaking out of the whirlwind, God now began to soften up Job in another manner. His voice continued to emanate from this turbulent cloud, which represented His omnipotent strength and power.

Job 40:7 Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.

God expected Job to give an answer when He finished what He was about to say. “You stand before me and give me an answer.”

Job 40:8 Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?

“Wilt thou also disannul my judgment?” Remember that Job had a serious affliction and he was questioning why this calamity had befallen him. In the continuing posture he had assumed in earlier chapters, he questioned the necessity for his experience since he had not done anything to justify it. But God now criticized him for even questioning. Job should have reasoned, “I do not know why God is permitting this affliction, but I have to trust that in His judgment and wisdom, it is the best thing for me. I should not question God’s providence in this matter.” However, to reason this way under extreme suffering is easier said than done. We can sit at a table and theoretically discuss how Job should have done this or that, but what would we have done under similar circumstances? The point is that theoretically God requires *absolute obedience and faith*.

“Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?” In other words, Job was very insistent that he had not done anything especially wrong to merit his experiences, but he was so self-centered in his thinking that he forgot to always give God a creditable response in faith for each of his experiences.

Job 40:9 Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?

Job 40:10 Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty.

God used sarcasm: “Job, deck yourself now with majesty and excellency. Array yourself with glory and with beauty!”

Job 40:11 Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and behold every one that is proud, and abase him.

“Take my position. Put yourself in my place. Let us hear the thunder of your voice. Cast abroad the rage of your wrath.” When God thunders with power, when a blast comes forth from His nostrils, man trembles.

“Behold everyone who is proud, and abase him.” In other words, “From the position of authority that you have, Job, let us see what you can do to control or abase the proud people in the earth.” No matter how strong an individual is mentally, morally, or physically, what can he do to deter the powers of evil? He is no match at all. God wanted Job to feel his impotence and inability to stop evil.

Job 40:12 Look on every one that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place.

Of course Job could not abase all of the proud and tread down the wicked, and he knew it.

Job 40:13 Hide them in the dust together; and bind their faces in secret.

“Hide them in the dust together”; that is, “Put them in the grave, bury them, so that they can no longer do their nefarious deeds.”

“Bind their faces in secret.” The burial custom was to wrap the face. Not only was a person (and his proud demeanor) laid *unseen* beneath the surface of the earth (abased in the grave), but the face was covered with a cloth.

Job 40:14 Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.

“If you can do these things, Job, then I will give you a little more credit.”

Job 40:15 Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox.

Verses 15-24 switch to thoughts on the “behemoth.” “Just as I made you as a human being, so I made the behemoth, which eats grass like an ox.”

Job 40:16 Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly.

“The strength of the behemoth is in his loins, and his power is in the muscles of his belly.”

Job 40:17 He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together.

“He makes his tail stiff like a cedar, and the sinews of his thighs are knit together.”

Job 40:18 His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron.

“His bones are as tubes of bronze; his limbs are like bars of iron.”

Job 40:19 He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him.

“Of the works of God, the behemoth is unique; He that made him can make the sword to approach him.” In other words, God, who made the creature, can cause it to respond to His wish. God has complete authority over this beast.

Prior to this part of the discourse, God spoke about wild animals and their characteristic behavior, but now He was discussing creatures of a higher level of ferocity and untameability. This is one factor that helps determine what the behemoth is.

Job 40:20 Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play.

Job 40:21 He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens.

Job 40:22 The shady trees cover him with their shadow; the willows of the brook compass him about.

“For his shade the lotus trees cover him; willows of the brook surround him.”

Job 40:23 Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.

“Behold, if the river is turbulent, the behemoth is not frightened; he is confident though Jordan rush against his mouth.”

Job 40:24 He taketh it with his eyes: his nose pierceth through snares.

“Can one capture him with his eyes? Can one pierce his nose through with snares?”

What is the “behemoth”? Various Bible translators are in a quandary as to how to identify this particular animal. Some say it is the elephant; others, the hippopotamus. However, neither of these two conclusions answers all of the conditions described. Perhaps the behemoth is the rhinoceros—for several reasons. This creature’s habitat is both dry land and water. But there is no suggestion that it has great agility for swimming. Rather, it delights in swampy, muddy areas and also goes into the fields. There other animals cavort and play, without fear, around this ferocious beast, for the behemoth eats grass and thus is not carnivorous. The literal Hebrew indicates the behemoth can devour much water. Also, it is confident in turbulent water, as are the elephant, the hippopotamus, and the rhinoceros because of their bulk, weight, and strength. The suggestion seems to be that this animal cannot be tamed, which fits the rhinoceros, whereas the elephant can be tamed and trained. (Of course one would not want to train a hippo because of its unwieldy condition and greater need for water.) The rhinoceros resents the presence of a human being when its liberty might in any way be threatened, and some hunters liken the rhino to an army tank. Its powerful horn can pierce through steel, so extra precautions have to be taken with a rhino in captivity. The hippopotamus is more acclimated to water than dry land—it does not go under the lotus trees—whereas the behemoth is equally at home on land and in water. To eat grass like the ox means that the behemoth consumes most of its food on dry land.

Certain wealthy people in this country who realize that the rhinoceros is facing extinction have transported some of these animals into the Southwestern part of our country. The rhinoceros likes to lie in the shade, but there are no lotus trees in this country. The mesquite tree, a variety of the mimosa tree, is used instead, and the rhino delights to get in the shade of this tree after its appetite has been satisfied.

The comparison of the tail of the rhino to a cedar tree does not mean that the tail is long but that when the animal gets mad, anger is reflected in the tail, which rises up like a little tree with a tuft of hair at the top. Thus, when an angry rhino runs, it looks as if a little cedar tree is sticking up in back of him.

That the limbs of the rhinoceros are hard and strong is apparent to anyone who has seen the animal or pictures of it. Even though the rhino appears to be very cumbersome, the strength of its limbs is obvious.

When rhinos are brought into captivity, great care must be taken in fencing them in because of their fear of captivity. Also, the fenced-in area must be large enough to hold a sufficient food

supply for their enormous appetites.

In any event, whether the behemoth is the hippo, the elephant, or the rhino, the thought is of the ponderous size of the animal and that the Creator, who made it, can control the behemoth so that it is like a little plaything. What especially makes the rhino seem to fit the description of the behemoth here in Job is the ferocity, the ill or short temper, and the untameability.

Job 41:1 Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down?

The *entire* chapter—all of chapter 41—deals with the creature called “leviathan.” This is unusual, for in earlier chapters only portions pertained to a particular bird, animal, etc. Where “leviathan” is used elsewhere in the Old Testament, it can be applied to a whale or some other beast of mammoth proportions. However, here in the Book of Job, it is not the whale, as will be shown by subsequent details. Also, “leviathan” is closer to mankind than a whale would be; its nasty traits have been observed by man down through the ages, whereas only in recent years has man understood much about the whale.

“Leviathan” has the thought of monstrous size. The RSV reads, “Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook? or press down his tongue with a cord?” This is irony—the answer is NO!

The reference is to a crocodile, which is far more ferocious and larger than an alligator. A crocodile is a very mean creature that can eat flesh (not grass like an ox). Although the crocodile can eat other things too, it is carnivorous.

Job 41:2 Canst thou put an hook into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a thorn?

“Can you put a hook in his nose? or pierce his jaw with a barb?” In other words, a crocodile would snap a fishing line like a thread, and it would be impossible to pull him out of the water (like a fish) with a hook-like barb in his mouth.

Job 41:3 Will he make many supplications unto thee? will he speak soft words unto thee?

Remember, these questions were addressed to Job. “Will this mean creature make many supplications to you? Will he speak soft words to you?” A person would not want to be anywhere near a crocodile because of the ferocity and probability of attack. The demeanor of that creature cannot be changed.

This chapter has an allegorical structure, as will be seen.

Job 41:4 Will he make a covenant with thee? wilt thou take him for a servant for ever?

“Will the crocodile make a covenant with you?” A covenant can be made with an elephant, for example, by training it to help the farmer in India or to perform in a circus. On the other hand, man wants to stay far away from the long nose of the crocodile.

“Will you take him for your servant forever?” There are times when the crocodile is relatively docile, but he is completely unreliable. Even other creatures do not want to play around the crocodile.

Job 41:5 Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?

“Will you play with him as with a bird? Will you play with the crocodile as if he were a harmless creature?” The implication is that God can do all of these things; He could make a

harmless pet out of the crocodile and control the actions if He so desired. The questions reveal or show the Creator's *capability*.

“Will you put him on a leash for your maidens?” “For curiosity's sake, will you put crocodiles on leashes and let young women walk them like pet dogs?” The sarcasm continues. Unlike Pleiades and some examples used earlier, leviathan is a creature down here that man can see.

Job 41:6 Shall the companions make a banquet of him? shall they part him among the merchants?

“Shall traders auction over him? Will you divide him up among the merchants?” No. Alligator skin is sold for shoes, belts, etc., but not crocodile skin. The way to differentiate between baby crocodiles and baby alligators is the curvature of their jaw or mouth—is it on the top or on the bottom? The same distinction is made between poisonous and nonpoisonous snakes.

Job 41:7 Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with fish spears?

“Can you fill his skin with harpoons? or his head with fish spears?” In Job's day, the instruments for spearing fish and animals were completely inadequate to penetrate the hide of the crocodile.

Job 41:8 Lay thine hand upon him, remember the battle, do no more.

“Lay your hand upon him, think upon that battle, and you will do it no more!” The Lord was being sarcastic. “Now if you think you can go up to a crocodile and grab him, you will never forget that day, and you will do it no more—if you survive.”

Job 41:9 Behold, the hope of him is in vain: shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him?

“Behold, the hope of overcoming [or conquering] him is in vain [as far as making him a docile creature]; shall not one be dismayed even at the sight of him?” The crocodile has a very mean face. The way the eyes are set in the top of the face makes him look vicious even when immobile.

Job 41:10 None is so fierce that dare stir him up: who then is able to stand before me?

God was saying, “If you are afraid of the crocodile, then what about me, the *Creator* of this creature? You have the nerve to think about your righteousness and then begin to question, in any sense, *my* righteousness?” It is odd how some people can have such nerve before a high authority and yet fear a lower authority. Many did and said things to Jesus that they would not have done to earthly authorities.

Job 41:11 Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him? whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.

“Who hath preceded me, that I should repay him? You respect your father because he brought you forth, but who preceded me?” No one, for God is from everlasting to everlasting.

“Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.” All of the creatures, both domestic and wild, are God's—plus the minerals, flowers, herbages, etc.

Job 41:12 I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his comely proportion.

Now God returned to the crocodile. He had momentarily digressed to try to reason with Job. “When you consider these creatures, how can you question, even a little, my integrity? You are so concerned about *your* integrity—what about *mine*?” God was softening up Job.

“I will not keep silent concerning his limbs, or his mighty strength, or his well-proportioned frame.” Mechanically speaking, tremendous strength is compacted into the crocodile. There is no flabbiness, no surplus skin. In water, the crocodile is very dexterous.

Job 41:13 Who can discover the face of his garment? or who can come to him with his double bridle?

“Who can strip off his outer garment? Who can take off the skin of a crocodile?” The crocodile’s skin is so well bound to his frame that removal would be impractical.

“Who can penetrate his double coat of mail?” The crocodile is like a soldier or warrior with a coat of mail knit to his body. A natural defense is girt about the crocodile.

Job 41:14 Who can open the doors of his face? his teeth are terrible round about.

“Who can open the doors of his face?” When a crocodile clamps down his jaws with ferocity and power, who would think of opening them?

“His teeth are terrible round about.” His teeth strike terror in the beholder.

Job 41:15 His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal.

“His scales are his pride, and they are shut together as a close seal.” The plates (of armor) on the back of the crocodile overlap so that there is no seam. Thus there is no point of weakness for the hunter to attack.

Job 41:16 One is so near to another, that no air can come between them.

Job 41:17 They are joined one to another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered.

The plates cannot be separated to expose an area for penetration.

Job 41:18 By his sneezings a light doth shine, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning.

Job 41:19 Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out.

“His sneezings flash forth light, and his eyes are like the eyelids of morning. Out of his mouth ... sparks of fire leap forth.” Whenever the crocodile coughs or sneezes in the water, a spray comes out. If the sun is shining, the mist can appear to be steam and fire—especially to one who fears the creature. Sparks of fire are *imagined* to leap out.

Many animated pictures or cartoons of ferocious beasts (such as a bull) show a stream of air with a bulbous cloud at the end indicating anger. A whale will forcefully emit a geyser spout when it surfaces.

When not attacking a victim, the crocodile looks like a serenely floating log with eyes (perhaps seven eighths of the creature is submerged). The eyes are likened to the “eyelids of morning.” Just as the orb of the sun rises above the horizon, so the arches over the eyes are seen above the surface of the water. The creature seems to be so docile—until it attacks *with ferocity*.

Job 41:20 Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron.

“Out of his nostrils goes smoke, as out of a boiling pot or caldron.” When a crocodile captures prey in the water, he rolls over or circles, churning up the water with powerful muscles. The water is compared to a boiling pot.

Job 41:21 His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth.

Job 41:22 In his neck remaineth strength, and sorrow is turned into joy before him.

“In his neck abideth strength, and terror dances before him.” When the crocodile attacks a victim, the effects of the motion are apparent in the thrashing of water in the outer perimeter of his activity.

Job 41:23 The flakes of his flesh are joined together: they are firm in themselves; they cannot be moved.

“The folds of his flesh cleave together, firmly cast upon him and immovable.”

Job 41:24 His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone.

“His heart is hard as stone; yea, as hard as the nether millstone.” In other words, the crocodile is like a cold-blooded killer, showing no trace of compassion or contrition. Even though the crocodile seems to be docile, his heart is hard and cannot be tenderized.

Note: This chapter is really giving us a picture of Satan, the archenemy of God. Someday all the detail in this chapter will be explained as spiritually applicable to Satan.

Job 41:25 When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid: by reason of breakings they purify themselves.

“When he raises himself up, the mighty are afraid; by reason of the crashing, they are beside themselves.” One who witnesses a crocodile clamping down on his prey hears the terrific sound of the jaws coming together. The sight and sound cause the beholder to tremble and shudder and to subconsciously put himself in the victim’s place.

Job 41:26 The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold: the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon.

“Though the sword reaches him, it cannot hold: the spear, the dart, or the javelin.” In other words, the weapon is prone to bounce off the tough armor plating.

Job 41:27 He esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood.

Even *metal* weapons wielded or hurled by humans cannot penetrate the tough hide. The crocodile is not fearful and will not back down. If anything, the crocodile wanders toward the hunter.

Job 41:28 The arrow cannot make him flee: slingstones are turned with him into stubble.

Nor do arrows or sling stones frighten the crocodile.

Job 41:29 Darts are counted as stubble: he laugheth at the shaking of a spear.

“Clubs are counted as stubble; he laughs at the rattle of a spear.”

Job 41:30 Sharp stones are under him: he spreadeth sharp pointed things upon the mire.

“His underparts are like sharp potsherds.” A potsherd is very brittle and hard. Even the underparts, which are not coated with the double mail of the back, cannot be penetrated. (Incidentally, the alligator is softer underneath.)

“He spreads himself like a threshing sledge on the mire.” A human being who tries to go through mud is slowed down because the mud is like glue. But the crocodile has such strength in his limbs that he can churn through mud like water.

Job 41:31 He maketh the deep to boil like a pot: he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment.

If the powerful crocodile goes into a circular motion, he causes the surrounding water to form a vortex. He has a rolling motion, a threshing motion, and a circular motion. Verse 31 describes the circular motion. The vortex looks like the swirling effect of ointment.

Job 41:32 He maketh a path to shine after him; one would think the deep to be hoary.

“Behind him he leaves a shining wake; one would think the deep to be hoary.” When the crocodile slithers into the water or travels in a straight direction, so many little bubbles are formed behind him that the water looks white.

Job 41:33 Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear.

A crocodile is without fear. An elephant is frightened by a mouse because it is afraid the mouse will run up its nose. The rhinoceros is alert and tries to avoid confrontations, especially with humans, but if forced into a confrontation, the rhinoceros is so ferocious that it has been known to overturn a Jeep®.

Job 41:34 He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride.

“He beholdeth all high things; he is king over all the sons of pride.” This verse is another proof the chapter is talking about Satan, the great dragon. The analogy is one reason why we can say that all animals, birds, insects, etc., were created for symbolic lessons. God created the crocodile to portray Satan because He could see the characteristics of Satan long before they became manifest. The only One who can control the crocodile is God, who created the creature, and the same is true of Satan. Even Michael had to go to Gabriel’s aid when Satan tried to withhold him from answering Daniel’s prayer for 21 days. When created, Lucifer was bedecked with not only beauty, power, and prowess but also strength of being. Evidently, that innate physical strength was not impaired by his fall.

Satan is the king of pride. Apparently, when God said that the crocodile was “king over all the sons of pride,” Job realized that the Lord had finished talking. In Job 40:7, God had told Job to answer when the discourse was finished.

Remember, NOT ONE shred of evidence had been given to Job as to why he was suffering. God did not stoop to say, “I did this because it was a contest with Satan to prove how obedient you are to my will.” As stated earlier, Job represents The Christ. While Jesus was very knowledgeable, the body members of Christ down through the age were not. In the days of the apostles, the Church had a great deal of information and reaffirmation, but when they fell asleep and the Bible was clothed in sackcloth and ashes, resulting in a famine in the land for the

Word of God, the permission of evil was lost sight of. One proof is the text “How long, O Lord ... dost thou not judge and avenge our blood?” (Rev. 6:10). The Book of Revelation shows that many Christians were puzzled about the injustices done. In fact, many grew weary because of the long period of suffering and travail. Just as Job did not understand the reason for his sufferings, so the bulk of the Job class likewise have not understood. In prior days, faithful Christians would die for a few pages of the Bible, and they traveled long distances for meetings. Those who were faithful to what was available were rewarded accordingly. Today we have abundant information, but it is questionable as to how many of us will make our calling and election sure. Therefore, we do not see an incongruity with regard to Job’s not being fully enlightened and his losing sight of the perspective that the permission of evil upon God’s people has been a trial and a testing of their faith. Those who exercised faith and obeyed God without this understanding are treasured by Him. The Gospel Age is a calling and battle of faith.

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

Job 42:2 I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.

“I know that thou canst do all things, and that no purpose of thine can be thwarted.”

Job 42:3 Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.

“Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge? Lord, when you first addressed me, you made this statement out of the cloud, ‘Who is this that darkeneth counsel [that hideth counsel] without knowledge?’” (Job 38:2) This recall by Job shows that the ancients *retained* what they heard. For example, following a *long* rebuttal by Job, even the next of the three comforters would select points and comment on them. The ancients were good listeners—but that does not mean they listened with a proper heart attitude.

Stated another way, Job replied to God, “You asked this question ‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’ The implication was that I did. Therefore, have I uttered that which I did not understand.”

Job 42:4 Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.

“Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak. I will petition thee; do thou declare unto me.” (The word “demand” was not used in a harsh sense; the inflection was important.)

Job 42:5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.

Job 42:6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

“I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear.” In other words, “All that I know about thee, O Lord, is based upon what I have been taught in the past and the little that I observe in nature. But now my eye seeth thee.”

All Job could actually see was the whirlwind cloud and he heard God’s voice, but now he could discern a dimension that he had never understood before. What was that dimension? Before in his affliction, it was “I”: “I am righteous,” “I have maintained my integrity,” etc. Therefore, the Lord took Job on an excursion and showed him various creatures He had created and how He even fed the little ravens out in the wilderness as they cried for food. God taught Job that He

cares for His creatures, and those who observe and meditate on nature can see that care. God said that even the water that gushes through wadis and evaporates and seems to be a great waste is needed by the desert. The desert is crying for that water whether or not Job could see any appreciable difference. God cares for the rain, the wild ass, the hinds on the rocks who easily give birth, etc., etc. If one truly observes God's tender mercies, as David did, he sees that they are spread over all of His works. "The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works" (Psa. 145:9). For example, the flowers (their color, fragrance, texture) and food (variety, flavor, color) bespeak His care and consideration.

Because he could observe the mechanics of nature, Job probably understood them better than any other person in his day, but if the aspect of God's *personal interest* on behalf of His creatures was manifest in His work, how much more it would be manifest for a God-fearing man who had prayed daily for his family. The reason for his sufferings would be revealed in due time—if not in the present life, then in the next life. Job could now see that the reasons for his trials were in God's hands. "Now my eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself." "I despise myself to have questioned as I did during the period of my bereavement, and I repent in dust and ashes."

That is all God wanted from Job: for him to repent, to ask for forgiveness. God wanted repentance not for something Job had done to merit punishment but for his attitude during his suffering, even though it was a period of great anguish. We question, "Could we have done as well as Job?" Each of us is self-centered, and Job truly suffered. Actually Job is to be commended, but since God is a *perfect* God and Christ's righteousness was not covering Job, he had to repent before God could bless him fully. If we as Christians do something wrong, God will take note of it, and attention will somehow be called to that wrongdoing. Fortunately, the robe of Christ's righteousness does make a difference.

What did Job repent of? He did not repent for any ethical infractions that occurred prior to his illness but for his careless talk in connection with his sufferings. The purpose of God's discourse to Job was to lift him out of his self-centered righteousness, to get a broader perspective of God's care for him and for all creatures. We must guard against getting too self-centered about our own individual importance—even though Job was probably the most important person in his day.

Consider the matter this way: God called Abraham, the important personage. Next came Isaac, then Jacob, and finally Joseph. But after Joseph, a gap occurred until Moses. Probably Job lived during that time gap—after Joseph and before Moses. Their lives may overlap, but a child is not reckoned in the same capacity as an adult. In the adult phases of their lives, these personages overlapped to a certain extent. Order: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Moses. Job was a not-too-distant relative of Abraham.

As a result of God's discourse, Job's outlook on life was broadened, greatly enriched. In spite of his original integrity, Job now had a mellowing of heart. And for God to even speak to Job was a GREAT HONOR. Job had said, "If I could only confront God, but I cannot. Who can confront this MIGHTY GOD?" But eventually God did talk to Job. God completely ignored the three comforters and Elihu, even though they heard His words. The experience was unique to Job—it happened for his benefit.

Job 42:7 And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.

Job 42:8 Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for

him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.

Job 42:9 So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD commanded them: the LORD also accepted Job.

Job 42:10 And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.

Job 42:11 Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.

Job 42:12 So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.

Job 42:13 He had also seven sons and three daughters.

Job despised himself and repented in dust and ashes (verse 6); his heart attitude was depressed at his former self-righteous disposition. It was commendable that the afflictions and trials had not come upon Job because of any ethical infractions he had committed, yet he was not perfect. If there was any fault to find with Job from a technical standpoint, it was that while he was under duress from the illness itself, he at times spoke above and beyond what he probably otherwise would have said. The discourse by God had the effect of making Job see that he was a little too self-centered with regard to his own righteousness. By God's showing His capabilities, wisdom, power, etc., as manifested in all of His created works, Job could see things in a much broader perspective, and he had a new outlook with regard to his own relative smallness and unimportance. Even though God never explained the permission of evil, Job was satisfied.

Job's condition healed when he prayed for the three comforters (see verse 10). It was as if God was looking to forgive Job, and Job actually repented. The principle is, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive others their trespasses against us." The three had really trespassed against Job. When he forgave them, God was ready and eager to reinstate Job completely. God "turned the captivity of Job"; that is, He removed the illness and began a restoration work when Job prayed for his friends. Moreover, God gave Job twice as many personal possessions as he had had previously. (The family members were not doubled; he had seven sons and three daughters before his affliction, and seven sons and three daughters were born to him after his affliction—see verse 13.) The numerics of the restoration of his flocks are even listed (verse 12).

Verse 11 tells that all of Job's brothers and sisters and others "comforted him over all the evil that the *LORD* had brought upon him." Actually the *Adversary* had been instrumental in afflicting Job with the illness (Job 2:4,5), but the Lord had permitted the calamity. (Incidentally, the word "evil" in this context refers to Job's illness and does not have a moral connotation.) In the final analysis, Job was vindicated, and so was God in His trust and confidence in Job.

Verse 11 continues, "Every man [in connection with the celebration] also gave him [Job] a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold." The money and gold earrings were an evidence of their wanting to have Job's good graces, for during his affliction, they had all forsaken him. Now Job was reinstated, and these gifts were a token of their recognition that they had been wrong and had misunderstood his experiences.

JOB

Job represents The Christ and their experiences—the permission of evil that comes upon God’s people during the Gospel Age. The name Job means “hated”; that is, his name, which was given to him prior to his affliction, was a reference to the experiences that would subsequently come upon him. It is as though he was born for the suffering circumstance. This reminds us of Isaiah 18:2, which is a prophecy of a “nation scattered and peeled” whose experiences are “terrible.” The Book of Job is a prophecy of the experiences that God’s people have during the Gospel Age.

Job was a descendant of Aram, a son of Shem, and he dwelled in the land of Uz. (The expression “the wizard of Oz” actually refers to Job.)

God gave quite an appraisal of Job in Job 1:1, “That man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed [shunned, despised] evil.” Job 2:3 said of Job, “There is none like him in the earth.” What a striking statement! This appraisal makes the time slot of his life important. The commendation would have been made at the time his testing was about to begin. Job’s birth probably occurred prior to Jacob’s death, but his testing was a number of years later. His life fills a gap between Joseph and Moses. The height of Job’s nobility of character as a man probably occurred after Joseph’s death but before Moses came on the scene. The sequence of God’s dealing with individuals is Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Job, and Moses. Job 1:8 also mentioned Job’s upright character: “Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?” These references describe Job immediately before his sufferings, so there is no question as to what God thought of him at that time.

Because of his uprightness and stability of character, Job cannot represent the human race. Nor can he picture the Jewish nation. He beautifully pictures the sufferings of The Christ. As mentioned earlier, even some of Jesus’ words are reflected in the Book of Job.

THE THREE COMFORTERS

Whom do the three comforters (Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar) represent? The fact they were called his three friends and companions (Job 2:11; 35:4) means that prior to Job’s suffering, the three had had some kind of rapport with him, even though superficial. Therefore, in antitype, there would be a degree of spiritual kinship between Job and the three comforters.

Definitions

Eliphaz = god of gold, the golden god

Bildad = lover of Baal; that is, Bel (Baal) has love

Zophar = a chirper

Temanite = right hand

Shua = a depression

Naama = pleasantness

Eliphaz is related to Judah and hence refers to the Judaizing influence in the professed Church. He pictures those Jews who, being attracted to the cause of Christ, ostensibly became Christians, but they had different motivations in connection with that attraction. During the first two centuries, the *Judaizing Christians* were a troublesome factor in the Church, and they had to be contended against. We know Eliphaz was the oldest of the three comforters because in each round of speaking, he was given the first opportunity. Moreover, God’s rebuke to the three was addressed to him (Job 42:7). Eliphaz was a grandson of Esau (Gen. 36:4).

The relationship of the three comforters to Job pertains to the nominal people of God. Israel means “people of God,” and when the promises of God were extended in the Gospel Age, they were first extended to the Jew. Therefore, in the first century, the great bulk of people who

were converted to Christianity were Jews. Eliphaz, being the oldest and the first to speak, corresponds to these early Judaizing Christians, who tried to yoke the Christian to the Law.

Eliphaz is defined as the “god of gold,” and the Jewish nation had the *golden calf*. The Israelites were confident of their relationship with God because it was long-standing. For many centuries, God had dealt with them in a unique fashion. However, this confidence was not warranted because of their lack of obedience.

Bildad, meaning “lover of Baal,” represents those of nominal Christianity who were polarized with the views of *Catholicism*, which next appeared on the scene, developing from the 300’s to the 500’s. The Roman Catholic Church was a thorn in the flesh to God’s true people.

Zophar, as “the chirper,” pictures *Protestantism*. Many in the bird family do imitations, such as the parrot and the parakeet, and even birds in the field can take up refrains from humans to make known their presence. The chirping is like a refrain, an echoing—that is, an *image* of the beast, a false prophet. Protestantism seems to have a more pleasant, sweeter gospel than the stern Catholicism of the past, and Naama means “pleasantness.” Nevertheless, Protestantism has deflected and has been a problem to God’s true people down through the age.

Thus three ostensible peoples of God—Judaizing Christians, Catholics, and Protestants—have troubled the Christ class throughout the Gospel Age. Just as Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar spoke in that order, so Judaizing Christianity, Catholicism, and Protestantism came on the scene in that order.

ELIHU

To understand Elihu, we must review Job 32:2. When he first appeared in the Book of Job, his wrath was kindled against Job for justifying himself rather than God. “Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God.” (The fact that Elihu was “of the kindred of Ram” indicates he was a fairly close relative of Job.) Elihu was also angry with the three comforters because they had no justifiable rebuttal for Job’s reasoning, yet they condemned him. “Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job” (Job 32:3).

Definitions

Barachel = God has blessed

Buzite = contempt

Almost all commentators believe Elihu was a very favorable character. A review of some of his statements will prove otherwise.

“Great men [in reputation, such as Job] are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment. Therefore I said, Hearken to me; I also will show mine opinion” (Job 32:9,10). Elihu was building himself up. His reasoning was wrong, for at least *some* of the aged understand judgment. All things being equal, if a person is right with God, age and experience are beneficial. Moreover, the word “always” is supplied and should be omitted, for it slants Elihu’s argument. Elihu said, “Great men are not wise.” Elihu was thus criticizing Job and the three comforters, all of whom were much older than he. It was as if Elihu were saying, “As the youngest, I have been listening on the sidelines very respectfully and did not interrupt because I was waiting for words of wisdom to come forth. But the words did not come, and in my frustration, I must speak and tell you my wonderful opinion!”

“Let me not, I pray you, accept any man’s person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man. For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my maker would soon take me away” (Job 32:21,22). Elihu again built himself up by saying, “I am not going to give you smooth talk. I will

not flatter you with introductions. I will just speak honestly and uprightly according to the purity of my heart.” “My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart: and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly” (Job 33:3). Elihu certainly had a high opinion of himself.

Now let us consider the “great wisdom” that Elihu had. “Behold, [Job,] I am according to thy wish in God’s stead: I also am formed out of the clay” (Job 33:6). Job had wished for an intercessor to plead his cause. Elihu was saying, “God has providentially put me here in His stead, as you wished. Now I will plead your cause.”

In Job 33:14-18 are more of Elihu’s words: “For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.” Elihu was saying, “Job, all kinds of calamities have happened to you, and you just do not seem to be getting the point. God uses different methods to try to impart wisdom to those He wants to instruct. He gives them a vision or a dream to bring them to their senses.” (Job’s dreams had scared him; they were like nightmares.) Elihu was saying that Job was getting instruction in the nightmares but was too proud to admit it. “Dreams are designed to make man repent and admit fault. Without such instruction, man will die (go to the pit) from disease, calamity, etc.”

Elihu used another technique in Job 33:19-22. “He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain: So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat. His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen [now] stick out. Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers.” Job had had not only dreams (nightmares) but these experiences too. And again Elihu was telling Job, “You are not getting the point. First, you had dreams. Now your flesh is consuming away and your bones are sticking out, but still you insist you are innocent and upright.” (Remember, Elihu had proclaimed his own innocence in verse 9.)

In Job 33:23-26, Elihu said that if there was a messenger to testify to Job’s uprightness, then God would deliver him from the pit because he had found a ransom. “If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness: Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom. His flesh shall be fresher than a child’s: he shall return to the days of his youth: He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness.” Elihu was saying, “If you are innocent (as you claim), you should have a witness, a testimony, something to back you up. There should be a messenger from God who can give concrete evidence that your statements of innocence have validity.” But, of course, there was no one to take Job’s case, no intercessor to support his claim of righteousness.

Thus Elihu suggested three means of “helping” Job: a dream, sickness or disease, and an intercessor. Because Elihu used the word “ransom,” some consider him in a favorable light and fail to recognize his reasoning as faulty.

In Job 33:25, Elihu said that if a person was upright, his flesh would be like a child’s. “But look at you, Job. You are a mess!” Elihu was viewing Job externally. “Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7).

In Job 33:27,28, Elihu used a fourth technique, saying a way out would be to confess sin. “He [God] looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.” In other words, “Job, you did not get the lesson with the first three techniques, so here is

another method. If you confess your sin, then God will bring back your soul from the pit.”

In Job 33:29,30, Elihu summed up. “Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.” In other words, “These four methods that I have enumerated—dreams, sickness, an advocate, and confession of guilt—are all methods God uses to save man.

Elihu used too much familiarity. None of the three comforters addressed Job by name. Only inferentially had they criticized him with their statements and rebuttals, but Elihu was very palsy-walsy, using Job’s name frequently. And he always assumed the higher attitude himself—that he was the superior in appraising Job.

Notice Job 33:31-33. “Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I will speak. [I have more to say. You have heard only part of my argument.] If thou hast any thing to say, answer me: speak, for I desire to justify thee. [I would like to justify you, but I cannot find any way to do that. Can you offer any new information along this line to state your case more positively?] If not, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I shall teach thee wisdom.” *What nerve Elihu had!* And this is an important point that will not be recognized until the Kingdom.

Continuing into the next chapter, Elihu said, “Hear my words, O ye wise men; and give ear unto me, ye that have knowledge. For the ear trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meat. Let us choose to us judgment: let us know among ourselves what is good” (Job 34:2-4). Elihu was saying, “Let us think and reason this out. You are mature individuals with experience. Listen to my argument. Let us pool our sympathies together, and you will see my point.” In other words, “If you use discrimination in thought and words, you will get the point and see that I am right.”

Elihu continued (Job 34:5,6), “For Job hath said, ‘I am righteous: and God hath taken away my judgment. Should I lie against my right? my wound is incurable without transgression.’” Although not in the best light, Elihu was stating Job’s case, what Job had professed. Essentially Job had said, “I am righteous. My sufferings are not because of what I have done. I am righteous but cannot be vindicated. Should I say I have done something wrong when I have not? Should I lie against my right? My wound is incurable without my having transgressed.”

Then came Elihu’s comment (Job 34:7): “What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning like water?” He had just stated Job’s attitude, and now he was saying, “Look at the man! He still does not get the point. He scorns words no matter how they are presented. You three comforters tried, and now I am trying, but he refuses to confess.”

“He ... goeth in company with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men” (Job 34:8). Elihu was plainly *condemning* Job.

“For he [Job] hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God” (Job 34:9). Technically, Job said something similar but not with this thought. Elihu took Job’s statements and gave them an added twist that was not Job’s intent.

“Therefore hearken unto me, ye men of understanding: far be it from God, that he should do wickedness; and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity” (Job 34:10).

“For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways” (Job 34:11). Elihu was saying that God judges a man according to whether he is good or bad. Presumably if a man is good, God rewards him, and if a man is bad, God will punish him. Elihu was implying that all of Job’s sufferings were a punishment for sin. “Do you not get the point yet, Job? God judges a man according to his ways.” In the *ultimate* future, God will punish

the wicked, but not necessarily in the present age or time. Elihu erred in trying to apply future conditions to the present.

“Therefore he [God] knoweth their works, and he overturneth them in the night, so that they are destroyed. He striketh them as wicked men in the *open* sight of others; Because they turned back from him, and would not consider any of his ways” (Job 34:25-27). Elihu was saying, “God punishes those who do wrong, and it is done in a way that is conspicuous to everyone else—except you, Job. The three can see that and I can see that, but you, Job, refuse to see that.”

“That the hypocrite reign not, lest the people be ensnared” (Job 34:30). In other words, “God watches those who are in authority—judges, kings, nobles, etc. If they do undue harm to their subjects, God interferes. He demotes or promotes according to deeds. Job, you have been a leader; you have been recognized as a respected authority. But now your sufferings are a demotion, and you had better heed what God is doing or you will go down to the pit to be destroyed.”

Elihu continued in Job 34:31-33, “Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more: That which I see not, teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do it no more. Should it be according to thy mind? he will recompense it, whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose; and not I: therefore speak what thou knowest.” Elihu was saying he wanted Job to confess and say, “Yes, I have borne chastisement, for I have done something wrong.” “Job, if you cannot understand, at least admit you have sinned, and God will tell you what the particular problem is.”

In Job 34:34-37, Elihu said, “Let men of understanding tell me, and let a wise man hearken unto me. [Elihu had a very high opinion of himself.] Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom. My desire is that Job may be tried unto the end because of his answers for wicked men. For he addeth rebellion *unto his sin* [Elihu had judged Job]; he clappeth his hands among us, and multiplieth his words against God.”

“Elihu spake moreover, and said, ... I will answer thee, Job, and thy companions with thee” (Job 35:1,4). Elihu was claiming to be superior to Job and the three comforters: “Now I will tell you what is right.”

Elihu gave his appraisal of Job: “Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain; he multiplieth words without knowledge” (Job 35:16).

“Elihu also proceeded, and said, Suffer me a little, and I will show thee that I have yet to speak on God’s behalf. I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker. For truly my words shall not be false: he that is perfect in knowledge is with thee” (Job 36:1-4). Elihu was saying that *he himself* was “perfect in knowledge.” Contrary to scholarship and for many reasons, Elihu should *not be commended*. He repeatedly incriminated himself.

Elihu continued in Job 36:5-18. “Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any: he is mighty in strength and wisdom.” (Earlier Elihu had said he was getting this wisdom from afar.) God “preserveth not the life of the wicked: but giveth right to the poor.” Elihu did not understand the permission of evil. “He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous: but with kings are they on the throne; yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted. But if they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction; then he showeth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded [their authority]. He also openeth their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.” Elihu was saying that Job’s affliction and demotion were God’s method of opening his ear to instruction and that they were a command for Job to return from his iniquity. “If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures. But if they obey not, they shall

perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge. But the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath: they cry not when he bindeth them.” Elihu was saying that because Job was not crying, “I have sinned,” he was a hypocrite. “They die in youth, and their life is among the unclean.” Elihu was using other illustrations, but the comparison was clear. “He delivereth the poor in his affliction, and openeth their ears in oppression. Even so would he have removed thee, Job, out of the strait into a broad place, where there is no straitness; and that which should be set on thy table should be full of fatness. But thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked: judgment and justice take hold on thee. Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.” Elihu was saying that Job was getting deeper and deeper into his sin because of his obstinacy. “Job, if you continue to be stubborn, you will become incorrigible.”

In Job 37:14-17, Elihu said, “Hearken unto this, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God. Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused the light of his cloud to shine?” Notice Elihu’s superior attitude. “Dost thou, Job, know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge? How thy garments are warm, when he quieteth the earth by the south wind?” Elihu, whose reasoning was *much inferior* to Job’s, was instructing Job.

The foregoing verses cited from Elihu’s discourse are sufficient to show clearly his superior judgment of himself. *Some* of his criticism of Job was valid (in the sense that Job did complain and wish that he would die, etc.), but it was not at all valid in the overall sense. The slant and judgment Elihu gave were completely inordinate. *Some* of Elihu’s statements were *utterly false*.

Elihu was immature and had a high opinion of himself. Although younger than Job and the three, he took the stance of maturity, but in the final analysis, his youth represented *immaturity*. His familiarity with Job (his manner of address) showed a lack of proper respect. He did not hold Job in esteem.

Who does Elihu represent? The Great Company. The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins is *God’s* view of the consecrated. In the present life, *the Great Company* feel that they are the wise ones and that those who will ultimately prove to be of the Little Flock are the foolish ones, the ones with the wrong slant and an improper spirit. Here, then, is a paradox. The foolish virgins think they are superior to the wise ones. Only when the Church is complete and the age concludes will the foolish virgins realize the truth of the matter.

IMPORTANT: Elihu is the author of the Book of Job. By writing the book, he demonstrated his repentance, for the book shows his foolishness. When the book is really understood, he will suffer humiliation, but his honesty is there. Basically, he was honest, but his judgment was warped. At heart, the Great Company are virgins and they mean well, but they have a superior feeling. God will judge *true humility*—those He will honor and those He will grant less honor.

The name Elihu means “God Jehovah,” “God Himself.” In other words, he represents a truly consecrated class. Those of this class are not castigated by God direct because they are in the family, whereas the three comforters are nominal. The Great Company are a closer class, but their immaturity should eventually be very self-apparent. Elihu showed his repentance by honestly revealing his boastful statements.

Job 42:14 And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Keren-happuch.

Back to chapter 42. After Job’s sufferings were reversed, he was blessed with seven sons and three daughters. Verse 14 tells the names of the three daughters and the order of their birth. This is

noteworthy because the sons' names are not given. The names are all significant.

Before Job was afflicted, he was commended in that there was no man in the earth like him—and this would be true, too, after his calamities ceased and his blessings returned. Consider again the words of Job 42:7, “After the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as *my servant Job hath [spoken that which is right].*” God had criticized Job from the standpoint of *perfection: a perfect God and an imperfect subject.* Yet in spite of criticizing Job for unwise words uttered during his affliction, God knew that Job, although born of imperfection, was *righteous in his heart intention.* God said to Eliphaz, “Job spoke that which was right concerning me, but you and your two companions *did not!*” Although Elihu was not mentioned by name, this statement undercut him too. Both before and after Job’s trial, God repeatedly called him “*my servant.*” And God stated again (verse 8) that Job had spoken correctly: “Ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.” In other words, from God’s standpoint, whoever they are, those of the Little Flock class—though not perfect by any means—are far superior to the Great Company class. There is a wide gulf between the two classes.

There is another point to consider. God has great mercy for those who do not measure up to the standard of the Little Flock. When we consecrated, we were smitten with God’s love for the world—that in spite of the world’s being in sin and iniquity, He will provide a way of escape. The thought is not that the standards of truth are compromised but that God gives the Great Company an opportunity to be retrieved, rescued. In whatever age, God appreciates those who give their heart to Him. Although there is a wide difference between those who get immortality and those who just get everlasting life, yet the Great Company class is far superior to the world of mankind. The “seven sons” of Job represent the world of mankind, who will get an inheritance. The “three daughters,” who were fairer than any of the other women, will ultimately receive other rewards.

In the Song of Solomon, the Great Company class are shown in bed and making excuses for not getting up immediately to answer the Bridegroom’s knock. When they do arise and go to the door, it is too late—Jesus has gone. They go out into the street asking, “Where is my beloved?” At first, the daughters of Jerusalem in the street smite the Great Company, but then they are influenced by the Great Company’s praise and enthusiasm for Jesus and say, “Let us know a little more about your beloved, O fairest among maidens.” In other words, at that time, when the Little Flock is off the scene, the Great Company will be addressed as having something above and beyond what the world of mankind has.

Moreover, in the Old Testament, a red heifer (female) pictures the Ancient Worthies. Although an exceptionally faithful class, they will not receive the reward of the Little Flock, and hence the heifer is not in the same category as a male animal. In the final analysis, it will be known which individuals comprise the Little Flock, the sin offering. Although we cannot now discern who are Little Flock and who are Great Company, we can see God’s love and compassion in that the other three classes are above the world of mankind: Ancient Worthies, Great Company, and “Great Company” of prior ages. In God’s mercy, not in their own self-righteousness, the Great Company will be honored for taking a stand for God and Jesus above and beyond that of the world. Therefore, just as Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar were interpreted from a successive standpoint, so Job’s three daughters (Jemima, Kezia, and Keren-happuch) picture, respectively, the end-of-the-age sequence of the Great Company, the Ancient Worthies, and the comparable “Great Company” class of former ages. The “three daughters” will receive an inheritance with their brethren.

The Great Company will be a spiritual class, but during the Kingdom, the age of restitution, they will spend a lot of time down here. Scriptures pertaining to Ezekiel’s Temple allude to this.

Because they were not sufficiently zealous to be of the Bride class, the Great Company will be with the world in the Kingdom as go-betweens, liaisons, or messengers between mankind and the Little Flock. Of course the Great Company will not have jurisdictional authority, but they will have privileges. Nathanael was told by Jesus that he would see angels ascending and descending before the Son of Man. The “angels” are the Great Company class. The Pastor called them a police force. During the Kingdom, their efforts will be greatly concentrated down here in a visual manner; they will be seen and communicated with. They will carry orders and instructions from above to the earth, and take up from the earth to heaven questions that need answers and judicial decisions. Out of Zion (heaven) will go forth the Law, and the pronouncement of that Law from Jerusalem.

Sequence

1. *Jemima*, meaning “dawning” or “morning,” pictures the Great Company, part of the “church of the firstborn” (Heb. 12:23). This class will be brought to perfection before any of the earthly classes. The mortgage of the Ransom has to be released before it can be applied on behalf of the world of mankind.
2. *Kezia*, defined as “aroma” or “fragrance” (based on cassia, a specialized form of cinnamon) represents the Ancient Worthies.
3. *Keren-happuch*, which means “beautiful eyes” (horns of antimony), pictures the Great Company of prior ages.

Job 42:15 And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren.

The three daughters were the most beautiful women in the land.

Job 42:16 After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations.

The poor wording aside, the thought seems to be that Job lived a total of 140 years.

Job 42:17 So Job died, being old and full of days.

SEQUEL TO ABOVE DISCOURSES ON THE BOOK OF JOB

The purpose of the sequel is to prove that Job represents The Christ. It has already been shown that Job pictures the Church, but to a certain extent, Jesus is included. Although Job had imperfections, he was justified in God's sight, and the experiences that came upon him were the result of a contest, or confrontation, between Satan and our Lord.

Before Jesus came down here at the First Advent, he was instructed as to his mission, and he knew he would receive testings. However, he did not know all the details in advance, even though he had considerable understanding about God's plan and his dying as a Ransom for all. Psalm 22 proves Jesus did not foreknow the details of his experiences and sufferings. This Psalm represents the final experiences of our Lord, particularly on the Cross. “My God, my God, *why* hast thou forsaken me? *why* art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?” (Psa. 22:1). Jesus uttered these words on the Cross, and it shows he did not fully anticipate God's withdrawing His favor. Jesus asked, “Why?” Also, in the Garden of Gethsemane, his soul was “exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,” which was an *extreme* condition. Probably this feeling of intense grief was not foreknown to Jesus either (Matt. 26:38).

Psalm 69 is prophetic of the experiences of The Christ. True, David was writing out of his own emotions and experiences, but the parts of his experiences that are recorded are those with a prophetic aspect. “O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee” (Psa. 69:5). Certainly this verse does not apply to Jesus, yet the Psalm as a whole applies to The Christ, Head and body members. The point is that not every experience is the same for both Jesus and the Church. Verse 5 treats the sin aspect of the Church, but verse 9 applies to Jesus: “For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.” Verse 9 is quoted in the New Testament when Jesus chased out the money changers. Verse 21 also applies to Jesus: “They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.” These three verses illustrate that the Psalm as a whole applies to The Christ.

Psalm 109:21-29 is similar, especially verse 25 (in italics). “But do thou for me, O GOD the Lord, for thy name’s sake: because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me. For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me. I am gone like the shadow when it declineth: I am tossed up and down as the locust. My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness. *I became also a reproach unto them: when they looked upon me they shook their heads.* Help me, O LORD my God: O save me according to thy mercy: That they may know that this is thy hand; that thou, LORD, hast done it. Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice. Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame, and let them cover themselves with their own confusion, as with a mantle.” Verse 25 pertains to Jesus when he was on the Cross and others wagged their heads at him.

In Leviticus 9:8, Aaron offered a sin offering “for himself.” “Aaron therefore went unto the altar, and slew the calf of the sin offering, which was *for himself.*” Jesus did not need a sin offering, but the body members did.

Leviticus 16:6 is even more pertinent: “And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is *for himself*, and make an atonement *for himself, and for his house.*” When Aaron, who represents Jesus, began the sin offering service, he offered a bullock, and that bullock pictured *himself*. The goat was offered later. The bullock for the *sin* offering represents *Jesus* and his house. Because of God’s plan and the thought of the sin offering and the unity of the body of Christ, we say this sin offering is for the *body members*, but the way the account is stated, that bullock represented Aaron (the head), although we make the distinction that Jesus was without sin, based on other Scriptures.

In regard to Satan being involved with the persecution of Job, it is interesting to observe that Satan is the tool the Lord has used for testing *all down the line*. Many have not fully realized this point. For instance, consider Jesus, the Head. At the very beginning of our Lord’s ministry, Satan tempted him. Incidentally, Jesus probably did not know in advance that he would be so tested, and the testing came as a surprise. At the conclusion of Jesus’ ministry, Satan was very instrumental in the persecution and suffering. Luke 22 tells how Satan entered into the picture—for example, Judas was involved with Satan. “Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve” (Luke 22:3). Judas represents a Second Death class. John 13:27 verifies the involvement of Judas with Satan: “And after the sop Satan entered into him [Judas]. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.” In Luke 22:31,32, we find that Satan would test Peter. In the same context, at the Memorial, Satan was near both Judas and Peter. Our Lord predicted, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.” In John 14:30, at the conclusion of the Memorial supper and before going to the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said, “The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.” Thus Jesus was tested, Judas was tested, and Peter (representing the Church) was tested. Based on the scapegoat picture, the Great Company will also be tested. And at the end of the Millennial Age, even the world of mankind will be tested by Satan in the Little Season. Therefore, Satan tests Jesus, the Church, the Great Company, the Second Death class of the Gospel Age, and the

world of mankind. Job 1:6 informs us that Satan was involved in the testing of Job.

Another picture is in Zechariah 3. “And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him [Joshua]” (Zech. 3:1). In verses 2-7, the angel of the LORD (a representative of Jehovah) said unto Satan, “The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? [This refers to Jerusalem at the end of the age.] Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him [Joshua]. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by. And the angel of the LORD protested [exhorted, enjoined] unto Joshua, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.” This Joshua was the high priest, and Zerubbabel was the governor. Both offices represent The Christ, one from a priestly standpoint and one from a governing standpoint. Joshua, the high priest, was clothed with filthy garments, but Jesus, the Head of the Church, was perfect and did not have filthy garments. Therefore, Joshua pictures *The Christ*, for the body members have the filthy garments. In the Bible, many Scriptures are addressed to The Christ, some of which are applicable to the Head, some to the body, and some to both Head and body. Many Psalms picture The Christ, and were especially recorded to have instructional benefit to both Head and body.

The *Second Volume* teaches that wherever in Scripture the Church is prefigured as a man, it always represents The Christ. Therefore, Job, a man, cannot represent just the Church. Elijah pictures the Church in the flesh, but the Head of the Elijah class was Jesus. The Head had already risen, but the body members living at the time were 1,260 years in the wilderness. In other experiences of the Church that are pictured in the Bible, the Head is included. Consider that Jesus’ ministry was 1,260 days long. Both he and Elijah fasted for 40 days without food. Both Jesus and Elijah had “1,260” and “40” experiences. Therefore, the Elijah class represents The Christ in the flesh, and so does David, even though the Head has had his testing and is beyond the veil. The body members are still here fighting the warfare.

Some may say, “There are exceptions where a man can represent the Church,” but this is not true in symbology. For instance, Benjamin sometimes pictures the Church, but when we think of Benjamin, we automatically think of Joseph too. Thus we are not thinking of one person but of the *relationship* of Benjamin to Joseph. In other words, where there are *two* individuals, that is another matter.

Consider the John the Baptist picture. Jesus is represented as the Head, but he is beyond the veil, while the body members are still here in the flesh. Jesus was on the scene at the *beginning* of the Gospel Age, but for the body, John the Baptist is particularly a picture of the *feet* members at the *end* of the age. The Head and the body are both in that picture. The Church in the flesh is decreasing, while the Church beyond the veil is increasing.

There is no problem in having Job picture The Christ, even though 90 percent or more of the experiences that are narrated apply forcefully to just the body members and their imperfections. Despite the imperfections, Job was considered to be upright. Although the sin of the body members has to be considered as a part of the picture, nevertheless, the *corporate whole* has to be taken into account. The body members cannot be extracted and made a man. In pictures of the Church, men always represent some relationship between the body members and Jesus, the Head. When Aaron went into the Most Holy the first time to present the blood, it represented only the Head. The second time he took the blood into the Most Holy, it

represented the Church. Therefore, Aaron pictures both Head and body.

In summary, a *portion* of a Psalm or a picture (such as Job) can involve just the Head and another *portion* can represent just the body members. But both applications are in a context where they are *together* as The Christ.