

## THE BOOK OF JOB

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### I. Introduction

- A. Stereotype: Job "heroic patience." Cf. Jas. 5:11: "steadfastness of Job...purpose of Lord...mercy and compassion." \*\*Job **steadfast** (\*endurance; not patience [or patience of prologue gives way to endurance of dialogue!]). (Irony – *hypomene* = "remain behind" [after others have left] – this what happens in book of Job!)
- B. Form of book
1. Prologue and epilogue: prose
  2. Dialogue: poetry
- C. Methodology: prose only, or include dialogue?
1. chs. 1,2: Job "not sin." But cf. 9:16-20; 10:1-7.

2. pre-calaminities: God commends Job: 1:8; 2:3. Post: 40:8.
  - a) Job 1:22 – “Job...not charge God with wrong.”
  - b) Job 40:8 – “put me in wrong?!”
3. Job 42:1-6: Job repents? (Why? Of what?)
4. \*Job of dialogue **should** bother us! Troubling language: way Job talks **to** God; **of** God (Job had 3 friends climbing walls!).

#### D. Job forces us to rethink

1. Our view of God (let Satan do this).
2. How we handle adversity (“theol. of adversity”).
3. How we deal with, relate to people (especially in crisis).

## II. Background Issues in Joban Studies (relevant to theology/ homiletics)

### A. Structure

1. Chs. 1-2: Prologue: Job’s fortune – heavenly assembly – Job’s misfortune (prose)
  - a) 3: Job curses the day of his birth (poetry)
    - (1) Chs. 4-27: three dialogues (poetry)
      - (a) Debates between Job and his friends
      - (b) Job vs. Eliphaz of Teman
      - (c) Job vs. Bildad of Shuach
      - (d) Job vs. Zophar of Naamah
        - (i) 28: Song of wisdom
      - (e) Chs. 29-41: three monologues (poetry)
      - (f) Chs. 29-31: Job’s defense and accusation against God
      - (g) Chs. 32-7: Elihu’s defense of God
      - (h) Chs. 38-41: God’s speech
    - b) 42:1-6: Job’s retraction of his curse (poetry)
  2. 42:7-17: Epilogue: Restoration of Job’s fortune (prose)

### B. Text/Language (“bristles with difficulties”)

#### 1. Text

- a) Job is textually most **vexed** in OT (rivaled only by Hosea). Crucial that consult various translations.
- b) **Size** of Job greatly reduced if all difficult passages removed.
- c) LXX sometimes “improves” reading; more often than not complicates rather than clarifies (\*shorter: because omitted really tough spots!).
- d) Peshitta/Targum: curious peculiarities; little help in text-criticism. E.g., 2:10: “in his heart Job already cherished sinful thoughts” (Tg).
- e) 11QTgJob/4QTgJob: Support present form of MT (e.g., no Zophar speeches in Qumran materials).

#### 2. Language:

- a) Problems: lexical; morphological; syntactic. Comparative Semitics has paid rich rewards with aNE //s. E.g., E.g.: Dispute of man with his *Ba*; Mesopotamia: *ludlul bel nemeqi* (allow us to see whole literary, cultural phenomenon in which Isr. live).
- b) Book: variety of styles; moods; tempos. Writer **change** style; mood; tempo with needs of story!  
\*\*Literary masterpiece at all levels.

### C. Genre

1. Entire book – how relate prose and poetry
  - a) Dialogue and prose account of dialogue
  - b) Theatrical

- (1) Comedy (ironic portrayal of cast members)
- (2) Tragedy (unsolvable predicaments of human fate)
- c) Practical – “self-help” book
- 2. Specific sections
  - a) Psalms of lament
  - b) Stylized court drama
  - c) Wisdom tract
- D. Date
  - 1. From Patriarchal (Mosaic > 3<sup>rd</sup> cent. BCE)
  - 2. \*Distinguish: *setting* (patriarchal) and *when written*. Key issue – language.
  - 3. \*JJM Roberts: irrelevant. Timeless classic dealing with perennially relevant issues!
- E. Unity/Integrity of Book
  - 1. Relation of prose (prologue and epilogue) to poetry (dialogue)
    - a) Key issues
      - (1) How deal with tension; various perceptions; apparent inconsistencies
      - (2) How deal with development in book (i.e., work of lifetime).
    - b) Most accept unity of prose prologue and epilogue. Sharply divided on question of literary relationship to poetic discussion.
    - c) Many: original prose story with poetic dialogue added later. Evidence for composite authorship:
      - (1) Inconsequential
        - (a) Divine names: Yahweh (prose); El, Eloah, Shaddai, Elohim (Yahweh **never** in dialogue). Elohim in prose.
        - (b) Prose: Job nomadic sheik; poetry: seminomadic (farmer; also shepherd; wealthy urbanite?).
        - (c) Prose: suffering the result of trial; poetry: **no allusion** to cause (\*totally without weight).
      - (2) More significant
        - (a) prose: sacrifices / poetry: absent (argument *e silentio*).
        - (b) prose: Job innocent / poetry: Job blasphemer; rebel.
        - (c) prose: severity judging friends (epilogue) / poetry: friends’ ideas presented with objectivity.
        - (d) prose: mood legendary idyll / poetry: raw; naked realism.
        - (e) prose: polish; literary craftsmanship / poetry: author writing about self?! Narrative **moves** us; dialogue **probes** us!
      - (3) Hypotheses
        - (a) Poet himself wrote narrative; inspired by ancient oral tradition.
        - (b) Prose **added** by later redactor.
        - (c) Prologue and epilogue an ancient folktale that existed in written form long earlier and provided framework to introduce meditation in dialogue form.
        - (d) \*\*Numerous variations on above!
      - (4) Response
        - (a) Differences largely exaggerated.
        - (b) Relationship prose and poetry **may** convey an **intended** tension (important contribution of literary analysis; motifs of tension; paradox). \*Crucial: Job of dialogue is Job of prologue (“ideal sufferer”).
  - 2. Chs. 24-27 (3<sup>rd</sup> cycle)
    - a) No speech of Zophar; Bildad unusually short. Out of keeping with previous utterances. \*Conclusion: symbolic! Whole dialogue broken down!

- b) Problem: Job seems at times to defend friends' viewpoints: consist of ideas he previously so vigorously opposed.
  - c) \*Numerous rearrangements and excisions proposed: none carry overwhelming conviction.
3. Ch. 28 (Hymn on Wisdom)
- a) Problems
    - (1) Interrupts Job's soliloquy.
    - (2) View of wisdom fits neither Job nor friends.
    - (3) Language and style: affinities with divine speeches.
  - b) \*A coda between main dialogue and Job's final words. \*Author's own response; not part of Job's own thought at this stage.
  - c) Point: God alone knows where wisdom is. Implicitly addresses issue of human ability to "solve the problem." Humans cannot solve mystery; can only "fear God" (28:28)
4. Chs. 32-37 (Elihu speeches)
- a) Elihu: climax; answer to book! \*Suff. is educative.
  - b) Elihu: late; useless. Pretentious; irksome. Scant value literarily or as contribution to argument.
  - c) **Perhaps** function of Elihu speeches in development of movement between Job and God.
5. Chs. 38-41 (Divine Speeches)
- a) Many reject: in part or *in toto*! Argument: speeches irrelevant to Job (no answer!). Many reject only second speech.
  - b) Others: indispensable part!
    - (1) Hardly conceivable leave work without some divine response!
    - (2) 1<sup>st</sup> speech: unsurpassed as literary beauty in ancient literature (Pope – highest genius – transcends all other descriptions of Creator and wonders of his creation in literature).
    - (3) Purpose in overall development of book: are speeches irrelevant? Key: perhaps looking for **answer** when "answer" irrelevant!
- F. Literary Analysis: "How does a poem mean?"
- 1. Irony
    - a) "Some statements cannot be understood without rejecting what they seem to say!" (Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony*, 1).
    - b) Purpose: "reconstruction" (tear down to rebuild > but **from within!**). Ironist: **lives** in habitat to expose its inhabitability! (Janzen).
  - 2. Questions: (Janzen, 18ff.).
    - a) Request for info.
    - b) Rhetorical (questions in chs. 38-41 ironic?).
    - c) Impossible.
    - d) Existential.
  - 3. Ultimate concern: "The Folly of a Menial Mind Reflecting on a Masterpiece" (Malherbe: A+ insights filtered back through C+ mind!)
- G. Wisdom Themes in Job (Murphy)
- 1. Preoccupation with creation (12:10-15; 36:22-37:24; 38-41)
  - 2. Importance of the name, or memory (18:16-18)
  - 3. Life as onerous (7:1-2; 14:1-6)
  - 4. Traditions of the fathers (8:8-10)
  - 5. Personification of Wisdom (28)
  - 6. Problem of retribution
- H. Job as resource for pastoral care (Oeming and Schmid)

<i>Person</i>	<i>Type of Behavior</i>	<i>Texts</i>
Job comforts himself	a) stoic arataxie b) lament and disgust with one's existence c) self-reassurance of one's own innocence d) speaking of one's own suffering again and again e) hope (beyond death? cf. Ps 49) f) submission to God	a) Job 1-2 b) Job 3 c) Job 31 d) the dialogues 4-27 e) Job 19:25-29 f) Job 42:1-6
Job's wife	a) Intensification of desperation: "adiuvatrix diaboli"? b) or: enabling lament and expression of suffering?	a) Job 2:9 b) Job 2:9 esp. LXX
The three friends	a) silent presence b) listening c) critical reminders of previous tenets of faith d) emphasis on God's promises e) invitation to submit to God's will f) admonition to repentance	a) Job 2:12 b) Job 4:1-2 c) Job 4:3-4 d) Job 11:13, 17 e) Job 22:5-10
Elihu	a) pedagogy of suffering b) creation theology: God is good c) treasury of grace as God's ransom	a) Job 36, esp. vv. 22-33 b) Job 37 c) Job 33:24-30
God	a) comfort through presence b) comfort through widening of horizons c) healthy disrespect	a) Job 38:1-2 b) Job 38:4-39:30 c) Job 40:6-32
The narrator	Narrative of encouragement about God's final restitution following all suffering. Emphasis on the reward for loyalty to God in prayer during times of temptation. Resurrection!	Job 42:6-17 (42:17 LXX)

### III. The Prologue (1:1-2:13)

#### A. Background and Exegetical Helps

- Structure: there are 6 scenes: 4 earth (1:1-5, 13-22; 2:7-10, 11-13); 2 heaven (1:6-12; 2:1-6). The prologue begins and ends with Job's greatness (1:3; 2:13). A (1:1-5); B (1:6-12); C (1:13-22); B' (2:1-7a); C' (2:7b-10); A' (2:11-13).
- Setting: the setting for the story is clearly the patriarchal age. This is reflected in several ways; note especially the accounting of wealth and the nature of Job's religion.
- "Job"
  - Meaning of name
    - ayya-abum*: "where is the (divine) father?"
    - ayab*: "to hate."
  - Historicity
    - Ezek 14:14-20: Noah, Dan'el and Job.
    - Though perhaps "real," speeches especially of such literary quality and artful that incredible if composed on ashheap [dungheap – LXX 2:9].
- "**The Satan**:" this individual is **not** the devil. This is conclusively demonstrated by the grammatical construction (definite articles cannot go with proper names in Hebrew). Rather, this is the "adversary,"

- who may or may not be a member of the divine council (“sons of God” [*bny ‘lhyim*]). For other passages concerning the sons of God, see Job 38:7; Pss. 82:1; 89:7; 29:1; 1 Kgs. 22:19. Designation of office = prosecuting attorney! \*Becomes?
5. The external catastrophes: of the 4 catastrophes, 2 are “human” in origin and 2 are “natural” in origin. They are constructed on an ABAB pattern: oxen and she-asses (Sabeen marauders); sheep (fire: [lit] “divine fire”); camels (Chaldean marauders); sons and daughters (tornado). Whatever their immediate cause, there seems to be an implicit recognition that all have some relation to the will of God.
  6. The Satan’s comments: the Satan makes two comments concerning Job’s integrity (1:9; 2:5). Clearly the Satan is quite skeptical concerning Job’s depth of commitment to the Lord and his motivation. Satan introduces “litmus test.” Raises issue of disinterested piety. The second statement (“skin for skin...”) is clearly an old proverb, although the precise meaning is still unclear. The following are possibilities:
    - a) barter imagery: “skin **for** skin...all he has *for* his life (*npsw*). Man will trade skins for skins. What will Job **give** for his life?
    - b) anatomical imagery: “skin **after** skin.” I.e., the peeling of the layers of skin away. \*\*How **deep** is Job’s integrity?
  7. Job’s piety: Job’s piety is reflected prior to the catastrophes in his concern not only for himself but also for his children (1:5). His piety subsequent to the catastrophes is reflected in his two replies to the external and internal affliction (1:21f.; 2:10, see below).
    - a) Job’s conduct (4 key traits)
      - (1) *tam* (blameless) and *yasar* (upright): straightforward conduct along a path. \*Blameless the cardinal / overarching virtue, denoting ethical completeness / integrity (*tumma*).
      - (2) “fears God and turns from evil.”
      - (3) Job first and foremost a “family man;” the ever-concerned, preeminent patriarch. He embodies the character of the listening heart.
      - (4) Job a “living saint” (Murphy). Job’s character profiled as unassailable (for which prologue provides ostensible confirmation).
    - b) Job 1:21f.: first response to calamities:
      - (1) Job 1:13-22: formal grief rituals; conventional confession of bereavement. \*\*Man of few words (traditional ideal among sages).
      - (2) Job 1:21: confession / affirmation: from experiential immediacy (“I; I”) to religious affirmation (Yahweh; Yahweh).
      - (3) Generative theme: **belongs** to Yahweh.
      - (4) Confession in name of Yahweh! (Israel’s redemptive and covenant God).
    - c) Job 2:7-10: second response to calamities. Equivalent to 1:21f., or **ambiguity** regarding his attitude?
      - (1) Scrape potsherd; sit ash heap (mourning? or outcast on city dump?).
      - (2) Job’s wife: temptress? or voicing a question latent within his own soul? or “in touch with reality?” “...hold fast integrity” (i.e., piety > for **what** purpose > it to no avail). She often given short shrift, but really she at heart of issue. Issue – does she exhort Job to step out of character (i.e., renounce integrity) or plead for Job to curse God *consonant* with his integrity? I.e., approval or indictment (ambiguous).
      - (3) Job 2:7: a “pebble loosed” > threatens to become an avalanche!
    - d) Comparison of 2 responses
      - (1) Job 1:22: “Job not **sin...charge God with wrong**. 2:10: “Job not **sin...with his lips**. (Cf. 1:5: “my sons...curse God **in their hearts**”).
      - (2) Job 1:22: positive and declarative affirmation. 2:10: questioning form (rhetorical?).
      - (3) Shift in use of 1st p. pron.: 1:21 (“I”); 2:10 (“we”).
      - (4) Job 1:21: affirms dependent existence on God. 2:10:
        - (a) question: loss of confidence in objectifying language;
        - (b) altered valuation of texture of experience (\*\*calamity no longer withdrawal of once extended blessings and good; it now reception from divine realm of **bad**).

8. The 3 friends
  - a) come to condole / console (*nu*: i.e., to be in sorrow with him).
  - b) come to identify / comfort (*\*nhm*): (*nhm*: “change of mind”).
  - c) Their presence interesting – if Job indeed accepting his fate, regardless of outcome, does he need their consolation?
  - d) Job 2:12: “saw...not recognize him; saw...his suffering was great.” Job’s suffering makes him all but unrecognizable. Reaction: repulsion (repelled by change); attraction: attempt to change! (undo the experience).
9. Wordplays
  - a) “without cause” (*hinnam*): 1:9; 2:3. In 1:9 it is used by the Satan sarcastically concerning Job’s motivation; in 2:3 it is used by God. In 1:9, in Hebrew in emphasis **first** position; in 2:3 **last** (perhaps dig at the Satan?).
  - b) “hedge” (*skk*): 1:10; 3:23. This term is used by both the Satan and Job, but again in totally different ways. Satan accuses God of affording Job *special privileges*; Job accuses God of singling him out for *special oppression* (Brown).
  - c) “integrity/die” (*tom / mot*): 2:9.
  - d) *be`ad* (“for/about”): 2:4; 1:10-12: “all that he has.”
10. The **purpose** of the book
  - a) The real issue/purpose of the book is **not** to treat the matter of “suffering” (or even innocent suffering). If this is the purpose, then the book is a failure, since no answer is provided!
  - b) Retribution (Theodicy): although this suggestion is somewhat better, it fails to deal with the intently personal nature of the book. However, book less “issue;” more “experiential?”
  - c) \*The real issue of the book is stated succinctly by the Satan: “does Job fear God for nothing?” The book treats the issue: “Why do we serve God?” Is there such a thing as “disinterested” righteousness? The move in the book is really from “Why do the righteous suffer?” to “Why are the righteous pious?” (Further: see Janzen’s [40ff.] discussion of the development of the **motivation** for obedience in the book. He uses the analogy of child > adolescent > adult. He notes Bernard’s of Clairvaux discussion of the stages of human growth in love).

## B. Applications

1. “Perspectives”
  - a) God’s perspective: God has **confidence** in Job.
    - (1) Imagery: somewhat that of a suzerain who has implicit trusts in his subject (divine council imagery). Like proud patriarch boasting of his children, God takes pride in Job.
    - (2) From this perspective, the “contest” is much more than “winning a wager.” It is rather the vindication of God’s faith in man and man’s faith in God. Accepts Satan’s challenge (which couched in form of oath / self-curse). Accepted neither from doubt nor jealousy, but confident trust. Issue of Yahweh’s ability to judge character at stake. To what extent do *we* measure up to that level of trust/confidence?
      - (a) God as tester
        - (i) Gen 22 – Akedah (Abraham)
        - (ii) Ps 26 (psalmist asks God to test him in order to vindicate him)
      - (b) Clearly the sovereignty of God is presupposed; the Satan can do nothing without God’s explicit approval.
      - (c) \*The Lord is not uncertain about the loyalty of his subject. He is apparently even willing to listen to “doubts” raised by the adversary.
  - b) The Satan’s perspective: the Satan has no confidence in Job. He refuses to believe that Job can be capable of disinterested righteousness. He seems to imply that if the Lord knew as much as he did from roaming the earth, he would have the same doubts (i.e., the Lord is somewhat “out of touch” with the real world)! Already there is an air of hostility, for the Satan is pitting his knowledge against that of the Creator. How well does God **know** humanity?

- (1) Satan cuts to heart of motivation for ethical behavior. If Satan right, Job's character a sham!  
 \*\*Deeper – Job's character necessarily intertwined with Yahweh's character.
    - (a) If Job fears God *for something*, then integrity a facade.
    - (b) Accusation toward Yahweh – viz., that Yahweh (like Job) is overprotective parent (who shields true character of children and preempts any degree of personal accountability).
  - (2) **Who** is out to destroy Job?
    - (a) Satan; God(?): both **may** be out to destroy Job's faith, but for entirely different reasons! God may be intending to create in its place a **deeper** faith.
    - (b) Cf. "who put Jesus on the cross?": **Both** God and Satan, but for quite different purposes.
  - c) Job's perspective: 1:20-22; 2:10. It is crucial to remember that throughout (even at the end) Job is totally unaware of this "behind the scenes" activity. Job is "the man with limited vision."
    - (1) **We** know more than Job!
    - (2) Our extra knowledge does not necessarily help!
    - (3) Job gains insight with **experience**. In a sense, we all live with "limited vision."
2. "Why do we serve God?"
    - a) What are the motivations behind our devotion? Do we serve God for who he is, or is our devotion in fact self-serving? (In many ways this becomes the most pointed issue in the quality of Job's piety.) Do I love God, or myself when I love God? Is selfless, disinterested worship of God possible?
    - b) Do we serve God "for nothing?" In many ways we might answer this negatively. We then ask: for **what** do we serve God?
      - (1) Material? Do we serve God to get health, reputation, family, long life? If all the material signs of divine favor are taken away, will we still serve God?
      - (2) Spiritual? E.g., fellowship. Will we serve God purely for the joy of communion with him? Is the sheer relationship enough? Cf. Lk. 18:28-30 (also Mt. 6:33).
    - c) Job is a needed antidote to such sermons as: "Do you want the abundant life?" "How to tap the springs of Power."
  3. "What is our Vision of God?"
    - a) How do we penetrate the mystery of divine decision, or divine caprice? (Issue ultimately not divine caprice, but human sincerity...which divine / satan interview portrays). Did Satan put God in a "no win" situation? I.e., if refuses challenge, would not have seemed to be certain of loyalty of his servants!
    - b) What kind of God does this to a person?! Prologue an attempt to confront that mystery.
    - c) Cf. Gen 22 (binding of Isaac); cross of X.

#### IV. The Dialogue (Part One): Job and the 3 Friends (chs. 3-28).

- A. Background and Exegetical Helps.
  1. Introduced to a different Job
    - a) A "verbose" Job...filled with bitter complaints.
    - b) A Job enfolded with ambiguity and complexity
    - c) What holds together – Job's integrity. This will be central – since Job debate with his peers will center about his character (and by extension the moral coherence of the world in which they live).
  2. Job's Soliloquy (ch. 3).
    - a) The form of Job's soliloquy is that of a lament or complaint. Typically these poetic forms have statements dealing with why God should intervene, or an expression of confidence stating with certainty that God has heard the afflicted person's prayer. The context of ch. 3 demands that this complaint lack any such motifs.
      - (1) \*Key: Job sitting in ashheap; speaking out of pain (lost all). (Friends will speak from shock of their friend's condition.)
      - (2) Biblical laments: "why" typical (see Pss. 44:23f.; 74:1).

- b) Job cursing his birth(day). Curse = to reverse course of action; reject. There is a very fine line between cursing God and cursing God's handling of oneself. In prologue Job had categorically rejected curse as appropriate response. In essence Job is stating that God did not know what he was doing in creation. Here "birth" = birth + very life/existence. Requests that God **annihilate** his day of birth and night of conception! Job's self-curse only technical distinction (from curse of God).
- c) The statement that residents in Sheol are better off than Job is intended to shock. Job contemplates what life would be like in Sheol, and considers it preferable, since there he would at least find respite from God! (See also 10:18f.; 14:14.)
- d) Compare 1:21 with 3:1-26:  
 (1) Job 1:21a...3:1-10 (conception / birth)  
 (2) Job 1:21b...3:11-19 (death)  
 (3) Job 1:21c...3:20-23 ("gave")  
 (4) Job 1:21d...3:24-26 ("take")
- e) Compare Gen. 1 with Job 3:4-10 (structural and theological antithesis to Gen 1).  
 (1) Twin contrasts: creation / destruction (reversal of creation); life / death. Death: darkness, gloom, cloud, sea, night, underworld. These powers of chaos; overcome light of life.  
 (2) Separate light/darkness.  
 (3) "Good."  
 (4) Gn. 1: "Light > Rest" (by God). Job 3: "darkness > no rest" (from God).  
 (5) Friends not speak 7 days (counter echo to Gen 1 [7 days of speech?]).  
 (6) Job's lament a veritable assault on creation.
- f) \*Job awakening from "dogmatic slumbers." Many devout readers of the Bible are "shocked" by the violent language used by Job (not to mention the language of the psalmists!). Such a reaction is unnecessary. It fails to allow for the fact that Job's reaction is a portrayal that is true to life. By the laws of reality and poetry the author must describe Job as a living and suffering character, and thus complaint is called for.
3. Eliphaz (chs. 4-5).
- a) Eliphaz begins sympathetic to Job. At this stage he seems to want truly to help, rather than simply to condemn him. Eliphaz paradigm for sapiential counseling! (Restoration possible if Job will follow his advice). Dual focus (blend of wisdom counsel and pastoral mood):  
 (1) experience / observation  
 (2) divine revelation (valid to extent affirms traditional teaching!)  
 (3) \*to move Job from past knowledge of reality to new knowledge that may be experienced by heeding the wisdom Eliphaz extends
- b) Structure:  
 (1) General: traditional teaching framed by appropriate expressions of encouragement, advice, assurance  
 (2) Thematic:  
 (a) Job 4:6-11: reassurance of reliability of moral order.  
 (b) Job 4:12-5:7: a contrasting perspective on the human condition.  
 (c) Job 5:8-27: divine pedagogy found within this reliable moral order. Central: human origin **dust**; form **clay**. Creator / creature polarity (Gen 2).  
 (3) \*\*Friends accent a,c; Job moves toward b.
- c) Job 4:6 is central: "Is not your fear of God your confidence?" "Fear of God" here is clearly Job's religion. In a very real sense Eliphaz has put his finger on a key issue in the book. \*\*Plays off terms of chs. 1,2 (hope, integrity, innocent, upright).
- d) Job 4:7-8: Central to the friends' argument is that the principle of retribution is **consistently** operative. Since "God is just," the friends argue that God guarantees causality in the realm of morality.

- e) Job 5:1-8: Eliphaz furthers his argument. Appeal to anyone is useless, since Job is caught in a “sin-punishment nexus.” No one has the power to intervene in the outworking of that law.
  - (1) Appeal to the “holy ones” (angels?) is futile because Job’s suffering is self-produced and thus can’t be alleviated by external agency. Eliphaz illustrates this (v. 2) with mention of a fool who by anger brings about his own death. Eliphaz knows personally of such a case! It caused the fool’s destruction, **and** that of his property and children (vv. 3-5; an implicit dig at Job’s situation?).
  - (2) “Anticipates” Job 9:33; 16:22; 19:25!?
  - (3) Job is **not** experiencing the “blind” working of law, but the active and constructive discipline of the Lord (v. 17). Job should commit himself to God, who will restore him in due time; i.e., presumably after the retribution has run its course (vv. 8ff.).
- 4. Job (chs. 6-7).
  - a) This speech assumes Job complained in ch. 3.
  - b) Structure of the speech:
    - (1) Job talks about himself; about his friends; about God.
      - (a) Indicts friends (6)
      - (b) Lament to God (7)
    - (2) This sets the tone for the rest of Job’s speeches.
      - (a) Job 6:8-13 respond to 5:2-7; 4:2-6 (respectively)
      - (b) Major focus: failure of Eliphaz as friend! Eliphaz’s consolation nauseous; he simply a compassionless disputant! Job may have forsaken his “fear of Shaddai” (religion); friends forsaken Job due to fear!
      - (c) Concerning God – Job sees self as in process of being “crushed” by God!
  - c) Job’s speeches abound with illustrations. In support that complaining is natural and justified:
    - (1) sandbag (6:1-3).
    - (2) lowing ox / **\*wild ass braying** (6:4-5).
    - (3) hireling and payday (7:2).
  - d) The motif of friendship will become even more prominent as the dialogue progresses (see below). Job criticizes his friends for lack of genuine support (they are like a wadi; 6:15), and for being more interested in preserving religious rules than in helping a person.
  - e) Job 6-7 and Ps. 8: Job gives a **savage critique** of Ps. 8. Parodies. Divine overlordship **harshly** overdone!
    - (1) Uses “surveillance” metaphor – God as “Watcher; All-Seeing Eye.” \*Positive: Ps 139!
    - (2) Job sees self as object of surveillance and “target.”
    - (3) Parody of Ps 8 – humans humiliated rather than exalted!
- 5. Bildad (ch. 8).
  - a) Bildad’s view of reality is **static**: the righteous prosper; the wicked suffer. So: perhaps Job’s **children sinned** (v. 4). God’s operation of divine justice-AUTOMATIC! God deals as AUTOMATON > deals with each situation exactly alike.
  - b) Bildad’s defense of divine justice (God not reject the upright [8:3, 20]) will be ironically truer than he realizes!
  - c) Bildad begins by “extending the invitation!” (vv. 5-7).
  - d) Bildad takes his authoritative stance on the “traditions of the forefathers” (vv. 8-10). Relies on accumulated wisdom of ancestors.
- 6. Job (chs. 9-10).
  - a) Job envisions/assumes a contest. This is especially significant since at the close of the prologue, God was on his side. Job begins to speak without fear of recrimination. Job’s suffering has *empowered* him. Job envisions a law court. The pertinent accusations: justice; creative purpose.
  - b) Job laments that God is unequal, unfair, and inconsistent. Job questions whether God can see things from the perspective of mankind and share sympathetically in man’s limitations. Unlike Job of prologue (who not charge God with wrong), Job accuses God of undermining justice (9:24).

- c) Job dreams of a solution: an Umpire/ Arbiter. Although Job longs for such an individual, he knows that God would never allow it. Job's vindication becomes all consuming. V. 33: Job searches for common ground. Note interplay: create > destroy (10:3-9)
  - d) Job 9 and Gen 1:
    - (1) Gen. 1: God create...inspect > "good."
    - (2) Job 3:3f.: reversal.
    - (3) Job 10:13: "seem **good**...to oppress!?"
7. Zophar (ch. 11).
- a) Although God's wisdom and power are beyond comprehension, one should view situations from God's perspective. \*\*Sapiential character. \*\*Knowledge – "touchy-feely stuff of Eliphaz only gets one so far!" But who has God's point of view? Zophar! Zophar assumes he knows what God would say if he were present (vv. 4-5 [seems to imply he initiated into esoteric mysteries of wisdom normally beyond human reach]). Begins with Job's exceeding guilt (chides Job for verbosity [characteristic of fool]).
  - b) Zophar's reply anticipates tone of God in chs. 38-41 (mystery of God higher than heavens and deeper than Sheol – what can Job do [11:7-8]). Ironically, he wishes God would intervene – God will!...and teach Job (11:6) the secrets of wisdom!
  - c) Zophar, like Bildad, extends the invitation (vv. 13-20). It is beautiful, but does it fit Job's situation?
    - (1) Job: empty-headed stupidity! Disputes Job's interpretation (vss. 2-12).
    - (2) Lure for repentance: reversal of fortunes! \*\*Conditional assurance: Job needs to reform mind (13a); turn in humble obedience (13b); eliminate evil from mind (14a); drop deceit, which characterizes his approach (14b).
    - (3) Irony: Job also seeks restoration; however, seeks through vindication, not repentance!
8. Job (chs. 12-14).
- a) The difference between Job and his friends is clearly drawn. The argument of the friends rests purely on doctrine. Job roots his argument in his life experience. Significantly, prior to Job's affliction, the friends had assumed that Job was righteous. Note how Job injects his **own** case as an example of God's arbitrary dealings.
  - b) Job's speech borrows heavily from the world of the law court. He is ready and eager to argue his case (13:3). He lashes out at his friends for irrelevancy (13:8,12); he accuses God of acting toward man arbitrarily. Job, in his confidence, puts God to the dare (13:13-23). Whereas in ch. 3 Job wanted to die, that wish has given way to a desire to vindicate himself. From here on, Job is driven by a compulsion to prove his integrity (and to prove God's **lack** of it!). Pebble of suspicion (2:20ff?) become avalanche!
    - (1) Satirical doxology on God's wisdom (uses hymnic formulas extolling God's wisdom and power, but satire, since all deeds reflecting God's wisdom and power negative!)
    - (2) pretrial declaration / consideration of legal preliminaries. Key term – God's "face" (against friends – if they "lift God's face" [i.e., show partiality toward God – why should he need their help?!]); ultimate gamble with God – "see face of God" – if not righteous – death! Job uses language of arraignment and complaint.
  - c) Job 14:7-22: whereas in ch. 3 Job saw residents in Sheol in a preferable situation, he here considers trees as better off than people. Whereas trees get a "second chance," people do not. (Implicit response to Bildad's use of plant parable?)
  - d) chs. 12-14: "shocker."
    - (1) wisdom not necessarily with elders (sarcasm: shocking pronouncement in those days).
    - (2) world **not** governed by "measure for measure." Almost everywhere wicked prosper!
    - (3) Key to chs. 12-14: at times Job quotes and distorts friends' positions to refute them. At times sarcastic, mocking of friends.
9. Summary of the positions of the friends and Job.

- a) Dialogue – theatrically exhausting. Constant talk; no plot movement. Lack of dramatic movement not due to authorial clumsiness, but point of section – Job’s friends state and restate their case and nothing happens – for all their efforts, friends get us nowhere (Long)
- b) The position of the 3 friends (they live in the world of Ps 37)
  - (1) Eliphaz
    - (a) innocent not cut off; guilty destroyed.
    - (b) Job should appeal to God who can control men.
    - (c) experiences divine revel.
    - (d) emphasizes power of God and abject helplessness of man (not helpful to Job!).
    - (e) changes as debate progresses: 4, 5: for Job; 15: hedges (describes wicked in general); 22: condemns Job of sins, enumerates sins (attacks Job’s integrity and his theological offenses!). Never changes his theology; changes his appraisal of Job. \*\*Problem – in Eliphaz’s “comfort” is subtle indictment.
  - (2) Bildad
    - (a) God upholds justice and supports righteous.
    - (b) Job simply needs to “seek God.”
    - (c) Let Job consult the traditional teaching.
    - (d) Later: indignant condemnation.
  - (3) Zophar
    - (a) Accuses Job of scoffing (Job’s empty-headed stupidity).
    - (b) God’s decrees irrevocable.
    - (c) Job, no recourse but to repent and plead for mercy. Lure to repentance: reversal of fortunes!
    - (d) Triumph of wicked quickly passes.
  - (4) Conclusion
    - (a) God of friends = engineer of retribution (the act-consequence relationship); God of justice; the Great Avenger (Mettinger)
    - (b) If experience conflicts with tradition, experience **must** be denied.
    - (c) Friends miss one basic fact: fact of man’s integrity. Their only solution-somehow Job must be guilty. Job deep in his heart **knows** better!
    - (d) Irrelevancy of friends: as actuarial tables of life expectancy for man desperately ill and wants to know how long he has to live.
    - (e) Friends – various non-answers to crucial question of drama. If listen – can recognize familiar characters who still hang around church, stalling and sidetracking honest religious questing.
- c) Job
  - (1) Movement in 2 directions
    - (a) Desires death: but **only** if written record left behind. Characterizes self as victim who yearns for death.
    - (b) Vindication: thinks God always acted the same. His problem: his suffering doesn’t fit his old idea of God. His self-defense takes root in the soil of defenselessness (Brown).
    - (c) Oscillates between despair and ardent faith. Argues with God, even if can’t find God (23:8-9); never stops yearning for confrontation. This the stuff of spiritual conflict, dark night of the soul. (Murphy)
    - (d) God of Job (his accusations):
      - (i) God a criminal (9:22-24; cf. 19:6f; 27:2,7;34:10-19; 40:8)
      - (ii) God has created the world void of meaning (3; 12:13-25).
      - (iii) God actively immoral; omnipotent Tyrant.
  - (2) Job consumed with his own integrity:

- (a) his insistence not motivated (primarily) by pride; it deeper – stems from a religious awareness that the foundation and source of man’s integrity is the very presence of God. Job defines God’s “presence” as = prosperity. Fundamental problem – signs of “rightness”
    - (i) Possessions
    - (ii) Health
  - (b) Job forced to redefine his relationship with God (just as his integrity becomes redefined). Begins to see God as tester and tormentor rather than majestic benefactor (contra Ps 8:4) (Brown).
  - (c) “Job’s ‘perfect world’ was built upon the assumption that God plays by a set of moral rules that are widely publicized and known to humanity.” As long as Job plays by rules, God can be expected to “play fair” and preserve and protect. Problem – God’s actions moved into foul territory. Job suffers not because of violation of holy ordinance, but from a seemingly capricious challenge God issued to the Adversary. Makes no sense to restore Job’s world to way used to be; plot of story destroyed foundation upon which that world built. (Long, 10-11)
  - (d) Job’s responses – he could play orthodox game as well as they. However, in game of “Proverbs” (where he once constant winner) his undeserved suffering turned out to be unexpected Joker in orthodox deck. Now that Job drawn this card, can no longer play his hand; rules have changed; game has changed.
  - (e) Job: sees self as “attacked;” never able to see in this attack the God of his deepest faith. \*Driven to say things he “theologically not believe!”
- d) Breakthroughs in Job’s thinking: key issues in Job’s thinking: 1) justice; 2) creative purpose.
- (1) **Job 9:25-33: UMPIRE /ARBITER (*mokiah*).**
- (a) Not just a judge who merely decides who is right, but a mediator who settles a quarrel by reconciliation. Function:
    - (i) Lay hand on both parties and force them to submit to proper legal proceedings (v 33).
    - (ii) Arbiter have unenviable task of controlling God’s violent nature and preventing him from intimidating defendant (v 34). Later, Job makes removal of this “terror” one of conditions for fair trial (13:21).
  - (b) Job **not** think the problem is man rising to God’s level, but God understanding **man’s** level. God thinks on a “God-level,” can’t understand “man-level.” God can’t understand **burden** problem; complaining problem; dying problem.
  - (c) Job: yearns for “1/2 God / 1/2 man” to explain to God what he **needs** to understand. Job: “Poor God, look at the mess he is making just because he doesn’t understand.”
  - (d) **Both** Job and friends convinced they know what God is and does: AUTOMATON-think he programmed ...like automatic machine; they know his every move! Problem: God is a PERSON!
- (2) **Job 16:18-22: WITNESS (*’ed*)**
- (a) Job 9:33: how to solve while still present. 16:19: how to solve in absence.
  - (b) blood: cf. Gn. 4:10 – blood cries out (until covered). \*Not see his vindication as immediate. Job seems resigned that he won’t survive to see his vindication.
  - (c) Only hope: witness in heaven! Paradox: God vindicate his cause with God! Job saying what he really doesn’t believe. 2 gods:
    - (i) God of Job’s past (tradition).
    - (ii) God of Job’s present.
    - (iii) \*Schizophrenic god! \*Behind this God of violence, so manifest currently in world, stands God of righteousness and love.
  - (d) Job convinced God of his past (God he always believed in) **must** come to his rescue. His concern: can he survive that long!? Or is he longing for another 3<sup>rd</sup> party (e.g., Satan adversary in Job’s case; here have proponent?!)

- (e) Vindication on earth: where crime committed!
- (f) Job struggling with his theology; contradicted by his **present** experience! \*His misery and his faith in God of righteousness.
- (g) Job 17:6-8: broadens appeal-what happen to him will have a detrimental effect on observers. \*Shake their faith in the reliability of God!
- (h) As contemplates, Job resigns himself to revolutionary idea that righteous life to be lived for its own sake, and not for desire of reward (but Job not yet ready to accept that)!
- (3) **Job 19:23-29: VINDICATOR / BLOOD AVENGER (*go'el*).**
  - (a) Notoriously impossible text to read!
  - (b) Permanent written memorial (vv. 23f.). Combines 2 earlier thoughts: how to be there when he won't.
  - (c) "Redeemer:" "Vindicator" (*go'el*) > blood avenger. \***Advocate**. Nothing to do with forgiveness of sins! Cf. Dt. 9:6-12; Ruth 3:9; 2 Sam. 14:11; Lev. 25:25,48; Pr. 23:10f.
  - (d) "at last"
    - (i) adverb
    - (ii) Noun: (Pope) "Guarantor."
  - (e) *hyh/qwm*: Barre (formulaic pair – Akkadian: *balatu // tebu*: live/rise). Akkadian: **always** context of healing! "I know that my Redeemer can restore (my) life/health; And that my Guarantor can raise up from the dust (=Netherworld)."  
    - (i) Dust = Netherworld. Cf. Job 5:6; 7:29; Pss. 7:5,6; 22:16; 30:9,10.
    - (ii) "To raise up from Netherworld" = restore to health.
    - (iii) Habel – preferable to see hear "rising up in court to testify."
  - (f) "from flesh"
    - (i) "in" (KJV – "in my flesh I shall see God")
    - (ii) "apart from" (RSV – "from / without my flesh I shall see God")
    - (iii) Habel – "after, that is, my flesh is peeled off." (Echo of Satan – "skin for skin...?")
  - (g) "see God:" in what sense?
  - (h) Avoid 2 extremes
    - (i) Not let loud note of Job's certainty be drowned out by numerous text difficulties.
    - (ii) Not read too much of later resurrection theology back into passage.
  - (i) Redeemer:
    - (i) = God. He is to vindicate Job.
    - (ii) 3rd party = *mokiah* of ch. 9; *`ed* of ch. 16.
  - (j) When this to transpire?
    - (i) pre-death (cf. 14:13-17; 16:18-17:1 [Habel])
    - (ii) post-death: no need for written record if pre-death; "earth" constantly connected with Sheol; "Redeemer lives... man dies."
    - (iii) Job touches depths of despair and heights of faith. In unshakeable faith in justice present in world, envisions Vindicator rising to his defense! God no longer **simply** witness; now vindicator!
- (4) Conclusions:
  - (a) Job's faith in underlying righteousness of universe grows deeper as his conviction of the injustice of his **own** suffering grows stronger.
  - (b) Job 9:33: Mere Hope; 16:19: Actuality in Present; 19:25: Distant Future;  
\*\*Postponement of Vindication compensated by change of setting: 16:19: heaven; 19:25ff.: earth.

## B. Applications

1. Job 4:6: "Is not your fear of God your confidence?"

- a) In what does Job trust? In his faith in God, or in his faith in his faith in God?
  - b) Problem in modern church: so shocked if people manifest any doubts or seeming lack of faith, people have been conditioned to suppress or deny their true feelings. Crisis: when something “big” happens, suddenly it all falls apart. All denied.
  - c) “Laying faith on table:” ultimately Job will see it **not** as impressive as he thought! The fellowship should be a place where people can openly express their doubts, fears, and even anger.
  - d) Cathartic value of **honesty**. Significantly, at this stage God seems less “shocked” than do the 3 friends. They feel compelled to defend God. God seems less concerned to come immediately and “defend himself.” In ch. 31, Job will be willing to defend his own integrity, even if God sacrificed.
2. Dealing with people
- a) Tendency to deal in truisms.
  - b) Tendency to become naively arrogant at times:
    - (1) Job 5:8-16: “Although God is beyond human comprehension, I understand what is happening to you.”
    - (2) ch. 11: Zophar claims to represent God’s perspective.
  - c) Tendency to not fully hear the other person’s situation:
    - (1) the friends are not so much wrong as they are often irrelevant (e.g., 11:13-20).
    - (2) Problem of irrelevancy – sounds so beautiful, but in **context** so inappropriate!
      - (a) Browning: “God’s in his heaven, All’s right with the world.”
      - (b) Ex.: Paul’s thorn in flesh.”
        - (i) Hey Paul – “relax.”
        - (ii) “Get rid of inferiority complex.”
        - (iii) Say: “Everyday, in every way, I’m getting better and better!”
    - (3) Tendency to dogmatically adhere to past tradition as an absolute authority, regardless of present experience. Authority: “dogma vs. experience.”
      - (a) Friends: righteous prosper/ wicked suffer (remember Satan).
      - (b) Problem – theology **inappropriate** at times: initially people may restrain from recommending patience under affliction, but, if pious, will hardly resist temptation to refer sufferer to God’s ordering of universe. Sounds alright, but particularly inept at times! Difficulty of applying Bible to **others’** lives.
3. Views of God: \*both Job and his friends are convinced they know who God is and what he does (in detail).
- a) Bildad: God is an Automaton (ch. 8).
  - b) Job
    - (1) God is “too big” to understand man’s problems. Significant in light of J.C. Did God come to earth to find out what it was like to be man, or because he already knew?
    - (2) God is inconsistent: because God is so big, he can “get away with murder.” Illustration: painstakingly build a machine, then tear it apart!
  - c) Job’s view of God affects his view of himself. However, he fluctuates:
    - (1) Job is “too little.” Job parodies Ps. 8 (in 7:17ff.). He argues that God has singled him out unjustly. Since man is so small (unimportant), God should just leave him alone and quit making such a big deal out of mankind. Implications: View of Man:
      - (a) In a sense, Satan’s challenge of Job’s integrity is a challenge of ways of God – place of humanity in creation.
      - (b) Why man where he is in creation? Ps. 8: man put in responsibility **solely** because of love of God. \*\*Problem comes when man thinks that position **deserved, inherent**.
    - (2) Although man is not worth messing with, Job is convinced that **his** particular situation merits close consideration! Job obsessed with own integrity; maintain it at all costs!
4. Alienation
- a) Social alienation: friendless.

- b) Temporal alienation: Job’s past cut off from his present.
- c) Divine alienation: Job feels abandoned by God because of his affirmation of himself.
- d) Implications: hard to reach people who “comfortable.” But, the disenfranchised can be met by God.

“But the condition of Job—the radical dislocation of consciousness deriving from the precarious situation in which he finds himself, is not wholly to be despised. For it is a condition in which one can grasp and be grasped by real meaning. The state of alienation is indeed that situation of the whirlwind out of which God may speak to a man” (K. Thompson, “Out of the Whirlwind,” *Int* 14 [1960] 51-63).

## 5. Friendship

### a) **Job 2:11-13; \*6:14-30; 30:29.**

- b) This book presents a radical view of friendship: “Trusting a friend without reservation in the face of an alien world is a major concern of the poet of Job who forces us to consider friendship as a radical option for life in an age of increased anonymity and contrived sensitivity” (Habel, “Only the Jackal is my friend,” *Int* 31 [1977] 227-36). Job is bereft of human loyalty and disillusioned with traditional values. His quest for truth includes a search for meaning of genuine loyalty (*hesed*) among friends. “Education in the art of compassion is the supreme virtue of a friend.”

- c) Job looks to his friends for faithfulness and consistency; he finds them to be “worthless physicians” (13:4; 19:21f.).

(1) Job 2:11-13: patriarchal examples of true friendship. They come from distant and diverse places; they make special arrangements to visit Job; they offer sympathy and comfort. Initially: not incidental companions coming to dispute (note: they “rend robes” in sympathy). Problem – they can’t “undo” the experience! Note – “they not recognize him!”)

(2) **Become** defensive proponents of orthodox religion. \*\*When Job needs a friend, he confronted with theologians; when he calls for sympathy, he confronted with doctrine.

(a) Mk. 10:46-52: Bartimaeus not seeking information, but compassion! Bartimaeus: “anyone out there care?” Jesus: “I care!”

(b) Job seeking meaningful compassion (*nehamah*) and genuine hope (*tiqwah*). Irony: death becomes “comfort” (*nehamah*; 6:10a). Friends’ rational arguments provide no substantive means of coping with his problem.

(c) Job’s accusations rife with language of betrayal. Friends have sorely failed in their responsibility to comfort him in his pain. Sees behind their vehemence an underlying sense of fear and failure of nerve!

- d) Friendship of which this book speaks is a radical relationship, a human covenant, an ultimate loyalty, and a redemptive process. What does it mean to **befriend** a man such as Job?

(1) Job 6:14 (NEB): “A despairing man needs the loyalty of a friend when he loses faith in the Almighty” (Habel). NAB: “A friend owes kindness to one in despair tho he have forsaken the fear of the Almighty.”

(2) Job in ultimate despair – 30:29 likens self to jackal / ostrich on fringe of desert. His cries as futile as wail of jackal and screech of ostrich.

(3) Friend: loyal companion who demonstrates *hsd* (loyalty) in times of extreme crisis.

(a) Job 4:6 (Eliphaz): “your religion supplies support (*tiqwah*).” \*What about when “religion” shaken?

(b) \*\*Our manifestation of *hsd*-loyalty **may** restore doubter’s lost sense of **God’s *hsd*!** True friend is one who identifies with (cf. Pr. 14:21; 21:10; in John 15:13, “friend” dies for another!). Distinguish sin/sinner; \*identify person/position. Job longs for “straight talk” (honesty) of a friend, rather than handbook of theological affirmations. “Greater love has no one than this to lay down one’s life for another!”

(4) \*Epilogue: 42:7f.: Job intercedes for friends!

## V. The Dialogue (Part Two): Job; God; the Epilogue (chs. 29-42).

### A. Background and Exegetical Helps.

1. Job's Oath of Innocence (ch. 31).
  - a) The form of chs. 29-31 begins as a lament, but instead of the normal plea for help, one finds an appeal for a formal judicial hearing (ch. 31).
    - (1) Ch. 29: "the golden days" (when Job considered the paragon of righteousness)
    - (2) Ch. 30: "sitting on a shelf feeling sorry for myself" (Willis)
  - b) The significance of taking this form of self-imprecation is that if a man perjures himself, God is then invoked by the oath to punish him. One might say Job is throwing caution to the wind.
  - c) Job 31:35: this is the key to the legal metaphor in Job 31. This represents the defendant's official appeal before a third party for a civil hearing at which the judge is to compel the plaintiff to formalize his accusations against the defendant and present any supporting evidence. This type of appeal is made **only** after all attempts at informal arbitration have been exhausted. A sworn statement of innocence often accompanied such an appeal.
    - (1) Legal metaphor: Job sees his state as an indication God has initiated legal action against him.
    - (2) Mesopotamia: trial procedures:
      - (a) verbal dispute
      - (b) if no resolution, go before magistrate(s): from private dispute > public judicial hearing.  
\*Only after oath of witnesses did judge hear case.
      - (c) "In the (legal) cause of the illness which has seized me, I am lying on my knees for judgment. Judge my cause, give a decision for me."
    - (3) OT parallels:
      - (a) First Sam. 24:10-6,18: David and Saul.
      - (b) Gn. 44:3-12: Judah and bros.; theft in Egypt (v. 9: request through oath).
  - d) The ethical standards Job affirms are impressive. They go beyond the required standards both in scope and depth. Vv. 1-8, 33 concern general proscriptions; vv. 9ff. concern specific sins. Vv. 9ff. are stated informally and contain motive clauses; vv. 1-8 exhibit a metaphoric use of body parts (especially the foot and walking). Job disclaims lust, dishonesty, unjust acquisition of wealth, oppression, miserliness, avarice, idolatry, parsimony, hypocrisy, and exploitation. Emphasis on generosity and hospitality.
    - (1) Job's oath of purity focuses less on letter of law than on motivations and attitudes. Interesting comparison of Job's oath and Decalogue (see Oeming). Introspective radicalization.
    - (2) Out of Job's passion to vindicate self emerges a deeper conviction – less self-righteous grievance and more raw yearning. Job expressing deeper longing to establish relational ties with God who has been apparently oblivious to pathos of Job's character.
  - e) Contrast Eliphaz's analysis of Job's ethics: 22:1-11.
2. Elihu Speeches (chs. 32-37).
  - a) Issue: is Elihu inspired? I.e., will Elihu speak for God, or **will God**? Elihu – one "last ditch effort to *save* Job!" (Brown) Elihu = "he is my God." (He fancies himself as veritable mouthpiece of God).
  - b) In some ways Elihu represents a mid-ground between Job and the friends. Literarily – Elihu antithesis of friends (he young, yet wise, wisdom granted solely by God).
    - (1) friends: God just; suffering consequence of sin.
    - (2) Job: denied both: he is no sinner; **God** is unjust!
    - (3) Elihu: as youth, attempts to reorient Job and call him back to his youth (33:25).
  - c) Elihu's contribution to the discussion is that suffering is often disciplinary; it warns one from slipping into sin. Elihu suggests that there are some weaknesses to which decent, respectable men are particularly prone – notably complacency and pride.
    - (1) chs. 32-3: God speaks to man in many ways:
      - (a) visions; dreams. *Angelic intercessor* – presence of grace of God?
      - (b) **physical pain**: illness **may** keep one from falling into wanton sin.
    - (2) ch. 34: declares Job denied justice of God only to bolster his own pretensions to innocence.  
\*Charging God with injustice is really trying to take God's place in the world.

- (3) ch. 35: completes principle rejoinder to Job. \*Delay of retribution? Sometimes sufferers cry merely out of pain, rather than from a genuine desire for God's presence.
- (4) chs. 36-7: paean of praise to Creator, whose mysterious ways are manifested in nature. Defends:
  - (a) God's might; justice; righteousness (innocence) in case at hand.
  - (b) God **not** answer direct challenges from humans; answers indirectly through dreams and affliction. Elihu has assumed role of "answerer" (arbiter!) God will not answer (divine speeches verdict on Elihu's message).
- d) The style of the Elihu speeches
  - (1) Prolix introduction (32:1-5)
  - (2) Bombast (32:6-22)
  - (3) Less pompous than unapologetically reckless (Brown). Paradox – several of Elihu's characteristics (e.g., unabashed confidence, courage, defiant assertiveness, passionate zeal) traits come to be shared by Job.
- e) The function of the Elihu speeches in the overall movement of the book. In Job 31, Job has demanded God appear in order to begin civil litigation. Job is prepared to fight. However, instead of God, he gets Elihu. At the end of the Elihu speeches, Job is silent.
  - (1) The Elihu speeches **may** reflect the poet's own experience during a lifetime.
  - (2) Meant to bolster friends' arguments. Elihu resembles reader who has gone over dialogue meticulously and singled out statements for further comment (33:10-11; 14:24b; 13:27) (Murphy). Meticulous refining of earlier speeches?
  - (3) Interlude: between Job and God? (Willis). Job ready to **argue**, not to listen. Elihu **silences** Job, but doesn't change him. (Cf. ch. 28 between dialogue and Job's soliloquy.)
  - (4) Elihu spiritualizes, better "theocentrizes" wisdom. Attests to God's *direct* role in human affairs. (Brown) He a "rebel with a cause."
- 3. Divine Speeches (chs. 38:1-40:2; 40:6-41:34).
  - a) The whirlwind: cataclysmic reactions are usual in OT theophanies (cf. Pss. 18:7-19; 50:3; Hab. 3).
    - (1) The very fact that God appears clearly a response of YES to Job. (Theophanies in OT for revelation [disclosure] and manifestations of divine grace!) (Remember: for God to provide reprobate with direct private revelation unthinkable).
    - (2) Response to "who is God?" In God-speeches, have legal metaphor (which Job started). Language of divine combat! With second speech, if Job victorious, Yahweh will acknowledge Job in praise (*ydh*) as Yahweh had hoped to elicit from Job in first speech (Brown).
      - (a) "who is this who clouds my design (*'esa*) (38:2: to Job's charge re. universe devoid of purpose / meaning).
      - (b) "would you declare me a *rasha*" (40:8 – to Job's charge that God criminal).
      - (c) Job called to "answer" (which he had earlier said he would do!)
  - b) The **Structure** of the Divine Speeches (Habel: any interpretation of Yahweh speeches must take into acct both framework and core – 3 key literary features: ironic fulfilment; thematic shock; structural integration).
  - c) The **character** of the divine speeches: questions and irony (see 38:5, 21); humor. **Not** rational discourse, but poetic, visionary discourse.
    - (1) In a real sense, the Satan and the friends have the same theology: *do ut des* (i.e., self-centered and contractual).
    - (2) Job reproaches his friends; he cries and appeals to God. In a real sense, Job is seeking the God of his faith, not the impersonal "law of justice" of his friends.
    - (3) Since the problem is not on the plane of ideas and teaching (the theoretical), but rather an event or experience, the solution must likewise by an event.
    - (4) Yahweh uses irony to suggest that the criticism Job has leveled against Him can only come from a rival god (*mi zeh*: "who is this?" [For Job to expect God to appear in person absurdly

presumptuous! God's response to Job of 13:19a: "who will contend this suit with me?"). (In speech #1, only wild animals and war horse are mentioned – \*power! The human, though unmentioned, is addressed: "Who are you...Where were you? Recall Job's savage reversal of Genesis 1!). The irony **may** also suggest that God comes not in anger; rather theophany is a grace, a loving presence. The friends stressed divine justice; Job emphasized arbitrary power; God glorifies the twin attributes of mystery and love.

- (5) The first speech – a "tour of the universe"
  - (a) Job 38:2 ingenious wordplay on 3:4-7 (God accuses Job of "darkening counsel [ `esa]).
  - (b) The Cosmological Realm: earth likened to structure of a temple. Where Job saw darkness and amorphous domains, God speaks of exacting measurements and solid pedestals.
  - (c) The Meteorological Realm
  - (d) The Animal "Kingdom"
    - (i) Animal realm marches by two by two (lion and raven; mountain goat and deer; onager and wild ox; ostrich and war horse; hawk and vulture). All \*wild and independent! Animal kingdom no kingdom at all; it "ordered anarchy!" (Brown)
    - (ii) \*\*Yahweh *denaturalizes* the world in which human beings consider themselves pinnacle of creation and lords of world. These beings not find their worth in humans; they objects of God's gratuitous attention. For Yahweh, this not waste of resources, but labor of love!
    - (iii) Animals – wild, untamed, roam inaccessible regions (to humans). \*They live in "chaos" rather than "orderly creation." God not only controls, he cares for these animals in the chaotic regions!
- (6) The human dilemma: we in **image** of God; we not God! Temptation: to remold to our human limitations; judge him and creation by **our** human standards! Judge God by human justice. Job's parody of Ps 8 pales in comparison to God's virtual silence about humankind.
- d) Job is given **no answers!** He is merely led more deeply into the divine mystery. Yahweh refuses simplistic replies of friends concerning law of reward and retribution; rather – challenges Job to change his orientation and view his case in light of total cosmic design of Creator.
  - (1) Job does not submit to the theological arguments of his friends, which he saw as wearisome traditionalism; rather, he surrenders to the presence of God. Job submits, not because he "understands," but because he has experienced the presence of God!
  - (2) Yahweh's defense operates on assumption that Job innocent but ignorant! (Habel) \*\*Rather than indulging Job's obsession with his own integrity, he forces Job to come to terms with God's integrity as Creator of a complex world.
  - (3) (Habel, 535): "In his design there is a measure of the comic with the controlled, the bizarre with the beautiful, the serendipitous with the serious. Recall the interplay of Zophar and Job concerning the wild ass (Job 6; 11). Yahweh challenges Job to show the discernment necessary to keep this paradoxical world in balance...Yahweh's theophanic appearance honors Job; his speech challenges Job; his enigmatic design throws Job back into a bewildering world of wonder. In that world Job reluctantly forgoes his demand for litigation."
- e) Behemoth and Leviathan:
  - (1) Backdrop: Job invited to "don royal regalia"
    - (a) What *not* said as important as what said.
    - (b) With second speech, battle language replaced by language of praise and admiration.
  - (2) Are these mythological monsters, or mortal creatures? If the latter, then they would represent the hippopotamus and crocodile respectively.
  - (3) The purpose of the second speech:
    - (a) These creatures are clearly **mortal**. They represent apparent invincibility (note their massive and powerful bodies). They are poetic hyperboles of "magnificent mortality!" They mirrors through which Job may view his own existence of protest and suffering.
      - (i) Behemoth = "The Beast" (water buffalo?)

- (ii) Leviathan = sea dragon (Ps 74:12-14; 104:26)
  - (b) Job 40:15: “Behemoth whom I have made *as I made* you.”
  - (c) Job 40:19a: “he is the first fruits of the ways of God.” (Implies preeminence, prominence, and excellence).
  - (d) Leviathan represents pinnacle of creation! Even Behemoth no match! Leviathan (sea dragon) given most attn. Twin roles stressed: strength; royalty.
  - (e) Irony – humans may be tougher to control than these beasts!! Genesis 1-11! What do Behemoth, Leviathan, and Job have in common (40:15)?
- (4) Theme: the universe is a mystery to humans.
- (a) It was **not** created exclusively for human use. Thus, neither it nor its Creator can be judged solely by man’s standards or goals.
  - (b) The natural world, though beyond man’s knowledge, reveals its beauty and order.
  - (c) \*Humans are only **one** of God’s creatures; they are **neither the measure of all things nor** the sole test of the worth of creation.
  - (d) \*\*Job is dramatically mirrored in creation that reflects his tenacity, fearlessness, courage, as well as vulnerability and stubbornness. Job finds self mirrored in creation and creation mirrored in himself. Yahweh has turned Job’s declaration of independence into interdependence (Brown).
4. Job’s Response (40:3-5; 42:1-6).
- a) Together: utters two approximate quotations of Yahweh’s challenge to him in 38:2-3; his final words constitute Yahweh’s opening words. Job responds not by pressing case he so passionately prepared, but by haltingly imitating divine speech (Brown).
  - b) The first response: Job admits his inability to answer God. I.e., the first speech brings silence, but not necessarily repentance.
    - (1) Job responds: “too light” (*qll*). Its antonym: *kbd* (biblical man’s *kbwd* precious to God). If taken away, man deprived of his better part (cf. 19:19; 29:20). Job disclaims *kbd*; says he *qly*.
    - (2) \*Does declining the invitation admit defeat? Or simply: “I have nothing more to add to my arguments.” Janzen: First speech “ambiguous” (cf. prologue: Job’s 2 responses: 2nd ambiguous).
  - c) The second response: Job had desired confrontation; he got communion.
    - (1) Of **what** does Job repent?
      - (a) Job 42:7-8: “Job spoke right...”
      - (b) Job **never** relinquishes his integrity.
      - (c) Job had been of the opinion that God **must** intervene, declare him just, and deliver him. Job is guilty of claiming God **must**. He relinquishes that claim.
    - (2) Outwardly nothing has changed; the ashes are the same (cf. 30:16-23 where Job likens himself to “dust and ashes”). Changed is the person sitting in them. Job no longer sees himself as the center of the cosmos.
      - (a) Divine speeches: **no answer**, but spell out mystery of Lord, on basis of which Job can entrust himself to God.
      - (b) Suffering: part of divine mystery, but can be **lived with** and endured by those who have an analogous intimate experience of divine.
      - (c) *Shadowlands*: CS Lewis: “I pray, not so that I can change God, but so that he can change me!”
      - (d) \*Absent is any reference to Job’s moral and religious integrity. Yahweh ignores it. It is important as a refutation to the friends’ retribution theology; however, it in no way entitles Job to make demands on God!
      - (e) The natural order was **not** created exclusively by God for man’s use and domination, **but** reveals a beauty and harmony that man is able to experience vividly and directly.
    - (3) Translation of 42:6: ...therefore I despise myself(?), and repent(?) in dust and ashes.”

- (a) \*Job changes his perspective concerning what it means to be “dust and ashes.”
  - (b) the nuance of *m’s* (“despise”[?]) is debated.
    - (i) to reject (words). 31:13: Job claims he not “dismiss/reject the case (*mishpat*) of his servant.” Here = his case against God.
    - (ii) to reject (life). In other occurrences of book (7:16; 9:21), implied object is “life.” *Double entendre* – not woeful, but since he has received hearing, can now embrace death.
    - (iii) to hold in contempt (see J. Curtis; D. Robertson): “Therefore I feel loathing contempt and revulsion [toward you, O God] and I am sorry for frail man” (= *’l ’pr w’pr*). Translation of 40:4-5: “Although I dealt with matters that to you are trivial when I spoke earlier, I will now with contemptuous revulsion cease speaking altogether. I spoke once, but I will not answer, twice, but I won’t do it again.”  
\*\*With this interpretation: must assume prose and dialogue can’t go together. Job totally and unequivocally rejects Yahweh!
  - (c) the issue of the object of *m’s* is debated. *M’s* usually carries an object.
    - (i) *npsy* (“myself/life”). Cf. Moore: “I despise my life” (no object): In despising his life, Job is despising his guilt. Hatred of life commenced in the dialogue (ch. 3); **now he repents** of his hatred of life.
    - (ii) riches.
    - (iii) \*my words.
  - (d) “repent” (*nhm*):
    - (i) *nhm* + *’al* = “to change one’s mind about something.” I.e., relents of dust and ashes = forsakes his position of lament among dust and ashes.
    - (ii) \*change mind **concerning** dust and ashes (i.e., what it means to be human!) “Dust and ashes” – see 30:19; Gen 18:27.
    - (iii) “to be comforted” (“and am comforted concerning dust and ashes”) (cf. 2:11; 7:13; 16:2; 21:34; 29:25; 42:11). Job’s friends came to comfort; it is God’s gentle rebuke that has assuaged Job’s pain. Job’s final rejection of life corresponds to his initial death wish in ch. 3.
- (4) Meaning of Job’s final speech / various interpretations (Habel)
- (a) Represents complete surrender of his will to will of God. Repents of arrogance and abases self as humiliated mortal.
  - (b) Reconciliation rather than capitulation is central focus of Job’s speech. God – not humans – a control cosmos; with new understanding, Job reaffirms faith with appropriate humility. New understanding of God’s governance.
  - (c) Consistent with comic irony which pervades book, Job’s final confession made “tongue in cheek.” God been shown as blind force and blustering orator; God’s acceptance of Job’s confession only further exposes divine duplicity.
  - (d) Closing speech Job’s final act of defiance. Job rejects deity who answers cries of human despair with arrogant boastings from a tempest. Job “sees” God for what he truly is – unjust, unfeeling, and cruel. Job’s final words ultimate defiant deed of the hero.
5. Epilogue (42:7-17)
- a) “What God gives to one who thinks he deserves nothing.” Restoration = act of grace; not a reward for his integrity or achievements as a hero. Consolation and restoration now partners, replacing old partner – death.
  - b) Epilogue – not paradise regained, but new creation. Adversary – unmentioned; he a character suitable only to the old world, which has passed away. Restoration involves return to fold of civilized life. But different person thrown into community – has new sense of purpose and moral vision.
  - c) Epilogue is a portrait of tenacious faith and restoration. Restoration requires risk, risk to give and receive love in an ever-threatening world (Brown).

- d) Irony: the friends had consistently urged Job to repent and plead for mercy. Job now intercedes for them. Strikingly, earlier Eliphaz had assured Job that if he repented of his misdeeds he could be forgiven by God and even be able to intercede for other sinners. With poetic justice, the Lord now tells Job to pray for these sinners. Job has relinquished stance as litigator and resumes role of “priest and righteous mediator” for the community (Habel). Reformation of Job’s character – compassion.
  - (1) Job’s prayer for friends is manifestation of *gratuitous* compassion, a compassion that only found in discovery of a God who takes gratuitous delight in all of creation.
  - (2) Just as Job prayed for children in prologue (there motivated by **fear?**), now prays for friends (motivated by **compassion**).
- e) “Now that Job has passed his test, and demonstrated that his heart is set on God, not on his gifts, his Master can resume the normal manifestation of His affection, and shower blessings on ‘my servant Job.’” (R. McKenzie, “Purpose of the Yahweh speeches in the book of Job,” *Bib* 40 [1959] 435-45).

## B. Applications

1. “Who is man?”
  - a) Bildad: “man is a worm” (25:6).
  - b) Job: “man is a prince” (31:37).
  - c) God: “man is a man” (38:3; 40:7). 42:6 – Job accepts royal vocation of humanity – to “become humanity” (so Janzen). \*Striking – Job not reduced to nothing; not crushed nor reduced to “dust,” but he becomes what he truly is – human being.
2. The Divine Speeches.
  - a) \*\*God is not out to “win an argument;” he is out to “win a person.” Elihu **silences** Job; difference between silencing person and changing.
  - b) Yahweh provides no answer! This is central – Job was looking for the wrong thing. Job wanted God to come and “untie the knot.” When God comes, Job realizes that God was speaking all along!
    - (1) Job finds it difficult to get a direct answer from God (cf. Jesus and the Pharisees). God is often interested in the motivation behind the question.
    - (2) Job wanted an answer, but found an answer was not what he really needed. Rather, he needed an “enlarged vision.” In application, one could say that faith is often not dependent on more accurate information about God, but on a personal relationship.
  - c) In truth, the conclusion of Job’s and God’s dialogue is filled with paradox. Job had accused God of negligence and incompetence. In response, God has shown Job his “tunnel vision” and opened Job to a world he formerly took for granted.
  - d) Image – God, like proud parent, displays pictures of his creation in sweeping fashion – from lion to Leviathan. Yahweh has *re-characterized* creation for Job. In short, Yahweh is praised not for directly intervening to subjugate the chaotic forces inherent in creation and eliminate conflict, though that potential is always there. Rather, Yahweh is characterized by creativity, self-restraint, and gratuitous pride. Yahweh allows the host of characters not only to exist but also to develop and exercise their endowed qualities, both positive and negative...It is out of gratuitous delight that Yahweh steps back and lets creation run its course, allowing the citizens of the cosmos the freedom to maneuver and negotiate their respective domains and lives. Far from being a divine tyrant, Yahweh is the gentle parent whose care extends beyond the maintenance of order and structure. Yahweh’s love embraces each creature’s individuality and unique role within the wonderfully complex network of life. Yahweh has countered Job’s chaos and curse of creation (ch. 3) with blessing and balance. (Brown, 103)
  - e) “The book of Job is, ultimately, not about what it means that humans suffer. It is about what it means to be human at all when God is seen truly to be God....This great text stands over against the prevalent religious impulse to fabricate a wishful picture of the world, to imagine the sort of God who would rule benignly over such a world, and then to bow down in worship before this projection of our own sense of moral order.” The book is about spiritual transformation; i.e., coming to live before the only God we cannot construct. (Long, 5) Book not answer difficult

question – Why me, Lord? Rather – forces us to ask whether we want to *be* God, or be kind of human being that in midst of inexplicable pain, trusts the One who is God? It a “Gethsemane-sized decision” (Long, 19). It is the contrast between Paradise (Genesis 3) and Gethsemane!

- f) Irony: “With Job, we see God testify in a whirlwind to might, power, and control over the natural realm, of which Job is a part. Yet with all this omnipotence, there is one thing the Almighty cannot do....In the Prologue the reader learns something which is not revealed to Job: that God cannot coerce the love and service of mortals – or rather, precisely the best of mortals, like his servant Job. God cannot make Job serve him.” (Seitz, *Int* 43 [89] 5-17)
3. Job’s repentance.
    - a) Job first is silenced, and only then changed.
    - b) Job had in essence wanted to be “God-for-a-day.” When given the opportunity, he suddenly saw his own limitations. At the root of man’s problems is man trying to be God. Genesis 3: \*knowledge of vulnerability, frailty. \*The “irony of knowledge.”
    - c) Job’s response: there is a world of difference between a “hand-me-down” religion (ears) and a personal relationship (eyes). Job moved from an academic understanding of God to a personal relationship (from the tradition of the fathers to a personal experience). The omission of any mention of innocence or vindication is intentional – Job no longer needs it; he has found the presence of God. Job no longer approaches God as a prince, but willingly takes his place as a trusting creature in God’s cosmos.
  4. Lessons from Job
    - a) friends:
      - (1) To what extent do we have to “defend God?” Do we get too caught up in reactions to “defaming talk?”
      - (2) Where are *we* when calamities “hit” people? Who around to “pick up pieces?”
    - b) Job: \*God can deal with, remake “blunt honesty.” Nothing worse than “pious dishonesty.”
    - c) God: not out to win argument, but person. Job’s **shallow** faith gives way to **deeper** faith!
  5. Scherer: book read on 3 levels (not for casual reader).
    - a) Superficial: suffering of innocent.
    - b) Satan: “fear God for nothing?” Cf. Peter: “we left all to follow...” (immediately followed by parable of *Laborers in Vineyard*). \*\*To whom does the Kingdom of God belong?! Key: \*\*not what we left for God, but what God left for us! Job new insight: God’s grace transcends our limited vision of “fairness.”
    - c) \*Ways and being and nature of God. Only as Job comes to firsthand relationship, leaves self-concern, is he free to wander the expanse of the universe. \*There God creates a “new creature;” the **old** questions die with the intimate relationship. Cf. the Prodigal Son: the father was never “away.” He waits at the gate! Son moved from **my** concern to a vision of the nature of his father (but first had to “bottom out”). \*\*The Peace of the Presence of God!
  6. Conclusion #1: How did Job spend the rest of his life, all 140 years worth? Still upright and blameless, Job, I suspect, exhibited a passionate investment in the life of the community, one that was no longer obsessive, but took a gratuitous delight in the created order that extends into the very margins of life...Job came to see beauty in the barrenness and dignity in the dispossessed. He no longer saw the social outcasts as objects, whether of charity or of contempt. Rather he viewed them as partners, for it took a procession of wild animals and a boastful God to reveal to Job the common bond of life that embraces both ostriches and kings, the foolish and the wise, the stranger and the elite. As Job found both reorientation and solace in the presence of God awesomely displayed in creation at the fringes, Christians see the radical presence of God in one more place, on the cross. In the cross, one beholds the next and final move of God, whose very self becomes marginalized, experiencing contempt as an outsider, rejected by humanity, and in death unleashes new life and vision to those who can say with Job, “I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, / but now my eye sees you; / therefore I reject my life and find restoration.” (Brown, 118-9)
  7. Conclusion #2: It is not enough to say that [Satan] loses in spite of his gains – that does not express the full irony of his position – for indeed, he loses by and through his gains. He makes Job a rebel, and in rebellion Job lays grip on a deeper loyalty. He provokes him into complaints against God, yet these

complaints mark not a renunciation of, but agonizing struggles after God. He makes him a heretic, a passionate repudiator of the faith of his people, yet even while the old faith is being destroyed, a new and nobler faith is taking root in his heart. Satan is thus, in most unforeseeable fashion, duped by his own activities. Yet if, after our facile manner, we sum up the results of Job's Ordeal by saying that good comes out of evil, let us beware in what sense we use the words. Never by way of natural and necessary sequence does good come out of evil. It is as a glad surprise, a miracle and triumph of grace, that it comes. Satan accomplishes nothing for God, though God may accomplish much through Satan." (J. McKechnie, *Job, Moral Hero, Religious Egoist, and Mystic* [Greenock: J. McKelvie and Sons, 1926] 26-7. Cited from *IB*, 920f.)