Jobs Article Collection
6/25/03
17 articles, 299 pp.
Job Articles for OT eSources


________. "Job and the Nation Israel First Study: In the Hands of the Enemy," Bib Sac 96 (384) (Oct. 1939) 405-11.


________. "Job and the Nation Israel: third Study: Face to Face with the Lord," Bib Sac 97 (386) (Apr 1940) 211-16.


Harris, R. Laird. "The Book of Job and Its Doctrine of God," GTJ 13.3 (Fall 1972) 3-34.

Newell, B. Lynne. "Job: Repentant or Rebellious?" WTJ 46.2 (Fall, 1984) 298-316.


ART. VI.--Commentar uber das Buch Hiob, von, H. A. HAHN u. s. w. Berlin, 1850. 8 vo. pp. 337.


THE poetical books of the Old Testament fall naturally into two divisions of three each. There are distinguished both by their subject and by the style of their poetry. The first class embraces in addition to the Psalms two brief books, which from their character might naturally have been included in the same collection, had not their length and importance been such as to justify the assigning to them an independent position. The Song of Solomon is an extended 45th Psalm. And the Lamentations of Jeremiah find counterparts in the Psalms, as well in their theme (Comp. Ps. lxxix. lxxx.) as in their alphabetic structure: These are all purely lyrical, and express the devout feeling of the heart, in the contemplation of the character of God, the truths of his word, or the dispensations of his providence.

The other three books constituting the second class, are Job, the Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. Their common theme may be suggested to us by the use which they make of one characteristic word, "wisdom." Their aim is to show that piety, is wisdom; that it is the one course promotive of man's true and highest welfare. They seek in other words to exhibit the consistency between the truths of God's revelation and the lessons of his providence, by making it appear--that what the former sanctions as right, is attested by the latter as good. The book of Proverbs presents the harmony of the divine law and of the actual experience of the world as a general fact. It contains...
a great number of maxims bearing upon every department of human life, and, embodying the results of long continued and careful observation, which prove conclusively that piety conduces to human welfare, and that wickedness is opposed to it. Such is the present constitution of things on the whole; such is the native tendency of these respective courses, unless obstructed by casual and outside influences. General rules are, however, liable to exceptions: this is the case with many of these inspired maxims. The conclusion as to the usual course of things cannot, it is true, be invalidated in this way; but anxious questionings and perplexing doubts may be awakened, which demand a satisfactory solution, if one can be furnished. If the identity of piety and wisdom is not only a general truth with occasional exceptions, but a universal truth with no exceptions; it is important that this should be shown, and the apparent interruptions of the general law explained in such a way as to show that it is at no time suspended or reversed. It is to this that the books of Job and Ecclesiastes are directed. There are but two possible cases which could be regarded as exceptions to the general rule, and these in various forms and degrees are perpetually presenting themselves in the actual life of the world. These are, first, piety without prosperity; and, second, prosperity without piety. The first is discussed in Job, the second in Ecclesiastes. In both, to make the argument perfectly conclusive, the difficulty is presented in its extreme form. In Job, a man without his equal for piety in the world, is overwhelmed by a sudden and most extraordinary accumulation of disasters; he is stripped of his possessions, bereaved of his family, afflicted by sore disease, despised and shunned by his acquaintance, and made the victim of cruel suspicions and censures, until life became a burden; and yet in it all it is shown that God was not unfaithful, and piety did not fail of its reward. On the other hand, the book of Ecclesiastes exhibits the spectacle of a man, who is raised to the summit of earthly felicity, who has surrounded himself with every source of gratification that power or wealth can command, or his heart desire; who leaves no project unfulfilled, no wish un gratified, and gives himself of set purpose to extract solid satisfaction from the world, conducting his efforts with a sagacity and a wisdom such as no other man
has possessed before or since; and the result of all was disappointment and failure, vanity and vexation, of spirit; and the conclusion to which he came after, the baffling experiment of a life-time was, that the world without God can, yield no solid good. Or as he states the issue himself, Eccl. xii.13: "Fear God, and, keep his commandments; for this is the whole of man;" this sums up at once his duty and his happiness.

These three books, forming thus a complete cycle, and covering together the entire range of the subject to whose illustration, they are devoted, belong to one common style of poetry, the, gnomic or aphoristic. This style, with its, brief, sententious apophtheqms, seems specially suited to bring out clearly and forcibly the truths of experience, embodying them in such a shape as shall strongly affect the mind, and lodge firmly in the memory. It appears in its purest and most unmixed form in the Proverbs; less so in Ecclesiastes, as the nature of the discussion demanded; least of all in Job, where the lyrical element rises to greater prominence than in either of the others, although the aphoristic is not discarded.

According to a supscription added, to this book in, the, Septuagint, Uz lay upon the borders of Idumea and Arbia; and Job was the grandson of Esau, the same with Jobab (Gen. xxxvi. 33) one of the kings of Edom. Though little reliance is to be placed upon this; latter statement, the correctness of the former is generally conceded. The authority of the translator is itself something, as it is not improbable that, the land may still have been known by its original name in his day. It seems to be even mentioned by Ptolemy. And all the indications in the book; itself, and in other passages of Scripture, where the name occurs, conspire to fix it somewhere in that region. Whether it was so called from the descendant of Seir, (Gen. xxxvi; 28) or the son of Nahor, (xxii. 21) or of Aram, (x. 23,) this location of it would not be unlikely. It is favoured by the fact that Job is called a son of the East, (i. 3,) that, his property was exposed to incursions of the Sabeans and the Chaldeans, that his friends were from Teman, Shuah, (Gen. xxv. 2,) and Naamah, (possibly that mentioned Josh. xv. 41,) that in Lamentations iv. 2;1, Uz is associated with Edom, and in Jer. xxv. 20, is distinguished from it.
That Job was a real person, and his history is a record of actual events, may be inferred from the fact that the localities are real, that the names are not significant, (except Job, which may mean the one assailed or treated with hostility,) that there is no analogy in ancient writers, and particularly in the Bible, for such a purely fictitious tale. The question is settled, however, by the allusions to Job as an historical person in Ezek. xiv. 14, &c., James v. 11. This does not render it necessary to assume that everything occurred precisely as is here narrated, that the speeches are reported verbatim, that the Lord pronounced a long discourse, or that Satan literally appeared in heaven among the sons of God. Still less can the round numbers in which Job's possessions are stated, and their exact duplication afterwards occasion any embarrassment. The history is given substantially as it occurred, not with an eye to precision in trivial details, but with the view of developing in their full extent the important lessons which it was adapted to convey.

The period when Job lived is nowhere expressly stated. But his great longevity, the patriarchal simplicity of the worship, as well as of the life and manners, reflected in this book, the absence of all allusion to the miracles or revelations which marked the period of the exodus, the fact of such piety existing out of the line of the covenant people, incline to the belief that he was not subsequent to the time of Moses. And the mention of names (ii. 11; vi. 19; xxxii. 2,) which occur among the descendants of Nahor, Keturah, Ishmael, and Esau, render it probable that he did live very long before this time.

The mystery which invests the origin of this book, as well as that of some others belonging to the Old Testament, will probably never be dispelled. Our ignorance of its author, however, does not prejudice its canonicity, for we may safely acquiesce in the decision which admitted it to its present rank while the evidence of its inspiration was still in being, attested as it is by the infallible sanction of our Lord and his apostles, given to the integrity of the Jewish Scriptures, and by repeated citations in the New Testament from this individual book. The opinion that Job was written in the later times of the kingdom of Judah, or even during or after the Babylonish exile, has little
in its favour. It is less easy to decide between two other epochs, to which it has been assigned, viz. that of Moses, and that of David and Solomon. The ablest continental scholars appear to be settling down" in favour of the latter, which, is maintained not only by Hahn and Schlottmann, but by Hengstenberg, Havernick, Delitzsch, Vaihinger, Hofmann, (in his later publications,) Welte and others. We are pleased to see that Professor Conant advocates the former, not so much because we have any settled conviction upon the point, as because no sufficient reason has yet been given for abandoning the old ditional opinion.

The highly artistic structure of this book and the exquisite finish of its poetry, are urged as showing that the poetic art must have been long cultivated, and brought to a great degree of perfection; and that some such golden period of the sacred muse as the age of David must be pre-supposed, before such a production as this could have been conceived or executed. But the finest specimens of a people's poetry stand sometimes among the earliest monuments of their literature. The epics of Homer furnish an irrefragable answer to every objection from this quarter directed against the antiquity of Job. Poetic genius was needed for its production, rather than any formal rules of art; and it is impossible to determine upon any general principles the time when such a genius must have appeared.

It has been argued from the relation in which this book stands to the law as an enlargement of its teachings relative to divine retribution, that the law as the foundation must have been first, and then Job as the superstructure, must have been built upon it. The law says, Fear God, and be blessed. Job shows that the truth of the law is still preserved, even when the righteous do not externally prosper. The law, it is alleged, must have been promulgated, before the question as to its consistency with the facts or experience could have arisen. But as, this declaration of the law is a direct consequence of the, divine rectitude, it was equally a tenet of the patriarchs by whom this attribute of God was known. And at a time when the piety of men, like Abraham and Isaac, was reflected in their fortunes, such a question as this in the case of Job would be peculiarly liable to arise and to occasion the most painful misgivings.
And if, as is alleged by those who would bring its composition down to the time of the exile, a period of national distress would make the subject here discussed one of wider interest and importance, would not its consolations be especially needed when Israel was groaning beneath the cruel and undeserved oppression of Egypt, or was pining in the wilderness, while abominable idolaters held possession of the promised land? Why may not the great legislator have been commissioned under these circumstances to expound, in what sense the promises of prosperity and blessing given of God were meant?

The striking resemblance which undoubtedly exists between several passages in this book, and such as occur in the Psalms and Proverbs, is quite as consistent with its priority as with that of the latter. It was naturally to be expected that a work of such originality and power should leave its traces on all the subsequent poetry of the nation. And if we find phrases, words or turns of thought common to it with other books, the presumption is, until the contrary is shown, that Job was imitated, not the imitator. This is admitted in the case of Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Amos; why not in that of David and Solomon?

That the whole air of this book is patriarchal, and that it never refers to any event subsequent to the time of Moses, might be explained on the hypothesis of the later origin of the book, by the assumption that the writer whose subject lay in the olden time, strictly observed the proprieties of time and place; though it would evidence extraordinary skill that he has not by the slightest expression betrayed that his assumed differed from his real position. The natural impression, however, antecedent to proof of the contrary, must be that the book was written in or near the times and scenes which it so admirably portrays. It is a remarkable coincidence, even if it be a casual one, that many of the things that we expect to find in the writer, meet in Moses. His long sojourn in Midian explains his acquaintance with the facts, while his personal experience and that of his suffering people impressed their lessons on his heart. This too may furnish a solution of the Arabisms of the book. The writer's familiarity with Egyptian objects (which is such that Schlottmann insists that he must have seen what he describes,)
and the knowledge which he displays of nature and of the arts will also be readily accounted for, since Moses was learned all the wisdom of the Egyptians. That Ophir (xxii. 24, xxviii. 16,) was not known to the Hebrews before the days of Solomon is asserted by Hahn; but it might be difficult to prove that Egyptian conquests or Egyptian trade had not extended there. The powerful and versatile genius of Moses none can dispute; a specimen of the various and exquisite poetry he was capable of producing, is furnished Ex. xv. Deut. xxxii. and xxxiii. and Ps. xc.

We do not venture to say that Moses did write this book, nor that it was written in his time; but only that the contrary is not proven. The chief repugnance, which we confess to having it assigned to a later period, arises from the manifest disposition in those who do so, though it is by no means a necessary consequence, to entertain lax notions of its historical character. Schlottmann distinguishes between the event itself and the tradition of it, as it came to the writer. And Hengstenberg, after maintaining (Kitto's Cyc. II. p. 121) that there might be some intangible historical basis for what is recorded of Job, has at length (Lecture before the Evangelical Union in Berlin, pp. 12, 13) reached the conclusion that there is none whatever, and that all which the allusions of Ezekiel and James compel us to assume, is that the lesson of the book is true and that the writer had passed through some such conflict in his own experience. The different views which have been held of the design and teachings of this book, have mostly arisen from not taking a sufficiently comprehensive view of the whole, confining the attention mainly or exclusively to one portion, and exalting it to an undue prominence. This is also the secret of the disposition manifested by several critics to dispute the genuineness of one section or of another, which they find incompatible with what they have arbitrarily assumed to be the governing idea. It is decisive against any view of the book at the outset, if such forcible measures are necessary in order to carry it through. No theory can be admitted which will not furnish the solution of it in all its parts just as it exists, without the necessity of its being mutilated or altered; in which it shall not appear that there is nothing wanting, and nothing superfluous, but that all
harmonizes and conspires together in its just proportion to pro-
duce the contemplated end.

The supposition that it is the design of this book to develope
the idea of true wisdom, takes its shape from chap. xxviii. and
makes that the key of the whole. Baumgarten-Crusius, who
maintains this view, thinks that the different speakers represent
the different stages in the progress of this idea. Job personates
a simple, unsophisticated piety; the three friends a legal mind;
Elihu a loftier and more comprehensive intelligence; while a
thoroughly instructed religion and wisdom in its highest form are
embodied in the discourse of the Lord. But besides that this
is not a just view of the parts sustained by the respective
speakers, the discussions relate not to wisdom in the abstract,
nor in the general, but in its bearings upon one particular
case.

Ewald thinks that the aim of the book is to teach the immor-
tality of the soul, and by means of the hope of a future state to
reconcile to the inequalities of the present. This is taking the
key from chapter xix; a chapter which plays an important
part in the economy of the book, as will appear hereafter, but
which is not entitled to the predominance here given it. It is
there shown how the man of God can rise to an assured
triumph even in the most desperate case, by holding firmly to
his faith that the God whom he serves is his friend in spite of
everything that seems to establish the contrary, and that he
will surely make this appear, if not on this side of the grave,
yet beyond it. But this is not the solution given to the
problem of suffering righteousness. It is possible to vindic-
tate the present as well as to make an appeal to the future.
Accordingly the subsequent speeches of Job show that, not-
withstanding the triumphant assurance which he had gained
respecting his actually existing relation to God, and the
certain manifestation of it in the future, yet the distressing
enigma of its present obscuration, remained to him as insoluble
as before. And in the discourses of Elihu and of the Lord,
where we look for the final settlement of the matter at issue,
man's immortality is not once referred to. Whatever place
this may have, therefore, in the complete view of the question,
it is not its ultimate solution.
According to others, the design of the book is to inculcate unconditional submission to the will of the infinite God. His ways are inscrutable. Man's duty is, without murmuring, to submit humbly to his dispensations. But instead of solving the enigma, this would be to dismiss it as insolvable. The book of Job goes far beyond this. The infinite perfections of God are presented as a sure ground of confidence, even in his darkest dispensations, while his 'gracious purpose in affliction, and its happy issue, are distinctly brought, to view. The resignation of the truly pious, on such grounds as these, is at a world-wide remove from the submission of the Stoic to inexorable fate. This view has led some of its advocates to rid themselves of the difficulties which the historical introduction and conclusion lay in their way, by denying their genuineness. But the alleged discrepancies between these and the body of the book are of no account. The grounds assigned for Job's sufferings in the introduction, and the issue to which they are conducted in the conclusion, teach nothing incompatible with the intermediate portion of the book, if this be only properly understood. That Job was a man of eminent holiness, and bore his calamities with becoming resignation, is not falsified by the subsequent language of impatience and despair, wrung from him by their long continued intensity, and by the cruel censures of his friends. The Lord's rebuke of Job, xxxviii. 2, xl. 2, involves no such appraisal of his friends, as would conflict with xlii. 7. Chapters xix. 17, and xxxi. 8, are not at variance with the account of the death of Job's children, i. 18, 19. Professor Conant translates the second passage correctly, "Let my products be rooted up." And the first he renders, "I am offensive to the sons of the same womb;" whatever question there may be as to the first part of this clause, there can be little as to the last; the allusion is not to Job's 'children, but to his brethren, xlii 11. The death of his children is in fact alluded to in the body of the book itself, viii. 4, xxix. 5. That the introduction and conclusion are in prose, (as historical sections always are,) that they speak of sacrifices, while no mention is made of them in the rest of the book (for the reason that there was no occasion for it,) that they use the divine name Jehovah, (though not exclusively,) while in the rest of, the book the
divine name employed is Eloah, God, (yet see xii. 9, xxxviii. 1, xl. 1, 3, 6, xlii. 1,) can scarcely be considered serious arguments. On the other hand, the positive and invincible argument of genuineness is, that the beginning and the end of the book are essential to the understanding of it. Apart from these, there is no intimation who the parties are who are here speaking, nor what is the occasion of their discussion. It is especially necessary that the reader should be made aware of Job's character at the outset, or how could it be known that there was any enigma in his suffering, or that the suspicions of his friends were unjust, and that he was not merely pretending to an innocence which he did not possess: and the book would be manifestly unfinished, if it were to stop where the poetic portion ends; that is no suitable conclusion. This is so clearly the case, that some who deny the genuineness of the present introduction and conclusion, assert that it must have had others in their stead originally, and that these were removed to make way for those we now possess. But this is bringing hypothesis to support hypothesis, and only involves the matter in still greater difficulties. What has become of that original preface and termination? What motive was there for expunging them to introduce new ones? And how was it possible that such a forgery in so remarkable a book as this, and one, too, included in the sacred canon, could succeed? Not to speak of the fresh obstruction interposed by the authority of the New Testament, for the allusion in James v. 11, is to the historical conclusion.

Others think the book designed to show the inadequacy of the Mosaic doctrine of a temporal retribution. Their notion is, that, according to the law of Moses, righteousness is to be invariably rewarded and sin punished in the present life, in proportion to their deserts; and that the writer of Job meant to prove on the contrary that men are not treated in this world according to their characters. But, 1. It would be inconceivable that a book whose design was to contradict the Mosaic law, should be written by a pious member of the theocracy, or that it should be admitted to the canon if it was. The law of Moses was sacred in the eyes of every Israelite, and antagonism to it would not have been tolerated. Those passages in the prophets, which have been alleged to be antagonistic to the law, in
which they speak of ceremonial observances' as inferior to spiritual religion, are not in reality such, for this is the very spirit of the law itself. If this book, therefore, takes ground opposed to the law, it is without analogy in the whole Old Testament. 2. The defenders of this view identity the position taken by the friends of Job with the statements of the law, and regard the censure passed upon the former as falling equally upon the latter. But this is not correct. It is not the law, but partial or erroneous conclusions drawn from its teachings, which are here condemned. Just as in his sermonic on the mount, our Lord rebuked not the law itself; but the false glosses and interpretations which the Jews! had put upon it. Because life and prosperity are promised to the righteous, and calamities are threatened to the wicked, the friends inferred that the external prosperity of the good must be uninterrupted, and that severe calamities always evidence gross wickedness. This book does, not oppose the law, but confirms it, by freeing it from the burden of these erroneous inferences. It shows that a man of eminent piety may, for reasons inferring no antecedent crime on his part be cast down from his prosperity, and involved in the greatest misfortunes. It shows moreover that the promises of God were after all fulfilled in the case of Job, and the mystery which overhung the ways of Providence is dispelled by, raising him in the end to a higher prosperity than ever; thus revealing that temporary sorrows may, be conducive to a future, higher good, and may be themselves blessings: in disguise. It is to be observed likewise that the discourses of the three friends are not to be condemned in toto. Many of their sentiments are correct, and much that they say is just and proper. In fact, even where they are wrong, their error is often not so much in what they say as in what they intimate. Taken as abstract propositions, what they oppose to Job is commonly true; it is only the application of it which they design, that is false. Their statements, though capable for the most part of being understood in a sense that is correct, are rendered incorrect by their being adduced as the full explanation of a case which they do not really meet, and to which they could only be applied by the most unjust and unfounded assumptions of the guilt of Job. 3. The law of Moses, in teaching the righteousness of God's
dispensations in the present life, is most strictly true, and is in entire accordance with the doctrine of the New Testament on this same subject. Piety has its temporal as well as its eternal rewards. Our Saviour (Matt. v. 5) blesses the meek; for they shall inherit the earth. In Mark x. 29, 30, he says that whoever has left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father or mother, or wife; or children, or lands, for his sake and the gospel's, shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, and in the world to come eternal life. The apostle Paul tells us (1 Tim. iv. 8) that godliness has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. The essential righteousness of God in fact secures the righteousness of all his dispensations in this world, as much as in the future state. The retributions of the world to come are not to be regarded as a compensation for present inequality and injustice. He who admits that men are not dealt with justly here, and treated according to their characters, cuts the nerves of the argument for a future retribution, instead of strengthening it. For if God is not just now, what assurance can we have that he ever will be? But in claiming for the righteous the favour and blessing of God here, it must be distinctly understood what that means. For external worldly prosperity is no certain gauge even of present happiness, much less of men's true welfare. God consults for the highest interests of his people. He sends upon them what he sees to be most for their good. Affliction thus sent is not an evil, but a benefit; while worldly prosperity without the divine favour is a curse instead of a blessing. Besides it must be borne in mind, and this is one of the truths insisted upon in the book before us, that even the holiest of men are not free from sin. Conscious, therefore, of ill-desert, they should receive with humility and resignation whatever sufferings are sent upon them. These sufferings have a direct connection with their sin. They may not be penal, indeed, but they are disciplinary. They are needed and designed to purge from sin. Their proper effect was produced upon Job as soon as he said, (xlii. 6,) "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." When that state of mind was produced, the discipline had gained its end, and was at once removed.

This book has also been regarded as an allegory, designed to
set forth, the fortunes of the Jewish people. According to Bishop Warburton, Job represents the nation of the Jews, and his sufferings the calamities, which befell them, including their captivity; the three friends were those who obstructed the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple, particularly, Neh. vi. Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshero; Elihu represents the writer of the book himself. Others make, the three friends stand for the prophets; others explain them differently still. But without going into the details of any of these schemes, it will, be sufficient to show them to be impracticable in regard to their chief character, in which alone they all agree. Job cannot possibly represent the Jewish nation, for the whole mystery, of his sufferings lies in their arising from no fault on his part, whereas those which befell the Jews are always represented as the penalty of their transgressions. And there is no allusion in the whole book to the circumstances of the people at the time of the exile, and nothing whatever from which an intimation can be gained that it is to be allegorically understood. Everything, indicates the subject to be a case of individual not of national suffering. This view too would require the assumption that the book was written in or after the exile; it is contradicted likewise by the historical character of Job already proved.

The real theme of this book is, as it has, been well expressed, "the mystery of the cross." It is intended to throw light upon that perplexing enigma, so trying oftentimes to faith, of the sufferings of the righteous. How are they to be reconciled with the justice of God, or with the declaration of his law "Do this, and thou shalt live?" This purpose is accomplished by adducing the case of a man, in whose history the truth to be taught is strikingly illustrated. God himself testifies regarding Job, that "there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil." This man, not for any special transgression, but at the solicitation of Satan, is suddenly cast down from his prosperity, and made to endure the severest inflictions in his property, his family, and his person, in order to try the strength of his piety, and that his steadfastness may be exhibited to the confusion of the tempter. The secret of Job's sufferings is thus far explained
to the reader before the discussion begins; but it is a mistake however common, to suppose that this is the whole mystery. So Delitzsch, (Herzog's Encyklop. art. Hiob,) after enumerating the four kinds of suffering to which men may be subjected, viz. punishment, chastisement, trial, and martyrdom, insists upon it that the third is the only one applicable to this case, in which "there is not the remotest connection between the suffering and the sinfulness of the sufferer." This initial error leads him, as we shall see hereafter, to deny the genuineness of an important section of the book. Others who are not prepared for this extreme, go at least to the length of declaring that it contributes nothing toward the proper settlement of the question at issue. Even Professor Conant says of the section referred to, "Elihu has contributed his suggestions, without advancing a step towards the solution of the problem. For there is no place in his theory, any more than in that of the three friends, for the actual case presented." It will be sufficient to say here, that it is not the design of the introduction to dispose of the case, but simply to place it before the reader. It prepares the way for the discussion, but without anticipating its result. It acquaints the reader with the fact, concealed from the human speakers, of Satan's agency in these afflictions. But it does not profess to give in full the reasons by which the Lord was moved in allowing Satan to deal with Job as he did. No haste is exhibited anywhere in this book to disclose the hidden purposes of God. They are suffered to unfold themselves in his actual providence, and their ripened issue is their ample justification. In fact, a similar course is pursued with most of the great lessons here inculcated, and herein lies one of the evidences of the wonderful skill of the writer. These lessons are strongly brought out, and the impression which they leave is perfectly distinct and clear; but this is effected less by precise and formal statements, than by the combined effect of the whole course of the history and the discussion.

That Satan was used to accomplish results on behalf of this pious man, very different from any that he designed or imagined, is suggested by the representation of his appearing statedly among the sons of God, when they came to present themselves before the Lord. Satan is like them, God's servant, employed
in ministrations to men which are directed (or controlled) by God's sovereign will, and of his performance of which he comes like the rest to render his report. It is not given to this malicious spirit to torture men as he may please. His office is to spy out the faults of good men, and to tempt them to sin; labouring to crush where he cannot seduce them. But this is an agency, which God employs for ends of his own. He does not originate the evil, but he uses it. So too, when Satan misleads the wicked to their ruin, as we are taught in 1 Kings xxii. 19 23, a passage strikingly similar to that before us, it is by the same divine permission and in just judgment for their sins. This subordination of evil to the designs of the Most High is it leading lesson impressed upon the; very front of Job's history. Perhaps it may be called one of the original conditions of the problem. What those designs were, or how evil can be employed to effect them, we must be content to learn as the progress of events shall disclose them.

One purpose which God had in view, as shown by the event particularly of the first trial (i. 22, ii. 3,) was, as has been stated already, to test the fidelity of Job, not of course for the satisfaction of the Lord, who had previously given his unerring judgment of his character, but to confound the tempter and to present an example of the sustaining power of faith to men. But it is nowhere intimated that this was his sole design. From subsequent developments we learn that he had another purpose quite compatible with the former, but additional to it and distinct from it. The fire was designed not only to prove the existence of the gold, but to purge away its dross. The trial was a chastisement likewise, not for overt acts of sin, but for the yet unsubdued corruption of the heart. God would not have subjected a perfectly sinless being even temporarily to Satan's power, however gloriously his steadfastness might thereby be made to appear. If there had been no discipline in them for Job himself, permission would not have been given for these infictions. This antecedent, presumption is confirmed by the fact that, latent sin is detected in Job and brought to light under "the terrible pressure of his sorrows. There is an unmistakable leaven of self-righteousness in his vindications of himself and in his complaints of God. Job would never have sus-
pected himself of this, nor have sought its correction, but for this affliction. This element of corruption in his soul it is the evident aim of the writer to depict with a strong hand. And this explains the puzzle, that so eminently good a man, as Job is known from divine testimony to have been, could speak so presumptuously as he sometimes does. He had been touched with divine skill precisely upon his tender point, and this previously undeveloped evil sprang up at once in full power. And his speeches are so framed as to allow us to look directly in upon the struggles of his heart, which is here laid open without disguise. The bare discussion of the problem would not call for these culpable expressions on the part of Job. But they were necessary to bring out the lesson that there is evil in the best of men, which the searching test of affliction may discover. Additional confirmation is given to this view by the speech of Elihu, who is an interpreter of the will of God, and who makes the correction of men's inward pride one of the grand aims of affliction. The fact too that Job is ultimately brought to penitence, and that this is the condition of the removal of his affliction, warrants the conclusion that this was one of the things to be accomplished by sending it. While, therefore, Satan sought Job's ruin, God designed both to exhibit the sincerity of his piety, and to elevate that piety, thus preparing him for a higher measure of happiness.

All this, however, is unknown to Job and to his friends. They are left to confront this mysterious dispensation, without any clue being afforded them as to its design. The friends of Job having no other idea than that of the invariably penal character of suffering, conceive the suspicion that he must have been guilty of some gross iniquity to account for such unexampled sorrows. Job, conscious of his own integrity, cannot admit the unjust aspersions of his friends; but is himself in utter perplexity as to the cause of what he suffers, and is strongly tempted to arraign the righteousness of God's providence. The answer given to this difficult problem consists substantially of two parts, viz. 1. Men must confide in God; not only because they must expect in the dealings of infinite wisdom much that transcends their finite understandings; but because his glorious perfections should be a sufficient guaranty
that all he does is right and good, however dark and unexplained. 2. Affliction has its uses. It not only tests the constancy of faith, but is a necessary discipline which will conduct those who properly receive it to higher holiness and happiness.

The structure of this book is eminently regular. It consists of three parts of unequal length—the historical preface and conclusion in prose, and the main body of the book in poetry. The first contains such statements of fact as are necessary to the right understanding of the problem to be discussed. In the second, this problem is largely treated and its proper solution shown. In the third, the history is brought to a close, and the providential issue of the whole matter exhibited; this last we regard, for reasons already hinted at, but which shall more fully appear presently, as really forming part of the solution.

The rest of the book after the historical preface, is also divisible into three parts: the discussion of the problem by Job and his three friends, and its twofold decision, first as rendered by the instrumentality of a man, Elihu, then as given immediately; by the Lord himself. The discussion again consists of distinct sections. After the opening discourse of Job, in which the theme is, as it were, propounded, the discussion is continued in three successive rounds of debate, or three systems of discourses, in each of; which there is a discourse from the three friends severally, in regular order, together with the rejoinders made by Job; except that in the last, for a particular reason, the third friend, Zophar, says nothing. We have consequently the following scheme:

Introduction, Chaps. i. ii
The Problem treated, Chaps. iii.-xlii
The Discussion, Chaps. iii.-xxxii.
Job’s opening discourse, Chap. iii.
First series of discourses, Chap. iv-xiv.
Second series of discourses, Chap. xv-xxi.
Third series of discourses, Chap. xxii-xxxii.
Decision rendered by man, (Elihu) Chaps. xxxii.-xxxvii
Decision rendered by God; Chaps. xxxviii-xl.

According to the view commonly entertained of this book, it is, plainly not: a drama, or can only be called one in a very
improper sense. If it is simply the discussion of a grave and solemn question, to which a decision is subsequently rendered, there is no more propriety in saying that it is a drama than there would be in saying the same of the philosophical dialogues of Cicero, or a report of Congressional debates. Action is essential to the drama, as is implied by its very name. To be successful, there must be a plot which becomes gradually complicated, the interest growing more intense as it proceeds, while the issue is kept in suspense until the final dénouement, when all is explained. Schlottmann has presented an exceedingly ingenious and captivating view of this book, according to which it will be a proper drama, though of course not designed for scenic representation; for the Hebrews knew nothing of such shows, and it would be beneath the sacred dignity of this inspired composition if they did. It is not maintained that this presents a precise parallel to any of the dramatic compositions, whether of the ancient Greeks or of modern times, but simply that it possesses all that is essential to that species of poetry, having unity of action and a consistent, regularly developed plot, the progress of which is disclosed in the speeches of the actors; and that it bears a closer analogy to these than to any other productions of the muse. The action of this piece is not external and palpable to the senses, but inward and spiritual, and has place among the deepest experiences of the soul. Its subject he states to be the temptation of Job. The interest of the piece consists in watching the effect produced on Job by his aggravated sufferings, and seeing whether the tempter gains his end, which he pursues so unremittingly, of driving him to abjure his God. The alternate speeches of Job and his friends will then still contain a discussion of grave truths respecting the providence of God in relation to suffering; but it will not; be as a mere discussion that they appear here. The part which they sustain in the plot, is that the stinging censures of his friends are taken into the service of the tempter; they are a fresh aggravation of Job's distress, and by exasperating him add to the strength of the temptation to give up his confidence in God and to renounce his worship. The speeches of Job himself on the other hand exhibit the tumult of his soul under the temptation, and show how far the tempter succeeded in
driving him to the use of expressions sometimes, which sound as though he were on the very point of giving up his trust in God, and his allegiance to him, and we almost dread to hear him open his lips again, lest the fatal word should be spoken and Satan gain his end. But though often on the verge of, the precipice, Job holds fast his integrity, and the tempter is foiled. Then the discourses of Elihu, and of the Lord, may be regarded as the means employed by God to rescue his servant from this perilous position, to check his presumption and bring, him to humble penitence and submissive faith; whereupon all the clouds are dispersed, the malice of Satan falls harmless at his feet, and when the curtain drops upon the scene, Job is possessed of a loftier and more secure felicity than ever.

Schlottmann has bestowed great pains upon the poetical structure of this book, and has certainly improved upon the previous attempts of Koster, Stickel, Ewald and others, to prove that it is throughout arranged in stanzas or strophes. The true theory of Hebrew verse has long been a matter of curious inquiry amongst scholars. Following the lead of Josephus, Philo, Eusebius, Jerome and other ancient testimonies, who speak of trimeters, pentameters, hexameters, etc., in the Old Testament, some made numerous and persevering attempts to discover there the different styles of Greek and Latin verse; others acting upon a suggestion of Sir William Jones; sought for Syriac and Arabic measures; others endeavoured to develop a peculiar system of prosody from the masoretic accents. All these efforts failed. It was found impracticable to carry out any one of these views without unwarrantable assumptions, arbitrary changes of the text, and the constant violation of the simplest and most obvious prosodial rules. It is in fact demonstrable that Hebrew verse could not have been regulated by the number or quantity of syllables, nor by any succession of feet, for the variety in the length or character of lines is palpably such as could be embraced within no conceivable rules of that description. Syllables were no doubt so disposed as to produce a rhythmical and harmonious flow; but that is all that can be maintained.

The productions of the Hebrew muse took on quite a different form from that developed in other lands, though growing out of
the same ultimate idea. The ordinary flow of prose resembles a quiet stream, through which the thought pours itself in an even current until it is expended. Poetry, as the language of excited emotion, reflects the state of mind in which it takes its rise. It expresses itself in more brief and rapid utterances; whence it follows that the thought not expended in the first flow, gushes forth again, thus returning upon itself, and a relation of correspondence being established between the first movement and the second. Now in Greek verse, and in occidental poetry generally, the outward form took precedence of the inward conception. The correspondence of successive lines was indicated by a determinate arrangement of syllables and recurrence of feet, so that the reiterated movement was marked to the ear by the rhythmical effect. In Hebrew poetry, on the other hand, in which the primitive, unfettered simplicity was better preserved, the thought predominated over the form, and the correspondence established lay in the repetition or fuller expression of the idea in varied style; in other words, in the parallelism of clauses.

Parallelism being thus the governing principle of Hebrew verse, as it is fundamentally of all other, the question arises whether this is confined to clauses, or whether it has been extended likewise to paragraphs and sections. The same law of correspondence, which regulated the measure of successive lines in Greek verse, gave birth to strophes and antistrophes, in which, after a series of varying measures, the same were repeated again in precisely the same order. Is there anything similar to this in Hebrew poetry? The writers above alluded to maintain that there is; that every poem or leading section of a poem resolves itself into portions of corresponding length, containing the same or nearly the same number of verses, the predominance of the thought over the form being here maintained as before, and the transition from one thought to another marking the points of division between the strophes. There is nothing to be said against this theory but the difficulty of establishing its truth. In many cases there is a singular conformity in the length of the paragraphs or divisions, into which the various speeches of this book naturally fall. But it seems doubtful whether this conformity is due to any conscious design
of the writer, or is not a simple consequence of his presenting in their order several thoughts of nearly equal moment, so that he naturally dwells to a similar extent upon each: This explanation is rendered more probable by the fact that in many cases the conformity is not obvious, and can only be educed by arbitrary means. Schlottmann's divisions are highly ingenious; and sometimes, by a new grouping of verses, he succeeds in setting them in a different light, or in giving them additional force. But on the whole, his straining after strophes has been to the injury of his exposition, and has frequently led him to propose divisions which an unbiased examination of the passage would certainly never dictate. Besides, his strophes are reached by masoretic verses; whereas, if there were anything in the theory, it is obvious that the only proper mode would be by clauses as indicated in the parallelisms.

The discussion between Job and his friends takes its point of departure from the opening discourse of the former, chap. iii. Weighed down by the intensity of his anguish, he complains of three things; that he was ever born, vs. 3–10, that he was suffered to live after his birth, vs. 11-19, that he is compelled to live on still in his misery, vs. 20-26. The following argument turns upon the question of Job's right thus to complain; the friends deny, Job affirms. Much of the art with which this discussion is managed, is lost by those who fail to observe how both the parties gradually shift their ground, or at least modify their tone, receding from each other and departing from their own early positions as they become warmed in the vehemence of debate. Wonderful skill is displayed by the writer in portraying in the speeches the growing vehemence of the speakers. It is not proper, to impute to Job in all his discourses the same presumptuous chiding with God, which breaks forth in some of them. Nor must the friends be supposed to have begun the discussion with the same harsh suspicions of Job that they cherished afterwards. Their seven days silence indicated no such suspicion; it was the natural impulse of profound sympathy in the presence of overwhelming grief, (ii. 13.) Job's opening speech implies no thought of his friends' unkindness; it is the piteous moaning of a man under intolerable sorrows. And the first speech of Eliphaz, though without the tenderness and
consideration that Job had reasonably expected, (vi. 15, etc.) and already betraying the radical error that the external condition of men invariably corresponds with their characters, yet assumes throughout that Job is a good man, and rebukes him for entertaining the thought that being such he could perish, (iv. 1-11,) charging him only with that general sinfulness which is common to all men.

In each of the three series of discourses Eliphaz is the leading speaker, not only preceding, but, as it were, guiding the others. They take their cue from him, reiterating in other forms what he had already substantially said. In the first series Job is treated with comparative leniency and each of the friends closes with an exhortation to Job to receive his sufferings submissively, promising him in that case a return and enlargement of his former prosperity. In the second series the tone of the friends is much harsher and more irritated. They are provoked that Job should continue, in spite of their arguments and exhortations, to maintain a position which they consider so indefensible and wrong. They now hold out no promises for the future, but dwell largely on the uniform and necessary connection of sin and suffering, intimating in no doubtful terms, what yet they do not declare in express words, that Job had brought his sufferings upon himself by his sins, and that nothing but ruin awaited him in the course he seemed determined to pursue. In the last series Eliphaz comes out distinctly with explicit charges of aggravated crime. That these cannot be substantiated, however, is intimated by Bildad's failing to repeat them; while the brevity of his speech and his falling back upon arguments which had been adduced at the very beginning of the discussion and which Job had answered long before, showed that he had nothing new to bring forward. Zophar's not replying at all is an admission that they have no more to say, and that they cannot answer Job.

The discourses of Job are divided into two portions by the triumphant confidence expressed in chap. xix. This chapter is both in form and in fact the centre of the whole. It occurs in the middle series in the answer to the second friend; and it is the turning point in the discussion. This is the culmination of all that precedes, for which it has been preparing the way, and
to which it has been tending by gradual and marked advances. What follows is of quite a different character. The prominent feature of the first portion is the struggle of Job's own mind against despair. The prominent feature of the second portion is the refutation of the position taken by his friends. What gave its chief poignancy to Job's distress was that God seemed to have become his enemy. It was because the principle urged by his friends led directly to this result, that their speeches stirred such a tumult in his soul. They could see nothing in suffering but the penalty of sin. As he was conscious of his freedom from crime and of the sincerity of his piety, the tendency of their language; is to make him feel that God is treating him as a criminal without his being one, that he employing his omnipotence to crush him for no cause except that he has arbitrarily determined so to do. This idea of God as cruel and inexorable, as infinite power without regard to justice or mercy, bent on his destruction, is the phantom which is perpetually rising before him, and with which he has contended. A fierce conflict is awakened in his soul between his faith in God's rectitude and love; and this phantom, which sense of his misery and the arguments of his friends, are ever afresh forcing upon him. On his first opening his mouth, chap. iii., we hear his groans under unutterable woe, and in his despair he piteously begs for death as a coveted relief from his sufferings. His replies to the first series of his friends discourses show him to be still in unrelieved despair. They are divided between upbraiding of his friends for their hard-hearted aggravation of his woe, the justification of his complaint by the intensity of his misery, and the fresh utterance of it, coupled with remonstrances with God that he should so torment, his frail and helpless, creature. In the later speeches of this series, the replies to Bildad and Zophar, we meet the first dawning of a thought, which is soon to overspread his soul with the clear effulgence of triumphant exultation; but as yet there is only glimmer enough to make the blackness blacker. In ix. 34, 35, he says, that if God would but lay aside his terrors and suffer him to meet him as he might an equal, he could vindicate himself; and in x. 7, that God without such a vindication, knew that he was not wicked. But this only aggravated his hopeless misery,
that in spite of this knowledge of his integrity God had resolved upon his destruction. In xiii. 13-22, he expresses his conviction that if he could only succeed in bringing his case before God for judgment, and were permitted to argue it there, he could make his integrity appear, and would obtain sentence in his favour. In xiv. 13-15, he ad4s, that if death were only a temporary evil he could bear it. He could lie down in the grave resignedly, if a limit was set to the period of God's anger, and when that was past he could return once more to life and to the enjoyment of his favour. Gloomy as these words appear, and vain as are these wishes in the form in which they are expressed, they nevertheless contain the seeds of hope, which from this moment begins to kindle in his bosom. It is a desperate struggle; but his pious trust in God shall gain the victory.

The heightened intensity of Job's inward conflict is finely expressed by the fact that his complaint and remonstrance from being a single section, beside other sections of equal length, as in his previous speeches, swell in those that follow over almost the whole discourse. He now says little to his friends in the way of justifying his complaint to them. He merely, in a few verses at the beginning, begs them to be silent and to desist from their cruel treatment, and then turns from them to God; or even when his words are not in form addressed to him, his thoughts are occupied about his relation to him. The seeming proofs of God's hostility stare him in the face; and yet he is thrown back upon God as his only helper. His friends scorn him; he has no hope nor expectation from them. His tearful prayer is that God, the witness of his integrity, would take his part with God his seeing foe. In the most eloquent and impassioned language he makes his appeal from God to God himself, xvi. 17-xvii. 3. In spite of this present hostility, which he cannot understand, he reposes a trust in God which he cannot abandon. This tearful appeal is not unheard. The certainty takes possession of Job's bosom that God will vindicate his innocence, and is even now his friend, for whatever inexplicable reason he does not so appear, xix. 25-27. Every prospect of earthly good, he had already said, had vanished, xvii. 11-16. There was nothing for him to look for here, but the grave.
And yet he knows, notwithstanding all this, that his Redeemer lives, and he shall see him after death in that character, no longer his foe, but his Saviour and his Friend: Faith here rises to its loftiest triumph. To outward sense all is cheerless despair. No earthly hope remains. God still appears to be pursuing him as an implacable foe. The mystery of his sufferings is as unexplained, and as seemingly insolvable as ever. But let the worst come to the worst, Job still trusts in God. He may 'die under the cloud; but he knows that God is his Redeemer, and that he will certainly vindicate him yet. The struggle with despair is now over, and never reappears. He does not understand this dark dispensation any better than he had done before; but the question of his personal relation to God is settled, and that gives him comparative peace. The phantom of a cruel and inexorable Deity has given place to the vision of his Redeemer. And though for some mysterious reason, which he knows not how to comprehend, he does not act toward him in this character now, but in one that seems to be its opposite, he will sometime manifest himself as such.

In favour of the correctness of the view which has been taken of this important passage, and which finds in it the assurance of a divine vindication in a future state, may be argued—I. Its position as already exhibited in the plan of the book. It stands in the relation of climax to corresponding passages in Job's former speeches. It winds up that intense mental struggle in which he has been engaged from the outset, by one gigantic exercise of faith, clearing away those dark clouds of distressing doubt which had previously overhung his soul, so that henceforward we find him in a very different state of mind. The enigma remains, but his apprehensions of God's enmity do not reappear. All this shows that something extraordinary is to be expected here; something which rises far above the level of any of his previous declarations, and which could lift him, as nothing else had done, from the depths of despair to a triumphant hope. Such is the marked prominence, in fact, of this passage in the economy of the book, that Ewald, as already stated, considers it the key of the whole, and thinks that its grand lesson is concentrated at this point, viz. that the doctrine of the soul's immortality can reconcile the inequalities.
of the present state. But it is manifest that the immortality of the soul is not presented as a solution of the enigma. That is as obscure as ever; though he can stand up in the face of it, now that he knows he shall be vindicated hereafter. But it is still a puzzle why God makes him suffer so in the present. Although this passage, therefore, does not solve the problem of the book, it is the focus in which the scattered rays of faith, which appear in Job's former speeches, are gathered and intensified. He had expressed before the confidence that if he could bring his cause before God, he would be justified; he had wished for another life after death, which might be blessed with God's returning favour; he had claimed God as the witness of his integrity, and had prayed that his blood, causelessly shed, might not be covered by the earth nor remain unexpiated. What more fitting climax could there be to these thoughts than that God would vindicate him and appear on his side in the future state?

2. This view is rendered necessary by the formality with which this passage is introduced, and the stress which is laid upon it, vs. 23, 24. That he should thus mark out these words, and put so broad a distinction between them and all else that he had uttered; that he should wish them engraved in the rock, to endure as his testimony to all future time, warrants us in expecting to find something in them which shall be worthy of so formal and impressive an introduction.

3. This view alone gives its natural and proper sense to the language which is here employed. We might not perhaps lay much stress upon the expression, "at the latter day," or its original equivalent, signifying "last," or "at the last," if it were by itself. For though it is the same word which stands in the designation of God as the first and the last, it might be claimed that it had here only the general sense of futurity. But the period intended is more clearly explained in what follows. Of the two clauses of ver. 25, the first states the character in which Job was by faith enabled to contemplate God, and the second, the time when he was assured that this character would be displayed by him on earth. These clauses are then expanded separately in the verses that follow, the second, in ver. 26, the first in ver. 27. The latter day referred to, accordingly finds its
explanation in the words, "And after my skin [which] they destroy, [even] this,' and out of my flesh shall I see God."
There is no need of supplying "worms" with the common English version as the subject of the verb "destroy;" it is in the third person plural indefinite, a frequent equivalent in Hebrew of the passive construction. The agents of the destruction are not named, perhaps not distinctly thought of; It is at any rate after the destruction of his present skin or, body, that the vision of God as his Redeemer is to take place. This cannot mean less than after death; mere emaciation by disease not attended by dissolution could not be so described. The next expression, "out of my flesh," (Eng. ver. marg.) has the same ambiguity in the original as in the translation. It may mean either in the body or disembodied. It may describe the position to be occupied by the speaker, and out from which he would look to see God. In that case, taken in connection with the other expressions previously employed, it would mean, that after the destruction of his present body he would be clothed with it afresh at the resurrection, and from out of it he would see God, who had now hidden himself from view. It is more probable, however, that "out of my flesh," here: means disembodied, separated from my flesh, in the future state." The two clauses of the verse being connected not by "yet," but by 'and,'" the expressions" after my skin," and "out of my flesh," are not contrasted, but parallel; and are both alike descriptive of the period intended by "at the latter day," ver. 25.

4. This is the oldest, as it has always been the most prevalent interpretation. The Fathers in fact generally found in this passage an allusion not only to a future state, but to a corporeal resurrection. So Clemens Romanus, Origen, Cyril, and others. Jerome incorporated this idea in his Latin version, and was followed by the writers- of the Western Church generally. It is likewise expressed in the Septuagint, notwithstanding Stickel's denial; for even if ἀναστησω τὸ δέρμα μου might be explained of a raising up to health, the beginning of the apocryphal section at the close of the book, "It is written, that he shall rise again with those whom the Lord raises up," leaves no doubt as to its sense in the intention of the translator.

According to another view of this passage, the meaning is,
that Job expected a divine vindication in the present life; he felt assured that God would make his innocence appear by the removal of his present sufferings, and by restoring him to a state of prosperity. This explanation is first found in Chrysostom, and was adopted from him by some later writers in both the Greek and Latin churches. During the prevalence of rationalism in Germany, it became the reigning interpretation in that country. But, 1. This is opposed to the whole previous tenor of the book. Job always appears just on the verge of the grave, and invariably rejects the idea of any earthly expectation, whenever it is presented to him. 2. It is inconsistent with the position maintained by Job, in opposition to his friends. They assert that men are rewarded in this life according to their characters. Job denies it. If now the confidence he here expresses, is that of an earthly reward, he comes over to their ground. 3. It is inconsistent with the obvious meaning of the language, as that has been exhibited already. 4. There is nothing in such an earthly expectation to justify the solemn and imposing manner in which these words are introduced. The idea especially of graving upon rock, to endure for ever, a statement which was to meet its fulfilment during his own life, is grandiloquent if not absurd.

It has been said in recommendation of "this view, that the doctrine of a future state is elsewhere denied or ignored in this book, e. g. vii. 9, xiv. 7-12. Even if this were so, jo understand this passage of a vindication in the world to come, would involve no greater inconsistency than to refer it to a restoration in the present life, when the possibility of that had been over and over again denied. But, as a simple inspection of those passages will show, they merely declare the impossibility of another earthly life after the present, (see vii. 10.) To suppose a future state denied, would not only involve an unwarrantable rejection of the inspiration of this book, but would be inadmissible even on the assumption of its merely human origin. Although the Old Testament saints had less light than we have upon the nature of that existence upon which the soul enters at death, they were never ignorant of the fact of its continued existence. Had they been, they would have been behind the very heathen. The account of the original creation of man itself contains
enough to settle this question for ever, Gen. ii. 7. The two
elements of our nature are there plainly distinguished, the body
made of dust, and to return to dust again, and the immaterial,
immortal part breathed by God into man's nostrils to make him
a living soul. That the doctrine of immortality is not spoken
of before in the book of Job, is: simply because it was designedly
reserved for this passage as the sublime utterance of a faith
secure of the future, though without a visible prop in the pre-
sent. It does not recur afterwards, because the aim of its;
introduction is now accomplished. "Job's despair is' stilled by it,
but it is not the solution of the question to whose discussion the
book is devoted. Hofmann, who (Schriftbeweis II. 2, p. 471)
supposes an earthly restoration to be the thing intended in this
passage, is peculiar in his attempt to show from that the writer's
certain knowledge of a future state. He says that the very
emphasizing of the present, involves a tacit opposition to the
future.

We are amazed to find Hahn, who is usually so correct in his
opinions, giving a view of this passage, which empties it still
more of its meaning than that just opposed. According to him;
no future vindication is referred to at all, by God or man, in-
this world or the next; all has relation to the present moment,
and the statement is merely a repetition of what he had said
several times before, that God was at that very time aware of
his innocence, though he still allowed him to suffer. The pro-
cess by which this sense is arrived at is as extraordinary as the
sense itself. He translates thus: "I know that my Redeemer"
lives, and a proctor (this rendering of יָד לַא is about matched
by his making יָד ה רֵע xx. 25, mean 'a stream of blood') stands
above the earth (in heaven.) Even after my skin which is thus
destroyed and bare of flesh (in my present emaciated condition)
I see God', (I know what his judgment is of my character; he
does not regard me as guilty.) There is the less need of spend-
ing words upon the refutation of this view, as it has since been
abandoned by its author, who has reverted to the old and only
tenable ground. And there is quite as little necessity of delay-
ing to discuss such notions as that of Aben Ezra, that the
Redeemer here spoken of, is some man then living, who would
come forth after Job was dead, and vindicate his memory; or
of Hirzel, that Job entertained the fanatical expectation that God would instantaneously and visibly appear for him, and against his friends.

Job's own inward conflict being thus stilled, he no longer acts merely on the defensive, but proceeds in his remaining discourses to assail the position of his friends. And the first blow which he deals is really decisive of the conflict. In his reply to Zophar, chap. xxi. he demonstrates by undeniable facts that suffering is not invariably attendant upon sin, and graduated by it. With their first principle thus hopelessly demolished, only one course remains open to the friends, if they will continue to maintain the show of an argument; and this Eliphaz takes in his next discourse which opens the third and last series. The discussion can no longer be kept up as heretofore on general grounds. The universality of the connection between sin and punishment in the external lot of men, cannot be reasserted in the face of what Job has now said, and the facts of experience which he has adduced. The only thing that can be done, is to claim that in this particular case that connection has been observed. Eliphaz accordingly comes out with a direct and explicit attack upon the life and character of Job, maintaining that his enormous criminality sufficiently accounted for the extraordinary sufferings he was enduring. The question at issue was thus brought down to a very narrow compass. It was now a simple matter of fact, which could readily be ascertained. Was Job the guilty man, which he had been alleged to be, or was he not? In his reply he takes up the challenge thus thrown down. While he considers it beneath him to notice particularly these unfounded charges of specific crime, he solemnly appeals to the tribunal of the Searcher of hearts, as vouching for his innocence; and then proceeds to show more conclusively than before, that there were cases of aggravated suffering not the fruit of sin, and of aggravated sin not succeeded by suffering. This puts an end to this argument, upon which the friends have been ringing changes from the beginning, and which has been the main staple of their discourses. It has now been refuted both in the general and in its application to this case. There is nothing left for Bildad, therefore, but to present, which he feebly does, their other
standing argument, the infinite exaltation of God, before whom no man can pretend to absolute purity.

As the defeat of the friends is intimated by Zophar's failing to answer Job's next speech, so the victory of Job is intimated by the unusual length to which his closing speech is extended and by his pausing twice as though he was waiting for a reply, which they do not make. This peculiarity of external form must not, however, be allowed too much effect upon the interpretation. It is not three speeches, but one speech in three distinct but closely related parts, and of gradually increasing length, and is to be regarded as a general reply to all that had been urged upon the other side, a summing up of the whole argument. In the first section, chap. xxvi., Job concedes the fact upon which one of the arguments of the friends, that just reiterated by Bildad, is built, viz. God's, infinite greatness; but shows its inapplicability by outdoing Bildad in the description; without yielding his position. In the second section, chaps. xxvii., xxviii., he does the same with their other main argument, the rectitude of God's retributions. Though insisting that this is inapplicable to his own case, he concedes the fact and exhibits the true ground upon which it rests. For while man, though able to uncover the secrets of nature, cannot find, and the world cannot teach, wherein true wisdom lies, God has revealed that it consists in the fear of God, and in departing from evil. It is a lesson; therefore, resting on higher authority than any human experience, that ruin attends wicked courses, and happiness is only for the good. A large number of commentators, and among them Hahn and Schlottmann, understand chap. xxviii., differently, supposing it to teach the inscrutable nature of divine providence, and the impossibility of man's comprehending the wisdom by which God manages the world. We prefer, however, the view already given, which is substantially that of Hengstenberg and of Prof. Conant.

Considerable embarrassment has been created by the fact that Job seems to assert in this section, what he had strenuously denied in his previous speeches. Hence some have been disposed to think that the missing speech of Zophar has, by some error and confusion of the text, been assigned to Job. The whole difficulty may be explained, however, by attending to the
design of the respective passages. Job had denied the universality of a providential retribution, by showing that there were multitudes of cases, his own among the number, to which that rule would not apply. But he had no idea of denying that God exercised a moral government, on account of these inexplicable anomalies. He never meant to say that the course of the sinner was the path of wisdom and the high road to happiness. Accordingly he does not here contradict, but merely qualifies and explains his previous statements. He first provides for the exceptional cases which he had before exclusively insisted upon, by maintaining his own integrity notwithstanding his afflictions. He then freely concedes, what he had never doubted nor disputed, the existence of a righteous government in the world. In fact so far from being foreign to Job's views, it was this very conviction of God's essential righteousness, which enabled him to rise to that triumphant expression of his faith in chap. xix.

The fundamental idea of wisdom common to this book with the other two of the same class, and their mutual relations, have already been remarked upon. The resemblance of chap. xxviii. to various passages in Proverbs chaps. i.-ix. has been often observed, and is one of the grounds urged in favour of the composition of this book in 'the age of Solomon. But it may be worth while to notice the occurrence of a similar thought with a remarkable similarity of expression in the writings of Moses, Deut. xxx. 11-16, where he speaks of the life and good which he set before the people, as obtained not by searching for it in heaven, nor by going beyond the sea, but as brought nigh them by the revelation of God.

In the third section of his discourse Job proceeds to show that in spite of the concessions just made, the enigma of his own case remained unsolved. The problem in fact was one not reached by their arguments; it was that of suffering righteousness. He dwells (chap. xxix.) upon his former happy condition; then states in contrast (chap. xxx.) the present dismal reverse, and (chap. xxxi.) his freedom from any crime which could account for the change. The opinion expressed by Delitzsch and others, that xxxi. 35-37 has been shifted from its proper place, and that this solemn appeal to God and asseveration of
innocence ought to stand at the close of the chapter, could only
have arisen from overlooking the plan upon which the whole
is arranged. This plan is to group together a number of hypo-
hetical statements of his guilt of various crimes, with the occa-
sional introduction of a parenthesis denying the fact of the
crime hypothetically assumed, and to terminate the entire series
by the imprecation of a severe penalty upon himself, if he were
really, guilty. Thus ver. 22 is the imprecation following the
various hypothetical statements of criminality found in vs. 13,
16, 19, 20, 21, while vs. 14, 15 and ver. 18 contain parentheses
declaring his abhorrence of, or freedom from the forms of crim-
nality named. So ver. 40 is an imprecation closing the series of
hypothetical statements beginning with ver. 24, the form of the
sin last named. In the course of this series of assumed possi-
bilities he introduces parenthetical clauses denying the truth of
the suppositions made, e. g. vs. 28, 30, 32. So also vs. 35-37;
having supposed the case that, he might have concealed crimes
which he was really guilty, he introduces this parenthesis
affirming in the most emphatic terms that he had no cause to
do so. Then after another hypothetical statement of crime he
adds to the whole an imprecation. And there are few probably,
who, would not say that the imprecation is the most fitting and
emphatic close.

Job is thus, the victor in the argument. His friends have
failed in their attempt to show cause why he should not com-
plain. All, that they have been able to advance, has fallen
before his double appeal to the inequalities existing in the
world, and to his own internal consciousness of rectitude. So
far he stands justified, and his complaint against the providence
of God appears, to be well founded. The matter cannot of
course be suffered to rest here. The question has only become
more and more perplexed as the discussion has advanced; and
some foreign aid is needed to disentangle it; some umpire to
set both parties right, point out what is wrong in each, and
show where the truth lies--to show how it is that a righteous
man like, Job can suffer as he did, and yet no reproach be cast
upon the providence of God, nor the sufferer have any just
ground to complain. This want is supplied in the remaining
chapters, which contain the decision. It is two-fold, as rendered by Elihu, and as rendered by the Lord.

No part of this book has given more trouble to interpreters than the speech of Elihu. It has been an exceedingly vexed question, what he is intended to represent, in what relation his decision stands to that of the Lord, or why two decisions are given, in place of settling the controversy by one. Many German critics, instead of patiently untying the knot, cut it by the assumption that the discourse of Elihu is an interpolation.

In proof of this it is urged, 1. That its language and style are different from the rest of the book. But a degree of individuality is given to each of the speakers by peculiarities of language; it was natural that this should be done for Elihu as for the rest. And if words and expressions occur here which are not met with again in the book, the same might be said of any portion of equal extent which could be selected in any part of it; for the whole abounds in unusual words and forms. Besides these are more than balanced by a still greater number of characteristic expressions which do occur in other parts of the book and betray identity of authorship.

2. No mention is made of Elihu elsewhere than in this single section. But there is no professed enumeration of the *dramatis personae* in the previous part of the book. The three friends are spoken of because with them the discussion is carried on. Elihu only speaks because they cannot answer Job. To announce him at the beginning, therefore, would be to anticipate their failure before their incapacity had been actually shown. That nothing is said of him after his speech is concluded, is just because there was nothing to be said about him. Job makes no reply because he is silenced by the force of what is presented; and Elihu was not one of the parties to the contest, in reference to whom a judgment was to be expressed. His decision is impliedly sanctioned by the Lord, and that is all that could be asked.

3. This speech is alleged to be inconsistent with the plan and purpose of the book, but upon grounds mutually repugnant, and which may very properly be allowed to neutralize each other. Some object that it anticipates the Lord's decision, and so renders it superfluous; others, that it contradicts his deci-
sion, and consequently cannot be admitted. Neither charge is true, as a correct exposition will show.

A good illustration of the facility with which some German critics can believe or disbelieve just what they please, is furnished by Delitzsch's assertion that this speech, which he thinks to be greatly in advance of the rest of the book in its teachings, and to have been added to it by way of correction, is an interpolation, but is nevertheless canonical.

Among those who admit the genuineness of this discourse, there is still a wide difference of opinion as to the function assigned to it in the plan of the writer. Some have thought him to be the representative of human reason, and his decision to be not true but false, the true decision being subsequently given by the Lord. The purpose of his introduction will then be to show that here is an enigma, which unaided reason cannot solve. This is not a decent opinion. Jerome found in Elihu the representative of philosophy as opposed to faith, which latter was taught in the discourse of the Lord. Gregory the Great regarded him as a boastful, conceited stripling, presumptuously undertaking to solve a question to which older and wiser men had shown themselves incompetent. These lights in the western Church had a great influence upon subsequent commentators, down to the time of the Reformers, with whom a different view prevailed. The majority of Rationalistic writers take a like depreciating view of the part of Elihu. Eichhorn says that Job does not reply, for the reason that a giant would not measure himself with a boy. Among those who regard Elihu as the exponent of human reason, there is quite a diversity of judgment as to the ability which marks his discourse; some regarding it as empty and shallow in the highest degree, others as clear and forcible, and representing the loftiest result of the unaided wisdom of man, which fails, it is true to give a just solution, but only because the problem itself transcends man's capacity, and requires the intervention of God himself in order to explain it. The advocates of this view, however modified, generally assume that Elihu stands upon the same platform essentially with the three friends, that of the invariable connection of suffering with sin, and that his doctrine is tantamount to theirs, or so nearly so, as not to embrace the case
in hand; while the doctrine of the decision given by the Lord is on the other hand, that these providences are inscrutable by man, as God's other works are. Man must bow to the infinite greatness of God, and submit without murmuring to his sovereign though inexplicable pleasure.

This seems to be a defective view of the case. For, 1. It is antecedently very improbable that a character to whom so large a space and so much prominence are assigned in the book, should contribute nothing or next to nothing to its main design. If the speech of Elihu does little more than repeat what had been said by the friends, and especially if it is mere twaddle and empty declamation; it is unworthy of its place and of the writer.

2. The positions taken by Elihu are not identical with those of the friends, and ought not to be confounded with them. The writer evidently did not intend them to be identical, for he says expressly (xxxii. 3) that Elihu blamed the friends for not having found the proper answer to Job. His own must consequently stand upon different ground from theirs. All that is plausible in this view of the matter arises from the fact that Elihu in several cases repeats the language of the friends, or uses expressions similar to those which they had employed. But he does so discriminatingly. They had said much that was just and true, and was only vitiated by the wrong application made of it. Elihu sanctions what was right, condemns what was wrong, and puts the whole matter upon its proper basis. The intimate relationship between the discourse of Elihu and that of the Lord is also such as to lend a divine sanction to the former, and attest the truth of his claim to inspiration.

3. The solution of the sufferings of the righteous furnished in this book is something more than that they must be resigned to an arbitrary allotment, which admits of neither justification nor explanation. That would leave the problem entirely unsolved, and would not remove the difficulty at all. A man may be crushed under an infinite force, and have to submit to it. But such a view of the matter will not satisfy his higher nature, and it will be impossible, except upon stoical principles, to acquiesce unmurmuringly in such an allotment.

The relation of these two decisions, as we conceive it, may be
expressed by calling the first the theoretical, and "the second the practice decision. As far as, there was any need of argument to justify the ways of God, this task was committed to Elihu. Be meets Job like an equal, takes up the various points involved in the controversy, and shows; Job that he was "wrong in complaint, and that God was right. The way is thus prepared for the Lord, to appear and bring the whole matter to a final issue, rendering a decision not by mere words, but by acts.

The position of Elihu is distinguished from that taken, by the friends, mainly by two particulars. Be, like them, maintains a constant connection between suffering and sin. That this is not inconsistent, with what is said of this infliction in the historical preface, has already been seen. Unlike them, however, he regards suffering as disciplinary, whereas they considered it as exclusively penal, with the exception of v. 17, which solitary passage had no influence on the general tone of their discussion and sin is understood by him, not of gross external crimes merely, but as including inward states of heart, such as pride, xxxiii. 17, xxxv. 12, xxxvi. 9. Bis speech consists of four divisions. In the first (chap. xxxiii.) he establishes that suffering is sent upon the same errand with God's revelations to reclaim from sin; and if, when God's messenger explains its design, it is submissively received., its end is answered, and it will be removed. In the second, (chap. xxxiv...) he shows; that God is righteous in, all his dealings;; in the third (chap. xxxv.) that man can have no such merit before God as; to claim exemption from suffering as a right; in the fourth (chaps. xxxvi. xxxvii.) that grace is joined with power in God. Job's silence is an admission that these principles are conclusive, and that they have effectually put an end, to his complaint.

The discourse of the Lord is, as was fitting, far the sublimest portion of the book. Though the former speeches abound in lofty and striking passages, where one would, think that the writer was exhibiting iris full power, it is plain, when we see the new grandeur and majesty which are here developed, that he has been consciously, holding back his strength to the last, with the view of making a worthy contrast between the divine speaker and the men who had preceded.

The principles upon which the question between Job and his,
friends should be settled, having been stated by Elihu, nothing
remains but to give to this the seal of the divine attestation by
the actual issue to which God shall conduct the whole matter.
This is the aim of the personal intervention of the Lord himself,
and of his practical decision. He enters into no explanation
of the principles upon which he conducts his providence; he
makes no statement even of what had been his design in this
instance; he brings no argument to justify to men the course
which he had taken, or which he might at any time please
to take. As far as it had been thought necessary or proper to
give explanations and arguments, this had been devolved upon
Elihu, who as God's agent and ambassador might very properly
reason with his fellow-man, and labour to correct his misappreh-
sensions, and justify to him the ways of God. It would not
have been compatible with the divine dignity, however, to
suffer the impression to be made that God regarded himself as
amenable to human opinion or to the tribunal of his creatures.
He is not responsible to them; nor are they authorized judges
of his acts. The event itself is the only explanation which he
deigns to furnish. The wisdom and goodness which mark the
issue, afford sufficient proof that, in spite of previous appear-
ances, he has been wise and good throughout. The issue to
which God brings the sufferings of Job, and by which conse-
quently his decision of the case is practically rendered, consists
of two parts. It is, 1. Internal and spiritual, xxxviii. I-xl\textvisiblespace ii. 6,
concerning the feelings and heart of Job; 2. External,
\textvisiblespace xl\textvisiblespace ii. 7-17, concerning his outward circumstances.

The spiritual effect or issue produced upon the heart of Job
is, that he is brought to penitence and humiliation, xlii. 6. He
is brought to say, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and
ashes." That which immediately produces this effect is his
seeing God, ver. 5, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of
the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee." These verses are the
key to what precedes, and must guide us in its interpretation.
The great thing done by the Lord in this first part of his de-
cision is, that he manifests or reveals himself to Job in such a
way as brings him to humble penitence. He so appears as to
make upon Job a profound impression of his presence and
glory. The discourse, which he utters, is subordinated wholly
to this design of deepening Job's sense of the present God, of bringing home to his soul the thought of how great and glorious that Being is, who has appeared and who speaks to him.

In unfolding his greatness and glory to Job, the Lord dwells chiefly and almost exclusively upon those displays of it which are found in creation and in the external world, which he has made and which he upholds. It is to misconceive the purport of the decision which the Lord here renders, to see in it only an appeal to his omnipotence; so that the lesson would simply be, it is man's wisdom to submit to a power which it is vain for him to think of resisting. This would reduce its teaching to the heathen idea of submission to inexorable fate. Besides, if this were the meaning of the Lord's discourse, it could never have produced the effect upon the heart of Job, which it did produce, and to which allusion has already been made. In fact it was his being tempted to take this very view of God, and of his providential dealings toward him, which had awakened the previous struggle in his mind and been the source of his bitterest complaints. The whole art of the tempter lay in representing the Most High as an almighty force, crushing him without right or reason to the earth. God is more than power; or the part of the sufferer could never be so melted into acquiescence as Job's was.

Nor again is it the design of this discourse simply to present the evidences of God's infinite wisdom, observable everywhere in the works of his hands; as though the lesson to be inculcated were exclusively this, that his orderings are infinitely wise and lifted immensely above the comprehension of man. His duty, therefore, in relation to afflictive dispensations, is to bow implicitly before a mystery which he cannot comprehend, but which is not on that account less profoundly wise. The real lesson is much broader than this. More is done towards solving this mystery than thus to pronounce it insolvable. And more comfort is given to the sufferer in view of the divine dealings than would be afforded by saying simply that they are inscrutable.

These incorrect or rather partial views of the design of the Lord's discourse have arisen in the first place from the erroneous supposition that it is designed as the direct answer to Job's
difficulty; whereas it makes no immediate nor express allusion
to the case in hand. It is not directed to the solution of the
enigma, but is subsidiary to the fact that God now appears
before Job. It is simply designed to make a vivid impression
upon Job's mind and heart of his character and greatness. It
is but, as it were, the speaker's announcement of himself, I am
GOD. A second source of these partial views has been the dis-
severing of this discourse from that of Elihu, as though they
were two independent things; whereas Elihu's was a prepara-
tion for this, and his statements and reasonings are here presup-
posed. Elihu had dwelt upon the grace and the holiness of
God, and had shown that these attributes are not impaired by
the afflictions which he sends. He is gracious and just even in
these afflictions. He is just, because no man has any such
merit or claims, that God deprives him of his rights by afflict-
ing him. He is gracious, because these afflictions are sent with
a merciful design. These reasonings and explanations of Elihu
removed the stumbling-block out of Job's mind, reconciled to
him what he had found it impossible to reconcile before, and
took away that obstacle which had prevented him from seeing
God in his true character. When God now appeared, he was
prepared to discern in him the possession of all his glorious
attributes. He carried with him into his view of the divine
nature those lessons which Elihu had taught him. He now saw
the justice and benevolence of God. So that as soon as God
appeared to him, and a practical impression was made upon
his heart of the majesty and glory of the Most High, these
attributes which had been so long obscured, shone out brightly
with the rest. The words uttered by the Lord are occupied, it
is true, with appeals to his works in nature, which may be said
to yield a direct proof, only or at least mainly of his power and
wisdom. But it is because these works palpable to every eye,
give the grandest impression of his exalted being. They carry
with them the irresistible conviction that he is the all-perfect
One; and if this is so, he must be perfect in every attribute.
No such monstrous conception could be admitted, as a being
perfect in power, and perfect in wisdom, but devoid of goodness
and of holiness. And hence after the instruction given by
Elihu, and the preparation which his discourse afforded, it was
only necessary for the Lord to bring vividly to view the sub-
limely greatness of his nature in anyone of its manifestations, in
order to dispose Job to accept it in every. other. Job, had him-
self discoursed before at length of. the wisdom and power of God
But he had contemplated these too much as isolated-attributes;
and this knowledge did not humble him. But now, when he
not only. hears of God, but sees him, and consequently views
these in their indissoluble connection with the other divine per-
fections; when he views them as exalting the infinite nature of
Him who is possessed of every lofty and glorious, attribute, all
disposition to murmur is hushed, and Job bows subdued in
penitent submission.

The decisive reason, therefore, here given why he had no
right to complain, is found in God's: infinitely glorious nature;
not in his power merely, nor in his wisdom abstracted from his
other perfections, but in that exalted nature which embraces
within itself the whole assemblage of divine perfections. The
perfections of God present a ground for the most assured trust
of his creatures; they can confide in him and ought to confide
in him, under all circumstances. Such a being as he is, cannot
do anything but what is wise and right and good. As soon as
Job felt God's presence, he was instantly ashamed; and abhorred
himself for what he had said. It was God who had done it, and
that was enough. He could acquiesce, without a word of com-
paint.

The second, lesson brought to view by this issue or Job’s
affliction is, that the design of God in sending or permitting it,
was to bring Job to this increased acquaintance with himself.
Or, as the practical knowledge of God is identical with true
piety, this is equivalent to saying that it was designed to lead
him to a more elevated piety. The design of God in this matter
is to be learned not from any verbal explanation which he makes,
that would have comported less with the divine dignity--but
from the event. That event is that Job is brought to a better
and fuller acquaintance with God than he, had before. The
only solution of his enigma is found in God's infinitely perfect
nature being brought practically home to his inmost feelings
and convictions. He can find peace and satisfaction in no
other. In that he finds instant repose. And as Job's case is
proposed as an example for the whole class of sufferers to which he belonged, the design of God here rendered apparent by the event may be safely taken as evidence of the design entertained by him in every like instance. Suffering and trial put a man in a position, in which an ordinary amount of faith in God will not answer; in which a faith that might maintain itself in times of prosperity will not hold out. It requires an increased persuasion of God's infinitely glorious attributes to give a man comfort and peace then; and this persuasion the severity of his affliction will lead him to struggle after, and by God's grace to attain. A condescending disclosure of himself made, if not like this to Job by an audible voice from the whirlwind, yet by the inward voice of his Spirit confirming and applying the word sent by his human messengers, such as Elihu, is the customary end of the afflictions of the pious.

The Lord's discourse is divided into two parts, at the close: of each of which Job gives expression to the feelings of abasement, awakened by the view of God now vouchsafed to him. God first speaks of the displays of himself made in the inanimate and the animate creation, xxxviii. 1-xl. 2. Job can only reply that his unutterable sense of his own meanness in the contrast has silenced his complaint, xl. 3-5. God speaks again of the absurd presumption of his venturing a conflict with the Creator, who could not even contend with his creatures, xl. 6-xli. 34. Job replies more deeply humbled still. The inner workings of his thoughts are finely portrayed. We hear him repeating over to himself the words of God, which had so deeply penetrated his heart, and echoing their justice and their force. He first charges home upon his soul the opening words of God's first address, containing the theme to which it had been directed, (xxxviii. 2,) "Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge?" Who is he that in his folly obscures or denies the wisdom of the divine proceedings? He admits the justice of the reproof, and owns that he has been talking of things above his capacity. He then repeats to himself the challenge with which God began his second address, (xl. 7,) rebuking his presumption for contending with him, and to which that branch of the Lord's discourse had been directed. But the new views now obtained of the glory of the divine nature,
made him loathe himself that he had been guilty of such arrogance.

The spiritual design of the affliction being thus accomplished the Lord proceeds to the second or external part of his practical decision, by rectifying Job's standing in relation to his three friends, and then reversing his calamities and doubling his previous prosperity. The friends had been looking down upon him as justly condemned of heaven. The Lord, however; pronounces against them, and in his favour. He had, it, is true, spoken some things rashly and presumptuously, but for these, he had now expressed the deepest penitence. Meanwhile; in spite of the sorest temptation, he had held fast to his confidence in God, and even risen to a triumphant statement of it. They had not only cruelly assailed instead of succouring their distressed friend, but in their professed defence of divine providence, had really limited God more than Job had done. They had prescribed a scheme of providential retribution, as though that were the only one consistent with equity and righteousness, which yet was very different and palpably so from the one God actually pursues. It was tantamount, therefore to an indirect charge of injustice, even mote serious than that made by Job, and for which they had' no similar extenuation, in that they were not exposed to a like temptation. Their pardon being suspended upon his intercession, the first step in his restoration is made to test the thoroughness of that humiliation which his affliction has wrought."

Will he forgive his friends for the unkind speeches which had so provoked and embittered him against them? As Job sustains this test, the next and concluding step is taken in his restoration.

Seeking again the design of God in the event, we learn that it was his purpose, by means of this affliction, to enhance Job's happiness. As far as Satan was concerned, this affliction, sent at his instigation, was designed for his confusion by the exhibition of Job's constancy; and this end was answered, notwithstanding any weakness he may have betrayed in the hour of its greatest severity. But as far as Job himself was concerned, we are taught, by combining the leading points of the Lord's decision, that the grounds of acquiescence in afflicting dispensations are to be found, first, in God's glorious perfections, and,
secondly, in his gracious design thereby to advance the holiness and the highest welfare of the sufferer. And this is precisely the teaching of Elihu, though presented in a different form. What he says in words, the Lord confirms by deeds. The two decisions are in entire harmony, yet, each is indispensable. I

That the mystery of this perplexing subject is not so fully opened up in this book, belonging to the former dispensation, and perhaps to its earlier periods, as it is in the New Testament, is a matter of course. The Comforter was not yet given to the saints so largely as he is now. And we find holy men all through the Old Testament, and especially in this book and in the Psalms, uttering their complaints in their afflictions as though they were suffering beneath God's frowns. The full revelation of divine love had not then been made, nor the perfection of the triumph of divine grace over evil been exhibited. So that it might be thoroughly and practically felt how completely afflictions have changed their nature, and instead of being frowns and tokens of displeasure, though merited and temporary, they are become positive fruits and evidences of love, according to the munificence of that gospel grant, "All things are yours," "All things work together for good."

The great Pattern of submissive Buffering had not then appeared, nor could the argument so full of consolation be employed, "Seeing that Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind." And as life and immortality were not "then so fully brought to light, it could not be said with the joyful confidence of an apostle, "These light afflictions, which are for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." And yet it will be perceived that the germs of the whole gospel doctrine are already here, only needing to be expanded to New Testament dimensions. There is not only the utmost harmony, but absolute identity; only one pursues the same course to a further point than the other. Perhaps it may not be improper to seek here the germs of future doctrine to even a greater extent than has now been intimated. It may be that the Messianic contents of this book, (for Christ cannot be absent from any leading portion of the Old Testament,) is to be sought less in detached passages than in its prominent figure, and in the idea presented
of the righteous sufferer. The struggle with Satan's malignity under the seeming hidings of God's face, conducted to Satan's overthrow; the being made perfect through sufferings, and the heightened blessedness consequent upon them, present a conception to the mind which was to be realized in its most perfect ideal. This thought we find freshly pursued under the guidance of the Spirit in those Psalms, in which the righteous sufferer is again depicted, with a basis, perhaps, in the actual experience of the writer, but with unmistakable reference to the future ideal. A line of typical or prophetic reference is thus drawn, culminating in Isaiah liii. in a clear statement of the doctrine of a suffering but sinless Messiah. The counterpart is written in the Gospels.

Everyone who reads it, must be struck with the sublime power of this wonderful book. And certainly no one can study it without an ever heightening admiration. The marvellous fertility of its imagery, the grandeur of its descriptions, the masterly treatment of its high and solemn theme, the skill with which its various characters are managed, the vivid boldness with which the workings of a soul in the intensest inward struggles are depicted, and the delicate nicety displayed even in minute points of its structure and arrangement, place it among the loftiest productions of genius, even were it to be considered in no other light. That the author of such a book as this should have wholly dropped from sight, and have made no figure with his transcendent abilities in the history of Israel, seems scarcely supposable. It has often and justly been remarked, that the writer must have drunk deeply of the cup of affliction himself, have known in his own experience the inward conflict he portrays, and had brought home to his own heart the lessons that are here set before others. Can it be only another, in a series of fortuitous coincidences, that the reputed son of Pharaoh's daughter was driven forth an exiled fugitive for forty years for the crime of sympathizing with the Lord's people?—"choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the temporary pleasures of sin." Who can tell what it cost him to submit to this sudden reversal of fortune, and this apparently utter blasting of long cherished hopes, instilled even by a mother's faith into his infant mind? We see a momentary
trace of it dimming his joy at the birth of his first-born son, Ex. n. 22. We read its permanent effects in the transformation of the impetuous youth into the man of self-distrust, and of meekness beyond that of any upon the face of the earth.

The volumes named at the head of this article are the best with which we are acquainted, that have appeared upon Job within the present decennium in Europe or America. That of Professor Conant is a translation with notes; each of the others is a commentary with a translation. The very cursory examination which we have been able to bestow upon the work of Professor Conant satisfies us of the scholarship and ability with which it has been executed; and we have no hesitation in commending it to students of this book as a valuable aid toward its interpretation. That we find ourselves to differ from him in some of his views, does not surprise us in a book which confessedly presents so many difficulties.

While such is our judgment, however, of this work as a private enterprise, we must not be understood for one moment to endorse the action of the Society, under whose auspices it is given to the public, nor to consent that this new translation should supersede in general and ecclesiastical use the common authorized version. It savours of no small presumption, in our judgment, for the fraction of a single denomination to arrogate to itself the work of altering that version, which is the common property of English-speaking Christendom. We do not claim perfection for the common version, but we do say that it is the best version in use in any language, ancient or modern. And the chances are ten thousand to one, that if the attempt was now made to prepare a substitute, it would be worse instead of better. And judging by representations made by those who ought to know, we should rate the chances in the attempt made by this Society at an immensely higher figure than that. The evils of making any change will be so serious, that nothing but the certainty of a great and positive good can justify the experiment. The common agreement of all Christian bodies upon the existing version, the familiarity of the people with it, the reverence with which it is regarded, the extent of its introduction into our religious literature, are advantages which will all be thrown away, the moment it begins to be tinkered
with. And what, even upon the most favourable assumption, is to be gained by the change? In the great body of the Bible the common version is the very best for the popular reader that could be made even at this day. The parts, where improvement is possible, form not the rule, but the exception, and a very limited exception too. It is almost exclusively in the most difficult passages of such books as Job, or the obscurer prophets, that corrections could be made. In none of these is any important point of doctrine or duty involved; in most, the essential meaning of the passage as a whole would be little if at all affected by the changes to be introduced; while in many, the best scholars are still far from being agreed as to the precise rendering to be preferred. To give a single instance of this diversity, Professor Conant translates Job xxx. 24, "Yea, there is no prayer, when he stretches out the hand; nor when he destroys, can they cry for help." Hahn, "May not a man in falling even raise his hand, nor in his destruction cry thereat?" Schlottmann, "Only let no one lay hands upon ruins; or is his fall another's weal?" Besides it is not impossible that there may be a reaction in Hebrew philology, and at least a partial return to old traditional interpretations from which it has departed. Of whatever service, therefore, such a translation as that of which we are speaking may be in the study of the Bible, and however it may serve as one of the preparatory steps toward an improvement of the existing version at some future time, we are more than ever convinced that the proper time for making any changes in the authorized version has not yet come. And if ever a time should come, when such a thing shall be feasible or expedient, let it be not a sectarian but a Christian enterprise, undertaken by the entire Church using the English language.
THE BOOK OF JOB

By CHARLES LEE FEINBERG

Editor's Note: This article was Written as a class paper in the Bible at the Evangelical Theological College last year, having been submitted to the Professor, Dr. Henry A. Ironside, who recommended it for publication. Mr. Feinberg, a Hebrew Christian, took his academic degree at the University of Pittsburgh, and is a candidate for the Th.M. degree in May.

The Book of Job has been so designated because of its principal character, Job. In the Hebrew canon it stands among the Hagiographa or Holy Writings. In our canon it is placed among the poetic books. Unlike the Pentateuch or the Prophets which are read in the synagogue every Sabbath, or even the Megilloth or rolls (Song of Solomon, Ruth, Ecclesiastes, Esther, and Lamentations) which are read on certain festive occasions, the Book of Job is not read in the synagogue. It is usually the more educated class that reads the book because of the lofty and difficult Hebrew. The authorship of the book has been and still is disputed. Many think it was written by Moses.

The book is set as to time in patriarchal days. There is no indication anywhere that the law or the great social, legislative, ecclesiastical, and judicial system brought in by it, were in existence at the time; the law, as such, is not mentioned. What makes it particularly difficult to place the book in point of time is the fact that there are no references to outside contacts with either political or ecclesiastical events. As to place, the story takes place in the land of Uz, which is southeast of Palestine on the borders of Edom. The Rabbis tell us that it occurred outside of Palestine that it might never be said that God persecuted a righteous man in Israel. It appears, however, that the impression given by its setting in Uz is more of an international, or rather intercommunal, outlook. It is interesting to note, in
fact, that throughout the book the names for God are for the most part Elohim, Eloah, and Shaddai. These are used in God's dealings with all peoples; Jehovah is more particularly used in God's redemptive and covenant relations.

There are eight characters in the book: God, Satan, Job, his wife, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, Zophar the Naamathite, and Elihu the Buzite. God appears as the sovereign Ruler of His creation who delights in His saints and seeks their justification and vindication, whether in the sight of Satan or of Job's friends. We see "that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (Jas. 5:11). Satan is still the accuser of God's saints before Him. He uses his old tactics as he did in the garden: by casting doubts through questions. Needless to say, this is of none effect with the Almighty God. Job, the main character, is a man "perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil," according to the testimony of the Lord. He was said by some of the Rabbis to have lived in the time of Abraham. Others said he lived in the time of Jacob and married Jacob's daughter Dinah. Still others held he was a righteous Gentile who lived shortly after the time of Jacob and (on what authority it is hard to tell) was smitten with his great malady because he advised Pharaoh to cast all the male infants born in Israel into the river. Setting aside these fantastic speculations, from the book itself we learn that Job was "the greatest of all the men of the east." He possessed much wealth and was highly honored in his city. Listen to him as he describes it so vividly: "I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil; 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. When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: Because I delivered the poor that
cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy" (Job 29 ’6-13). Job’s wife, who comes into view in 2:9 only, appears to be impetuous and unreflective; she is hasty in her judgments and foolish in her advice. Then there are Job’s three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. Eliphaz is one noted for his sagacity and practical wisdom. He is much more calm than the others, and appeals to experience. Bildad has gained his knowledge from the accumulated lore of tradition. Zophar is an out-and-out legalist and a dogmatist as well. The last character to be mentioned is Elihu the Buzite who appears to be respectful in his manners, waiting for the others older than himself to speak before he cared to voice his opinions. He is less harsh than the rest and really shows insight into the situation perplexing Job and his friends.

The subject matter of the book is dramatic and the whole resolves itself into a continuous narrative. Along with the Psalms and Proverbs it is the only other book in the Old Testament that the Massoretic scholars pointed in such a way as to show its poetic form. Except for the prologue (chapters 1 and 2) and the epilogue (ch. 42:7-17) the form is that of the Hebrew poetry with the couplets. In the latter half of some of the couplets we have a reiteration of what has been expressed previously, but in others we have the opposite expressed, the antithetic parallelism. This latter form, to be sure, is more marked in the Psalms and Proverbs than in Job. The production as a whole and in all its parts is beautiful for its lofty style, its vivid pictures, and its reproductions of natural scenes and objects; it abounds in figures. This book has always held a high place in Biblical literature; so much so in fact, that the critics have placed its writing in the time of the literary prophets, Amos and Isaiah for instance. In contents the book has passages which are parallel to others in the Bible. Job 3:3-8: "Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is
a man child conceived. Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; 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. Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein. Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning," reminds us quite distinctly of similar words by Jeremiah in Jer. 20:14-18: "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?" Job 7:17, 18: "What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him? And that thou shouldest visit I him every morning, and try him every moment?" brings to mind the words of the psalmist David in Psalm 8:4: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

In order to get a closer and more satisfactory view of the book, its subject matter, purpose, and problem involved, let us look into the story as it is related to us. At the outset Job is seen living in comfort and in the fear of the Lord as was his wont, and surrounded by his ten children. His zeal for God is seen in his sacrifice of burnt offerings for his sons after their days of feasting, lest they might have offended God in a moment when they were susceptible to temptation. Then we are introduced into a scene where the sons of God presented themselves before Him and Satan came also. When
Satan was asked whence he had come he said: "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." This is true of him today for we know that our "adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Pet. 5:8). It has been well said that although Satan, by his experiences, is much wiser than when he was first created, yet in his consistent and constant opposition against God he still uses his same tactics. We must not be ignorant of any of his devices. When the Lord delighted Himself in Job and said to 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," Satan malignantly asked: "Doth Job fear God for nought?" By this Satan was by so much arraigning God for His control of affairs, so that it paid one to serve Him; on the other hand, it was reflecting upon Job as being one who desired to serve God merely for gain. God then allows Satan to try Job with the command that he touch not the person of Job. What a comforting thought that although the Lord uses means (Satan and others) to chasten His saints, the means are ever in His control and He watches over us until His will in us be accomplished! When We are tempted or tried we need never fear that God has left us or forsaken us. He knows His own and cares most tenderly for them. There is sweetness to be found in Him through chastisement, be it as severe as it may. In his first attack upon Job, Satan uses the Chaldeans and the Sabeans to strip Job not only of his wealth, but of his children as well. Yet in "all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." When Satan had failed the first time, he answered God when God asked him concerning righteous Job: "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." So God allowed Job to be tested further by the infliction by Satan upon Job of a loathsome disease. When Satan saw he had failed here, he appears to have used Job's wife to advise him to do what Satan
said he would, namely: "curse God, and die." Yet "in all this did not Job sin with his lips."

If the purpose of the book were to show how God can defeat Satan and sustain His saints in trial it might very well end at this point. But the Lord has much more in view than this. Job must yet come to an honest estimate of himself. There were in him elements of character, self-justification and self-righteousness, which had not been called forth into display because circumstances had not evinced them. Job must recognize them, judge them, and repent. But, you ask, was not Job a perfect and righteous man? Just so; and it is here that God would show us that the best of us has nothing to boast of, but needs repentance and self-judgment.

With this in mind let us take up the trend of the narrative. Job's friends had come to visit him in his sore distress. We must remember that they are mere auxiliaries in God's hands and our attention must be centered upon Job. It appears that Job could more easily bear his sorrow alone without his silent friends sitting about him. Perhaps the contrast in their condition and his was irksome and distasteful to him. Then he begins to speak and curses the very day of his birth. Eliphaz seeks to comfort Job by referring to facts that he had culled from his experiences. He uses his favorite words--"I have seen"--time and time again. He intimates very mildly that the trouble is in Job and that he should commit his cause to the Lord, for "who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?" Job, however, is not satisfied with this answer to his problem and asks to be taught wherein he has erred, for he claims he is as able as any to "discern perverse things." Bildad answers next and maintains that tradition has ever shown that the punishment of God is upon the wicked and that "the hypocrite's hopes shall perish." Job refuses the application of this principle to himself and bemoans the fact that he has not one to plead for him with God: "For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us,
that might lay his hand upon us both" (Job 9:32,33); and further: "O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbour!" (Job 16:21). But blessed be God that we know: "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8:34), and "he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). For "there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 2:5). Then we have the advice of Zophar who restricts God's dealings to hard and fast legalistic principles. He invites Job to "Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth." An exacting God! how unfair to Him! But Job is still not convinced. And thus the contention goes on throughout the greater part of the book with Job's friends condemning him and he trying to vindicate and comfort himself. Instead, they should have tried to comfort him, so that he would have been brought to self-condemnation. In Job's last answer (chapters 30, 31, and 29) to his "miserable comforters" and their intimations that he was a hypocrite while he contended his righteousness and showed glimpses of great faith (19:25-27), we have Job wishing for the blessing of former days: "Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me" (29:2). But could not God bless him now also? How like so many of us! When we are undergoing trials and perplexities we forget the troubles of the past and the grace that was daily vouchsafed abundantly to us, and we long and sigh for "the good old days." Our God is abundantly able to renew His grace to us day by day and refresh us in the inner man with His heavenly manna from His tender hand. But Job continues in his reminiscences concerning his past honor and dignity. Can we not feel his mental anguish and troubled heart as he says "But now"? How Job laments his fate! Can we not the more then adore Him who when He "was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not his
mourn! He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearsers IS dumb, so He opened not His mouth" (Isa. 53:7). And all for us! How our hearts and lives should go out to Him in adoration, praise, and grateful service! If Job could only have said: "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Mt. 11:26). But he continues on in this vein: "If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hasted to deceit; Let me be weighed in an even balance that God may know mine integrity" (31:5, 6). It has been well said by Dr. E. J. Pace that there are pride of race, pride of place, pride of face, but worst of all is pride of grace. The spiritual Christian can NEVER find anything in himself whereof he can glory, for "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (I Cor. 1:31). In chapter 31 and verse 40 we read "The words of Job are ended." How different is this ending from the one we find in Psalm 72:20: "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended"! In the former case Job had been assiduously attempting to justify himself rather than God; in the latter David had been praising the Lord for His abundant mercies and His wondrous works. How much more honoring to God are "the prayers" of His saints than "the words" of His saints.

Elihu, who had been from all appearances a witness to these accusations and refutations, now speaks and rebukes the friends of Job for their inapplicable and false principles and their misrepresentations of the character and dealings of God. Nor does he excuse Job in his contentions. He is God's temporary answer to Job's desire for a Daysman. Elihu delivers himself of a commendable theodicy, and at the same time he shows sympathy and kindness for Job in his plight. The gist of his argument may be summed up thus: Behold, in this thou are not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters" (33:12,13). And: "far be it from God, that he should do wickedness, and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity" (34:10). Does it not remind us of Paul's words in
Romans 9:20: "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God! Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?"

Finally, God out of the whirlwind answers Job and shows Job his utter insignificance in contrast to His greatness in all His workings. Job replies at first: "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth" (40:4). But Job has more to learn yet. In his second answer he says: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (42:5, 6). How like Isaiah this is who when he saw the Lord delivered himself similarly as the Word records: "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isa. 6:5).

Job had come now to the place where he knew the potency of the truth: "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18).

Thus far, in the words of James, we have seen "the patience of Job." Now we see also "the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (Jas. 5:11). After Job offered sacrifices for his three friends according to the command of God, we read: "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" (42:10). How blessed is that word "when"! Is it not true that just when we are striving in prayer with God for others that He so graciously and abundantly blesses us also? And can we not find for our own hearts and lives an application of this book in the words of the apostle Paul: "For if we judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (I Cor. 11:31, 32)? Oh! that we might recognize in our trials and chastenings the good hand of the Lord and turning to Him in the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ call upon His grace in time of need!
INTRODUCTION

This book is named after its chief character, Job, which means "persecuted" or "afflicted." In our canon it is the first of the poetic books of the Old Testament. Although the book is poetry the story is not fiction but fact (cf. Ezek. 14:14, 20; Jas. 5:11). The events must have taken place in patriarchal times for (1) there is no mention of the law; (2) the offerings are burnt offerings and not sin offerings as required under the law; (3) Job performs the functions of a priest himself; and (4) no mention is made of the exodus from Egypt. The book is a work unsurpassed for depth of feeling and grandeur of thought and conception. Luther said of it: "Magnificent and sublime as no other book of Scripture." Renan, the author and critic of the past century, delivered himself as follows: "The Book of Job is the Hebrew book par excellence—it is in the Book of Job that the force, beauty, the depth of the Hebrew genius are seen at their best." Tennyson called it "the greatest poem of ancient or modern times." Carlyle said it was "apart from all theories about it, one of the greatest things ever written with pen. There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal merit."

The theme, subject, or problem of the book is the suffering of the godly. The suffering of the ungodly is no mystery. The psalmist said: "Bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days" (Psa. 55:23; cf. also Prov. 405)
29:1). But why do the godly suffer? The book really deals with five problems that grow out of this main one and include it. (1) Can man serve God disinterestedly from pure love of Him or is all his worship of God tainted with ulterior and selfish motives? (2) Is there anyone but God to whom the control of the circumstances of human life can be attributed? (3) Are man's outward circumstances a criterion and standard of his moral character and life before God? (4) Can men, by their wisdom, rightly and completely comprehend the workings of the providence of God? (5) Since the righteous do endure such great afflictions in this life, is a life of righteousness worth it in the last analysis?

Scripture is so full in its truth that although there is but one interpretation, there may be many applications. This book in particular lends itself to several applications. By way of comparison with Job we can see the believer of this age exposed to himself by the dealings and chastenings of God, judging himself, mistrusting himself, resting in the all-sufficient grace of God. By way of contrast with Job we can see Christ, the sinless Sufferer, doing God's will without murmuring and with complete trust in the wisdom and will of the Father. By way of application we can discern in Job the whole story of the salvation of the sinner.

An Englishman once said to Moody: "Did you ever notice this, that the Book of Job is the key to the whole Bible? If you understand Job you will understand the whole Bible!" "No," said Moody, "I don't comprehend that. Job the key to the whole Bible! How do you make that out?" He said: "I divide Job into seven heads. The first head is: A perfect man untried. That is what God said about Job: that is Adam in Eden. He was perfect when God put him there. The second head is: Tried by adversity. Job fell, as Adam fell in Eden. The third head is: The wisdom of the world. The world tried to restore Job; the three wise men came to help him. That was the wisdom of the world centered in those three men. You cannot," he said, "find any such eloquent language or wisdom anywhere, in any part of the
world, as those three men displayed, but they did not know anything about grace, and could not, therefore, help Job." "Then in the fourth place, in comes the Daysman, that is Christ. In the fifth place, God speaks; and in the sixth, Job learns his lesson. 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' And then down came Job flat on the dunghill. The seventh head is this, that God restores him. Our last estate is better than our first."

By way of comparison, still further, Job is a picture of the nation Israel. This thought we shall attempt to carry through our three studies. For our purposes and true to the movement of the book we divide Job into three sections: chapters 1-3 speak of the suffering Job; chapters 4-31 set forth the sophistries of his friends; chapters 32-42 reveal the salvation or deliverance of Job by the Lord.

**JOB IN HIS SUFFERING**
First, let us note what kind of man Job was. Then let us consider his suffering, sorrow, and trial. This one delivered over into the hands of the enemy, Satan, was no ordinary man. He had wealth (cf. 1:3; 29:3, 6, 19). He knew the prosperity of the Lord. He was blessed with children (1:2). They are a heritage from the Lord. He was highly honored (29:7-11; 29:21-25). He was educated. He shows familiarity with writing, building, natural history, astronomy, and science in general. He was pious and godly (1:1, 5, 8; 2:3). He was perfect. This does not mean sinlessly perfect. He was perfect in the sense of complete as the word denotes (tam, from tamam, to be complete, whole). His godly life was well-rounded: not zealous in some things and lax in others. He was as honest in public as in private; he was as true with men as with God. He was upright, sincere, and straightforward, as we say "on the level." He feared God. God was the center of his life and desire. He lived in the presence of God. He turned away from evil, shunning every form of it. He was concerned for the spir-
itual well-being of his children (1:5). It was not spasmodic but a constant practice of his. This is brought out by two features of the original text: first, the words, "all the days," and secondly, the verb in the imperfect denotes that which is continuous and reiterated. He ever concerned himself for the needy (29:12-17).

Just as Job was an extraordinary man, so was his trial unusual at the hand of the enemy Satan. Job was tried in his circumstances or circumstantially, in his body or physically, and in his faith or spiritually. In these three spheres he was tested to the full. He lost all his wealth and property. He lost his children, dearer far than his riches. And all of this transpired with Satanic speed and suddenness. He lost his health. Someone has described it: "The disease of Job seems to have been an universal ulcer, producing an eruption over his entire person, and attended with violent pain and constant restlessness. A universal boil, or group of boils, over the body would accord with the (account of the disease in the various parts of the book. In the elephantiasis the skin is covered with incrustations like those of an elephant. It is a chronic and contagious disease, marked by a thickening of the legs, with a loss of hair and feeling, a swelling of the face, and a hoarse, nasal voice. It affects the whole body: the bones as well as the skin are covered with spots, and tumors, at first red, but afterwards black." Payson was asked, when under great bodily affliction, whether he could see any particular reason for such dealings of God with him. "No," he said, "but I am as well satisfied as if I could see ten thousand; God's will is the very perfection of all reason." So reasoned Job in his trial. Then Job lost the help and sympathetic understanding of his wife. Through all these tests Job stood firm and glorified God.

ISRAEL IN HER SUFFERING

What a parallel to these things does the nation Israel afford! She too was highly favored of God. God delighted in her. He called her the apple of His eye, His chosen,
His son. Yes, He even called her His Jeshurun (the same root word as "upright" used of Job), His upright one (Dt. 32:15; 33:5; 33:26; Isa. 44:2). She too was prosperous under the hand of God (Dt. 8:18). God gave her power to acquire wealth. Just as Satan resisted God's word of commendation and joy in Job, so has he done and still does with regard to Israel (Zech. 3:1 ff). God delivered Job permissively into the hands and devices of the enemy Satan for dreadful trials. In a similar manner God delivered over the dearly beloved of His soul into the hands of her enemies (Jer. 12:7). As Job was stripped of all, so was Israel also (Lam. 5:1-5). This is true in a greater measure today than it was in Jeremiah's day when he wrote the "Lamentations." Many were the waves and billows of woe that came over Job. How many and of what magnitude have they been that have swept over Israel and still engulf her in this hour! First, she was persecuted of Pharaoh upon arriving at nationhood. Then the nations on the wilderness journey, especially Amalek, vented their wrath on her. In later years Haman took up the cudgel of persecution against her to exterminate her. Antiochus Epiphanes in the second century before Christ joined himself to the number of those who can be called the inveterate and unrelenting enemies of Israel. The Middle Ages saw wave after wave of destruction break over the defenseless head of the nation of the weary foot and the weary heart. If thousands died in plagues from contaminated waters, it was Israel who had committed the dastardly deed, although many of her own number perished. If a Gentile child were found dead near the time of Passover, it was the community of God's people that had perpetrated the crime in order to have the blood for ritual purposes, although it was known that Israel turned with loathing from all blood in their ritual and in their food according to the explicit prohibitions of the Mosaic law. The long, sad, blood-stained story of the Spanish Inquisition has never been fully told and it were best passed over in some degree of silence. And what shall we
say of her present day privations, wanderings, and sorrows? And the end is definitely not yet. Israel's history has been one drawn-out concatenation of woes.

But we must realize what Job's friends had to learn and that is that not all suffering is retributive. God's greatest trials are inflicted upon the strongest for by His grace they are empowered to bear them. If Job had only known what God had said of him to Satan and how His heart went out to Job in his trial; if Israel only knew what God has said of her in His Word to Satan and all men and how His heart yearns for her! Here we have exemplified in a clear way the truth that whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth. Satan in the last analysis strikes at God by implying that He can only be loved with a mercenary love and only for His benefits do human creatures feel drawn to Him. When the human heart really catches a glimpse of the love in the heart of God, it responds with love. "We love him, because he first loved us."

It is said that Spurgeon, while visiting at a friend's home in the country, was attracted to a beautiful weather-vane which the friend had placed upon the cupola of a new barn which had just been built. On the weather-vane were inscribed the words, "God is love." Spurgeon expressed surprise at the choice of such a motto for such a place and said, "What do you mean by putting that text of Scripture on the weather-vane? Do you mean that God's love is as changeable as the wind?" "Oh, no," said his friend, "I mean to say that God is love whichever way the wind blows." Job learned this truth; Israel as a nation will yet learn it. No matter what the trial, how deep the sorrow, how cutting the wound, how painful the disease, how loathsome the affliction, how unbearable the circumstances, God is always and ever love. And He chastens those He loves. In these first chapters we have seen that God permits the godly to suffer for the glory of God. In the remainder of the poem it is seen that the godly suffer for their own good as well.
What is as evident as the afflictions imposed by Satan upon Job is the protection afforded him by God. Satan in his venom could go only thus far and no farther. Throughout the centuries Satan has longed to blot out Israel but she knows God's protecting hand. It is said of Felix of Nola that when he was hotly pursued by murderers, he took refuge in a cave, and instantly over the rift of it the spiders wove their webs. Seeing the web the murderers passed by. Then said this saint, "Where God is not, a wall is but a spider's web; where God is, a spider's web is as a wall." How true for Job and how true for Israel!
Dallas, Texas.

(To be continued in the January-March, 1940, number)
Most of the Book of Job is taken up with the addresses of Job's friends and his answers to them. They are not incidental to the book but are of primary importance. To view them otherwise is to lose sight of the great movement of the book. These friends attempt as best they can to probe Job's predicament. He does not understand the reason for his unusual sufferings nor do they. It is no small problem with which these men are wrestling. There is no book in the Bible that does not have some reference to trial. The Book of Psalms has one hundred and fifty psalms and over ninety have some reference to suffering. There is no believer in the Scriptures whose history we have in any fullness at all, but what was called upon to endure trouble and suffering in some form. Many times the most godly were the most tried. Let your mind review for the moment the lives of such men as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Daniel, Paul, Peter, the early disciples and apostles. Did not each one find out experientially the truth of the words: "But man is born unto trouble, As the sparks fly upward" (Job 5:7). Those who were greatly used of God were trained in the school of affliction and hardship.

JOB UNDER THE CRITICS' SCRUTINY

The friends of Job in trying to explain his afflictions really misrepresent God as well as Job, and so are Satan's tool to cause Job to renounce God. Job's heart feels it cannot accept their opinions as to the dealings of God with him. These friends, mark you, were prominent, wise, and pious men, men of age and experience. Their arguments were good and forceful, but they were based on wrong premises. Job refuses to admit the cogency of their arguments because he
knows of his own innocence of their charges against him. The arguments of Job's friends go from veiled insinuations to open denunciations. As the argument progresses the friends realize that they are unable to convince him, and they become more and more harsh and severe. They begin mildly but are astonished that Job tries to refute some of their primary arguments, and finally they lose confidence in his uprightness and sincerity. Instead of applying a balm, wine, and oil to his wounds, they cauterize them, pouring in vitriol. It is always like vinegar on soda to come to a broken soul and dejected spirit prattling about platitudes without sympathy.

The main contention of Job's friends was that suffering is for sin. This is true in general but far from true in all cases. As a matter of fact, Job's sufferings were not the result of sin so much as they were the trial of his righteousness, the trial of his faith. His friends reasoned that something grievous must be the matter with Job and because they could not see it, they concluded he was a hypocrite hiding his sin and his real self. Job's friends made him writhe more than Satan. They did him more harm than the devil. When Job knew his friends were wrong in their contentions, he was stirred to resentment against them. Throughout the words of the friends there is special pleading--they do not state the whole case at all. His friends were merely speaking truths they had learned from memory; he spoke his words from a tortured and anguished and agonizing heart. Though his comforters, miserable as they were, pelted him with inconsiderate words he had more faith than anyone of them (Job 13:15).

Let us note the trend of reasoning of each adviser. Eliphaz the Temanite held that all men are sinners and sin is connected with suffering. He does not at first doubt the sincerity of Job nor his integrity. He says: "Remember, pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? Or where were the upright cut off?" (4:7). His principle is true in general, but does not explain special suffering. What of the
case of Abel? Was he not upright and righteous and did he not perish, being cut off by the hand of his murderous brother? The other friends seem to get their point of departure from Eliphaz, and follow his reasoning, but more and more cast doubts on the piety of Job. He appeals again and again to his own observation and experience. Notice "as I have seen" in 4:8 and "I have seen" in 5:3 together with the recital of his vision in his dream recorded in 4:12 ff. See also 15:17. When he speaks in his second address he charges Job with guilt. He sets forth his indictment thus: "Yea, thou doest away with fear, And hinderest devotion before God. For thine iniquity teacheth thy mouth, And thou choosest the tongue of the crafty. Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I; Yea, thine own lips testify against thee" (15:4-6). In his third and last address he administers a scathing rebuke to Job accusing him of downright wickedness. Hear the severity of his words: "Is not thy wickedness great? Neither is there any end to thine iniquities" (22:5 ff). He goes on to charge Job with stripping the naked of their clothing, with withholding water from the weary and bread from the hungry, with turning away widows with emptiness, and with robbing the fatherless of their maintenance and stay. Think of it! Contrast this, if you will, with the statement God made concerning Job at the outset of the book and with Job's own recital of his former days in 29:11-13; 31:16-23. Carrying Eliphaz's argument to its logical conclusion, we should find that the most sinful men were the most afflicted.

Bildad the Shuhite appeals to tradition. He orders his argument after this manner: "For inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, And apply thyself to that which their fathers have searched out (For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, Because our days upon earth are a shadow): Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, And utter words out of their heart?" (8:8-10). Tradition is just the observation of a number of men, and many times is no more correct than individual observation. He should have appealed to an ob-
jective norm and standard, God's own revelation to man, in that measure in which God had already made Himself known in that day. In his second address Bildad prefaces his words with the statement: "Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, And the spark of his fire shall not shine" and goes on to enumerate the multiplied calamities and adversities that assuredly befall the wicked. His last answer to Job is quite brief and he contents himself with admonishing Job that man can by no means be pure and just before God when even the stars are not pure in His sight (Chapters 18; 25).

Zophar the Naamathite is the third friend and he feels he must speak forth his word of consolation and comfort also. He appeals to the law principle (not the law of Moses for it was not yet given). He states his position thus: "Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth" (11:6). If God were an exacting God, where would sinful man be? The Psalmist asks this same question: "If thou, Jehovah, shouldest mark iniquities, 0 Lord, who could stand?" (Psa. 103:3). In his second and last address Zophar points out that the triumphing of the wicked is short and that he perishes forever like his own dung (20:5-7). He closes summarily with the words: "This is the portion of a wicked man from God, And the heritage appointed unto him by God" (20:29). He is quite severe and denunciatory in his charges as one would expect of a legalist. Boiling down the words of a legalist to the basic residuum, we shall always find him saying, "It's good for you that you are in such a plight. You are getting just what you deserve and even less. You have no cause to complain."

All these men based God's infliction of suffering, or permission of it, on a basis of justice (for sin) rather than on a basis of love. They were miserable comforters (16:2) and physicians of no value (13:4); they did give the impression that they were the people and wisdom would die with them (12:2). How like so many critics of our day are these critics! Their criticisms too often are the opposite of the truth.
Satan's afflictions were sore, but the criticisms of Job's friends were far worse.

ISRAEL UNDER THE CRITICS' SCRUTINY

Since Israel has been suffering for centuries she has not lacked for critics, self-appointed, self-sustained, and assuredly self-opinionated, to tell her the reason for her trials. Zechariah gives a timely word here. In the first chapter of his prophecy, after noting the lessons for post-captivity Israel in the history of their forefathers' disobedience and punishment, he declares God's love and jealousy for Israel. God says through the prophet: "And I am very sore displeased with the nations that are at ease; for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction" (1:15). It is as though a father were reluctantly punishing his own child with a stick or with a word of rebuke or restraint and a stranger came to chasten with a rod of iron. God scattered Israel (Jer. 31:10), but the nations made them how [Isa. 52:5]. Isaiah tells Babylon: "I was wroth with my people, I profaned mine inheritance, and gave them into thy hand: thou didst show them no mercy; upon the aged hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke" (47:6). The contrast that the prophet draws between God's treatment of Israel and the dealings of the nations with the chosen people is marked. The critics of Israel ask: "Have not the trials of the Jews been minutely predicted by Moses and the prophets?" This question goes on the false assumption that God sanctions all that he predicts. By the same token God must approve of all wars for Christ said there would be wars and rumors of wars. Too, the sufferings of Christ were detailedly foretold, but still the Holy Spirit notes that it was with "wicked hands" (implying responsibility) He was crucified and slain. Some say: "It is too bad the poor Jews have to suffer, but they have it coming to them." On the same ground, which one of us, apart from grace, does not have infinitely more "coming to us?" Then, again, what of the saved Jews in the present suffering in Europe? (We
understand that with saved Gentiles they form the body of Christ, but to the persecuting unsaved world all Jews are alike.) Will not the remnant of the tribulation time suffer though they be righteous? (Cf. the imprecatory psalms). Would the critics say that these godly ones have it coming to them also? Many are satisfied in their thinking, that the Jews are suffering because they have objectionable traits, personal and otherwise. Is not this the same method that Job's friends used? Because these critics do not understand the real reason they feel they must find any petty reason to offer as cause for Israel's trials. Those who lay their sufferings to the crucifixion of Christ feel they have solved the problem satisfactorily. Let it be understood that no words of man can in the least mitigate the guilt that attaches to Israel for the rejection of Christ as noted in the gospel narratives. But are there not features worth noting in this regard? Do not the words of Christ, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" have some bearing on the question? The list of culprits in Acts 4:27 is also illuminating. Still others say that the very plight of Israel proves that they are so sinful God never chose them as His people. If God did not choose them when He said the words of Isaiah 44:1, 2, then He never chose any, believer today when He says, "he chose us in him before: the foundation of the world." We are aware that the choice of Israel is national to earthly privilege and that of the believer is individual to heavenly privilege, but we are speaking now only of the surety and certainty of the divine, sovereign choice. How unfair and cruel and inhumane and unfeeling and harsh, yea, almost savage and barbarous, have been many of the criticisms against Israel! She knows full well how Job felt when pelted with unfeeling words from self-styled physicians.

St. Augustine tells the story of the man who complained to Almighty God about a neighbor, saying, "0 Lord, take away this wicked person!" And God said, "Which?" How foolhardy to judge without the mind of God! He shall bring
to light the hidden things, so we can afford to refrain from the act of judging the suffering and the tried. May God grant that we shall not be found in the role of critic or judge of His suffering people Israel!

Dallas, Texas.

(To be continued in the April-June Number, 1940)

**JOB'S VICTORY**

Job's hour of victory came. The sorrow which endured through the long night was followed by the morning of light and triumph, and up from that ash heap of pain rose the loftiest note of the Old Testament: "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; though my reins be consumed within me" (19 :25-27). . . If Job had said nothing else, that sentence alone would lift him among the stars.

--Cox. Lives That Remind Us, p. 49.
The Book of Job reveals a victory but it is not the victory of man's remarkable reasoning, nor the victory of superior argumentation, but the blessed victory of faith (13:15). This triumph was not won in a moment nor by one leap, but in definite and progressive stages. When the last words of Job are given in chapter 31, his friends are still of their opinion and Job is still of his conviction. The problem is deadlocked, as it were. The argument of the book is summarized in 32:1-3. "So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram: against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God. Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job." Then Elihu comes preparing the way for the words of the Lord which follow. We take his words as appropriate because the Lord utters no rebuke of him later. In a sense he is the answer to Job's burning desire that he might have a Daysman (mochiach, lit. an umpire, arbiter) to stand between God and himself (9:33).

The burden of Elihu's several addresses is: (1) God is infinitely and eternally greater than man in power. In view of this it behooves man to be in a place of submission before his Creator. (2) God is infinitely greater than man in wisdom. He has no need to detail His ways and plans to man, even if man could understand them (33:13). Man does best (when he awaits God's solution which He alone can give and will give when it pleases him. (3) God is infinitely greater than man in righteousness. "Far be it from God, that he should do wickedness; and from the Almighty, that he should
commit iniquity. . . Yea, of a surety, God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert justice" (34:10, 12). It is impossible for us fully to conceive how sinful it is for us to condemn the righteous and just God, or seek to maintain our righteousness at the expense of His. (4) God is infinitely greater than man in His tender mercy (Jas. 5:11). If we could understand the heart of God, we should be convinced that even in Our afflictions which He permits, His heart is most tender and compassionate toward us. After these addresses, God Himself appears. But He is not on the defensive, for He is responsible and amenable to none of His creatures.

JOBS IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Neither the enemy nor the critics dealt properly with Job and his problem; that remains for God alone to do. Job had been afflicted inwardly and outwardly; now God intends to bless him inwardly and outwardly. God does this by asking Job well-nigh one hundred questions. (If one is ever inclined to feel quite exalted in his own mind, we suggest that he read through these questions. It is a most beneficial and deflating experience.) Suffice it to say, that Job failed in all his examination questions. But the result. was blessed, nevertheless. God revealed to Job the omnipotence and omniscience which are God's alone. Nowhere in the Bible have we a more marvellous delineation of the majesty and greatness of God. This revealed to Job his own ignorance (and of earthly, temporal things at that). Then God sets forth the impotence of Job. This was not done to show Job that His ways are totally inscrutable. If so, then why appear at all in this problem if not to solve it Himself? No, the portrayal of the frailty and weakness of Job is meant to given him a clearer conception of the glorious nature of his Creator.

Job's arguments showed that he had an imperfect, or rather an incomplete, view of God. The pivot and climax of the book are verses 5 and 6 of chapter 42. Job says: "I
had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee: Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." This is the height of the piety and faith of the afflicted one when brought to repentance. Job's righteousness was real, for God had boasted of it to Satan. But in the light of God it appeared as nothing. Such is the repentance of the righteous. He might try to clear himself before men; before God this was impossible. The vision of God had turned hearsay into clear vision. Hearsay is that which is taught us, what we receive by tradition or instruction, what might be termed the letter of the truth. (We dare not press this out of bounds, for Job did utter words of faith and truth in chapters 13 and 19). Vision, on the other hand, is that view which is unclouded, undimmed, untrammeled sight, having the eye filled to overflowing with the knowledge of God. That Job did not know God in all the perfection of His Being is clear from the view of God that he now expresses. It is direct and soul-searching experiences together with the realization of God's power, majesty, holiness, love, and goodness that turn hearsay into vision. He sees clearly now that what he had mistaken for the seizure of an enemy was the firm grasp of a friend, and what he thought was the weapon of a foe was the careful and skillful physician who only cuts to heal. The skilled physician may hurt, but he does not injure. Is this not true of our God?

By God's appearing to Job he learnt himself. Once having seen God he sees himself. He sees himself in all his impurity. When the seraphim stand before God they veil their faces before His holiness. When Isaiah saw the Lord he saw his own unclean lips and said, "Woe is me!" When Paul saw Christ he fell to the ground as dead. When Peter saw Christ he said, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." When John saw the Lord he said, "I fell at his feet as dead." In God's sight all our comeliness is turned into corruption; in His purity and whiteness all on earth is polluted and blackness of darkness. To see God as infinite
is to see ourselves as finite. To see Him as perfect is to bring us forcibly to our imperfection. To know Him as all-knowing, the summation of all wisdom, is to realize our ignorance. To acknowledge Him as right is to own ourselves as wrong. To view His holiness is to be smitten with our own sin and contamination. Submission, contrition, and humility should then follow. Job, then, comes forth with a clearer vision of God, a discrediting of self, a rejecting of self-righteousness. When the spiritual and the inward has been cared for, then God showers upon the patriarch the temporal and the outward. He becomes the channel of blessing through his intercession for his friends who had so grievously maligned him, such intercession surely a humilitating thing for them. "And Jehovah turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends; and Jehovah gave Job twice as much as he had before." Job's enemy dealt ill with him; his friends dealt with him as best they could; it is God who ever and always deals best with us. How true, then, the words of the apostle James, "ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end [the final experience that came into the life of Job by the Lord's command and direction] of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful."

ISRAEL IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

That blessedness which was the portion of Job in the presence of God, meeting Him face to face, will be the experience of Israel in a coming day. Zechariah predicts: "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of Supplications; and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born" (12:10). In that selfsame time "there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleaness" (13:1). Job, looking unto God, saw his own undone condition and was cleansed; Israel will see the returning Hope of Israel and
will be fully cleansed. Then shall come to pass the words of Jeremiah: "In those days, and in that time, saith Jehovah, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I leave as a remnant" (50:20). How glorious will be the lot of God's ancient people when Israel is without iniquity and Judah without sins! By the appearing of the Lord to Job, he came to know God as never before; when God appears to Israel, they shall know Him as never before. God's law will be implanted in their hearts after such a fashion, that they will not need to teach their neighbor in the knowledge of the Lord, for they shall all know Him from the least of them to the greatest (Jer. 31:31-34).

By coming face to face with the Lord they will finally understand and know themselves. They will repent in deep sorrow, mourning, and contrition. They will throw to the bats and to the moles all their vaunted self-righteousness. As with Job, their former knowledge of God will appear shallow in comparison with the light of that hour. Job was seeking after God and found Him; so will Israel.

The hour of Job's deliverance was one of the most intense pain, and mental and spiritual anxiety. Such will be the case with Israel. Regathered and settled in the land, the eyes of the confederacies of the Gentile nations will be attracted to her. The confederacy in the north of Europe, that in the south of Europe (the revived Roman empire with its ten kingdoms), that of the kings of the sun-rising, and the king of the north of Palestine will sweep down upon the defenseless land with rapacity and avarice, to make of her a spoil. Zechariah foretold that all the nations would be gathered together against the holy city of Jerusalem to make war with her. Israel has had many a dark hour in her national history; this will be the worst of all and the culmination of them all. She will have her time of trouble and trial but God's Word is sure that she will be saved out of it (Jer. 30:7).
Israel will then, as Job, know increased prosperity as never before. "Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages without walls, by reason of the multitude of men and cattle therein. . . grain shall make the young men flourish, and new wine the virgins" (Zech. 2:4, 5; 9:16, 17). That will be the time when Israel will become a channel of blessing to others. First Job was blessed, then his friends through him. The order is the same with Israel and the Gentiles. As Psalm 67 puts it: when Jehovah blesses Israel, it will follow that all the ends of the earth will fear Him. Israel will enter actually into the fulfillment of God's original purpose for her--a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exod. 19:5, 6). Ten men out of all the languages of the nations shall lay hold of the Jew and desire to go with him, recognizing that God is with him. Job is a wonderful character; Israel is a remarkable people; but oh, how blessed is God above all! He is ready to forgive and pardon and receive. This God is our blessed, daily portion.

The problem of Job is solved; that of Israel will be too. Then it will be seen that afflictions try piety as well as iniquity. Trials develop faith. Hardships lead to clearer! views of God. Tribulations draw the soul nearer to God. What was formerly considered an unbearable burden is seen to be an abiding blessing. What matters it, then, if God permit us to be delivered into the hands of the enemy, or allow us to be subjected to the vitriolic ministrations of physicians of no value, as long as at the end of it all we may have that meeting with Him face to face, to minister to our every need? Thrice blessed be God for Himself and for His all-sufficient provisions!

Dallas, Texas.
INTRODUCTION

Within the short period of less than half a century (1887-1929) the scholarly world was placed under heavy debt to two peasants. Through a peasant woman at Tell El-Amarna in Egypt the valuable Amarna Tablets were brought to light (1887, and through the plowing of an Alaouite peasant at Ugarit in Syria the even more important Ras Shamra texts were later unearthed by the French archaeologist Schaeffer (1929)." The texts resulting from these discoveries date from a period about the middle of the second millennium B.C. The findings at Ras Shamra have opened to us the vast extent of the Canaanite civilization: its society, commerce, political institutions, and religion.1 These had formerly been only imperfectly known through allusions in the Hebrew Bible and from Greek sources. As study progresses much light is being thrown not only upon Hebrew lexicography, grammar, and poetry, but also upon the cultural milieu in which Israel came to live in Canaan.

The task of comparing the Biblical literature with the Ras Shamra alphabetic texts is an exacting one and has many ramifications. The purpose of this article is to compare the poetic structure of both literatures. The matters

of similarities and differences in grammar, vocabulary, and concepts will occupy us in future studies.

HEBREW METRICS

Though unanimity has not been achieved on all points and much remains yet to be done, the study of Hebrew meter has made definite advance. Some of the early deliverances on the subject were those of Josephus and Philo, who held that Hebrew poetry had meter. Whether they were judging by Greek models or not, as some affirm, it is impossible to determine. Toward the end of the eighteenth century Lowth made his contribution to the study in his lectures at Oxford. To him we are indebted for characterizing the basic relationship in Hebrew verse as parallelismus membro-rum. This phenomenon had been noticed before him by Ibn Ezra (twelfth century) and Kimchi (thirteenth century), but the latter had not designated it in the clear fashion which Lowth did. Lowth also maintained that the utterances of the prophets especially, as well as other parts of the Hebrew Bible, were originally in metrical form. Subsequent study has borne out the validity of this position. His shortcomings were that he drew his examples from Greek and Latin sources, since he was not conversant with Oriental literature as such, and that, though he recognized the Hebrew poets must have had metrical rules, he felt it was impossible to ascertain them now.

Because of the rich discoveries of the past century through archaeological campaigns in the Near East, comparisons were made possible with Babylonian and Assyrian, as well as Egyptian, poetry. Assyrian poems, like the Epic of Creation and the Descent of Ishtar, reveal that the Accadians had a regular metric system and that the meter was accentual.

2 The statements of Josephus are not pertinent to Job, because Ant. II 16.1 refers to the song of Exodus 15; Ant. IV 8.44 to Deuteronomy 32; and Ant. VI 12.3 to hymns composed by David.
4 For his definition of this phrase cf. R. Lowth, op. cit., pp. 35, 43, and 157.
Usually the couplets were of two bicola (four hemistichs), each with a caesura. Delitzsch and Zimmern showed that the bicolon was 2 plus 2. Some of the poems manifest a complex strophic arrangement as well as a refrain, as in the Ishtar and Saltu poem.\(^6\) The strophes are quatrains with four bicola. When dealing with the Assyrian poems, we must keep in mind that much of the Accadian poetry has been translated from a Sumerian original.\(^7\) Not only is the meter of Assyrian poetry accentual, but, as Erman has shown, that of Egyptian poetry was also. Generally the meter was 3 plus 3 or 2 plus 2. The period of greatest development in prosody in Egypt and Babylonia was during the Twelfth Dynasty (c. 1989-1776 according to Edgerton's revised low chronology).

The work of Ley and Sievers, along with Budde, Duhm, and others, was destined to lay the foundation for later strides in the study of Hebrew metrics. Over a period of some twenty years Ley occupied himself with the subject and published three basic works.\(^8\) Sievers set out to find the rhythm of Hebrew poetry and to judge the Hebrew meter from it.\(^9\) The conclusion was that Hebrew did not count syllables, that is, it was not quantitative in the strict sense of the term, but depended upon the number of accents. Lyric meter was found to be 2 plus 2 (Canticles), dirge (qinah) is 3 plus 2 (Lamentations), and epic or didactic is 3 plus 3 (Job and Proverbs).

\(^7\) W. F. Albright, BASOR, 91, 1943, p. 44.
\(^8\) J. Ley, Die metrischen Formen der hebräischen Poesie, 1886 (here much emphasis was placed on alliteration as a metric form of Hebrew poetry); Grundzüge des Rhythmus, des Vers- und Strophenbaues in der hebräischen Poesie, 1875. (esp. pp. 8-15 on accent as the principle of Hebrew meter); and Leitfaden der Metrik der hebräischen Poesie, 1887.
\(^9\) E. Sievers, Studien zur hebräischen Metrik, 1901. The two basic laws of his system may be summarized thus: (1) no more than four unaccented syllables may accompany an accented syllable, so that a word with five syllables would have two stresses; (2) the accented syllable follows the unaccented ones and may not in turn be followed by more than a single unstressed syllable. Cf. G. B. Gray, Forms of Hebrew Poetry, pp. 143-144.
THE POETRY OF JOB

Before entering into a more detailed treatment of the poetry of Job, we note the view of Bickell and, more recently, Holscher, because it differs from the position just stated that the meter of Job is 3 plus 3.10 These scholars, judging the Biblical material from Syriac patterns where the law of accentuation places the tone on the penult, seek to construct a system of quatrains for the Book of Job. Bickell holds that the strophe of the book is "durchgangig je zwei siebensilbige, rhythmischjambische, inhaltlich parallele Verszeilen zu einem Doppelverse, und zwei von diesen zu einer Strophe verbindet."11 The arrangements resulting from these attempts are not only quite subjective, but require much emendation of the text. Rigid conformity to one pattern is not possible throughout the whole poem, as we shall see.

What type of poetry is Job? Is it drama, Greek tragedy, a didactic poem, or an epic poem? No one will deny that the book has dramatic action, but the action in the prologue and epilogue is subordinate to the main purpose of the work. Nor can we call Job a Greek tragedy for, among other distinctions, there is nothing in it to answer to the interspersed choral odes. Though its subject matter is of a didactic nature, it is not a didactic poem, for its differences from the poetry of the Book of Proverbs are clear. It is definitely an epic poem, treating of a lofty theme with unity and some progress in the action.12

This poem, the longest in the Old Testament, is unique in that it combines prose and poetry and utilizes the dialogue, the narrative being in prose and the dialogue in poetry. In the historical books of the Hebrew Bible, as well as in the prophetic books, we have the combination of prose and poetry, but not in the same manner as Job. Dialogue may

10 G. Holscher, Syrische Verskunst, 1932, esp. pp. 49-123, and Das Buch Hiob, 1937, esp. pp. 3, 4, 8. His position, as far as Job is concerned, is that the poem follows the same metric system as the Syriac.
11 G. Bickell, Das Buch Hiob, p. 11.
12 R. Dussaud, RP, 1937, p. 216, thinks Ras Shamra has what Hebrew and Arabic poetry lack; namely, epic poetry. Surely Job can be placed in the category of the epics.
be found in the Song of Solomon (for example, 2:1-3), but it is not employed in the same type of discussion.

Attempts have been made to find parallels to the Book of Job in Semitic literature. The Babylonian poem on the righteous sufferer, the so-called Babyloman Job, has been compared to the Biblical Job. Even a cursory reading of the Babylonian selection reveals that the resemblances are slight, while the differences are considerable. The cuneiform poem is, moreover, monologue and not dialogue. Among the Assyrian texts published by Ebeling he entitles one **Ein babylonischer Kohelet**, but Dhorme thinks the relationship to Job is closer, although he is not dogmatic on the point. The selection contains a discussion of the problem of evil and bears some striking parallels to Job. It is composed in twenty-seven strophes and employs the dialogue. Our Judgment would be that a closer parallel to the subject matter of Job must still be sought. As to the use of the dialogue in epic poetry, both a Babylonian and an Egyptian source have been posited. The "Descent of Ishtar" has been compared with Job, because in both dialogue is introduced into epic. "The Sayings of Amenemope" has been suggested as the Egyptian source of the dialogue." These maxims are arranged in thirty chapters, and are counsels directed to Amenemope's youngest son, who was priest in the Temple of Min in Panopolis. In form they scarcely parallel Job. Comparisons with the philosophical dialogue of the Greeks are not relevant.

The 3 plus 3 meter in the Book of Job is unmistakable. Whether it be in the cycles of addresses of Job and his friends or in the Elihu monologue or in the Jehovah speeches, the predominant epic meter is clear. Jerome had spoken of "the hexameters" of Job 3:2 to 42:6 in distinguishing the prose from the poetry. There is no serious disagreement

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with this view, apart from the position of Bickell and Holscher discussed above. The three basic parallelisms—synonymous, antithetic, and synthetic or constructive—appear in the text, with the great majority of the last type and few of the second type. An example of each will suffice.

Synonymous parallelism, Job 8:3:
Will God pervert justice,
Or will Shaddai pervert righteousness?

Antithetic parallelism, Job 8:7:
Though your beginning was small,
Yet your latter end will be very great.

Synthetic parallelism, Job 5:19:
In six troubles he will deliver you,
And in seven no evil will touch you.

Though the prevailing rhythm of Job is that of the balanced bicolon with three accents to each colon, rigid uniformity is not maintained throughout the poem. Attempts to impose such uniformity have been unsatisfactory. On the other hand, variations are comparatively few and must be dealt with cautiously.¹⁷ Ley, according to Budde, claimed to be able to find 800 bicola out of 1,000 verses.¹⁸ The presence of tricola can be explained as resulting from the poetic freedom and skill of the writer. Most of the alleged examples, however, are doubtful or open to suspicion. Those in Job 3:4, 5, 6, and 9 probably arise from disturbance in the text. Possible examples are 7:11; 8:6; 19:12; 38:41; and 39:25. What appears to be a tricolon of 2 plus 2 plus 2 in 9:21 disappears when we see the probability that the first two words are vertical dittography from line 20. Few cases of 3 plus 2 and 4 plus 3 rhythm are original, while 3 plus 4; 4 plus 4; and 2 plus 2 are very rare. However, there are too many variations from the dominant rhythm to allow the conclusion that none of them is original.

¹⁷ B. Gray, AJSL, 36, 1919-20, pp. 95-102. His emendations are not convincing.
When we examine the bicolon more closely, we find a number of variations in the sentence structure. While the literary form a b c--a b d occurs in the Hebrew Bible, there are no examples in the Book of Job. The common harmonic sequence in Job is a b c--a' b' c'. Variations from this pattern occur, but we shall occupy ourselves with the bicolon most frequent in the poem. Following Gordon's arrangement,19 we allow s, v, o, p, and x to represent subject, verb, object, prepositional phrase, and adverb or any miscellaneous particle. Analysis shows that these harmonic imbalances are present: pv pv, 4:9,
"By the breath of God they perish,
And by the blast of his anger they are destroyed";
vsp vsp, 6:5 (also 8:11),
"Brays the wild ass upon (when he has) the grass,
Or lows the ox over his fodder?"
pvo pvo, 7:2 (also 26:12),
"As a servant that desires the shade,
And as a hireling awaits his wages";
ovo ovo, 10:11,
"(With) skin and flesh thou dost clothe me,
And with bones and sinews thou dost knit me together";
and vpo vpo, 15:33,
"He shall shake off as the vine his unripe grape,
And he shall cast off as the olive-tree his flower."
Instances could be multiplied, but variety, even within certain types of bicola, is clear. We are coming to realize increasingly that Hebrew prosody was much more complex than formerly recognized.20 Early in this century Arnold held that "The rhythmopoia of Hebrew is, as we should expect, of the simplest and crudest description."21 His pronouncement is not borne out by subsequent studies.

In concluding our discussion of the poetry of Job, we

may note that the poem employs alliteration and assonance (6:14, 16, 25), rhyme (10:8-18; 39:3), and paronomasia.\textsuperscript{22} Rhyme, like strophe (see 31:5-10; 37:9-10), is only an occasional form of Hebrew poetry. Efforts have been made to divide large portions of Job strophically, as in Bickell’s system, but the results are subjective and arbitrary.

\textbf{UGARITIC POETRY}

With the finding of the Ras Shamra texts we have poetry which comes from a cultural and literary setting more closely related to Hebrew poetry than either the Babylonian or Egyptian. We do well to remember also that the cuneiform tablets have not undergone the copyings which the Hebrew poetic books have. In the short period in which the mythological poems of Ugarit have been studied, certain distinctive features of the prosody have been noted. Like Hebrew poetry, Ugaritic poetry is accentual. It is characterized by parallelism with the common rhythm of three accents to a colon. Examples are numerous so we confine ourselves to one case. 49 (I AB) III 6, 7:

\begin{verbatim}
날ーム תלך נחמ

The heavens rain oil;
The wadies run with honey.
\end{verbatim}

Not only is the bicolon frequent, but the tricolon is common as well. A case in point is 49 VI 27.

Though the poetry was not quantitative in the strict sense, as we understand it from Indo-European models, there appears to have been an attempt at counting syllables. Words vary from two to four, and even five, syllables. Cases with more than four are rare. Verbs with double energetic nun appear to have five syllables: תדרית and תדרית in 49 II 32 and 33. The number in each colon varied from eight to ten syllables, with the commonest at nine. If the second member of a bicolon omitted a word found in the first, there was added in

\textsuperscript{22} I. M. Casanowicz (\textit{Paronomasia in the Old Testament}) cites 52 examples (pp. 91-92) of this literary device in Job.
the former one or more words to counterbalance the latter, a "ballast variant" as Gordon calls it.\textsuperscript{23} A list of such devices shows how largely it entered into Ugaritic versification. Albright explains the fact thus, "The regularity in the number of syllables must be connected with the fact that these poems were chanted with simple melodies adapted to regular poetic syllabification, not as psalms and liturgies are chanted today in ecclesiastical music, where almost any number of syllables can be accommodated to the melody.\textsuperscript{24}

As in Job, the Ugaritic poetry manifests variations from the parallel cola with three beats. Dussaud, after referring to the dominant rhythm in Phoenician poetry, holds that when a colon of two accents follows two cola with three stresses each, it is always by the intention of the poet. The uneven colon marks the pause or punctuation.\textsuperscript{25} Besides the tricola, Ginsberg marks other divergences from the bicolon: single (extra-metric) words, as יִרְעַן in 49 III 8; single (extra-metric) lines,\textsuperscript{26} as the oft-repeated בַּעַר הַגָּשִׁים; run-on lines; apocopated end-lines; and rhyme, as יְדוֹ and יְדוֹן in 67 VI 17-21.\textsuperscript{27}

Ugaritic poetry enjoys a wide variety of harmonic balances within verses. The poets of Ras Shamra endeavored by artistic devices to avoid monotony, and the result is an elaborate system of sentence structure. Gordon has listed twenty-six different types of verses, and this number does not exhaust the possibilities.

Before we summarize the similarities between the poetry of Job and the Ugaritic texts, we call attention to some differences. First, there is nothing in Job that answers to the long sections in Ugaritic poetry which are repeated twice. Second, the verse-form a b c-a b d common in the cuneiform texts is completely lacking in Job. Third, Ugaritic poetry

\textsuperscript{23} C. H. Gordon, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 83, 84.
\textsuperscript{24} W. F. Albright, \textit{BASOR}, 91, 1943, pp 43-44.
\textsuperscript{26} Such extra-metric lines are found in Job 4:1; 6:1; 8:1; etc.
\textsuperscript{27} H. L. Ginsberg, \textit{Orientalia}, N.S., 5, 1936, p. 171.
makes use of refrain (49 VI 16-22) as well as strophic ar-
rangements (51 IV 52-57). Job has no example of the for-
mer, and the occasional examples of the latter in the book
are not so extended as the Ugaritic patterns.

The similarities between the poetry of Job and the Ras
Shamra literature may now be summarized briefly. (1) Par-
allelism, with its repetition, marks both literatures. (2) The
3 plus 3 meter based on accented syllables is the dominant one
for both. (3) Lines vary as to the number of words, and
words differ in the number of syllables they contain. The
corollary to this fact is that neither Hebrew nor Ugaritic
poetry is quantitative in the strict sense. (4) There does
seem to be a conscious effort to keep lines approximately to
(the same quantity. (5) Rhythms vary in both literatures,
so that change in rhythm cannot be interpreted as "the blend-
ing of different poems." 28 Rigid uniformity is not to be im-
posed on either the Hebrew or Ugaritic poems. (6) The sen-
tence structure within verses reveals great artistic skill.
Prose order does not apply; the elements of the verse may be
found in any order.

Definite points of contact, then, between Hebrew and
Ugaritic poetry cannot be denied. Indeed, the relationship is
closer than that which exists between Hebrew poetry and
that of Mesopotamia and Egypt.

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THE BOOK OF JOB AND ITS DOCTRINE OF GOD

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A few years ago, there was a man of the East--the eastern United States, that is--named Archibald MacLeish. And he wrote a rather famous play called J. O. B., taking his theme from that ancient man from a distant eastern country, Job. The play was in no sense a commentary on Job, and it gave a radically different treatment of the problems of the relation of God, man and evil. But at least we may say that MacLeish's choice of his title underlines the perennial fascination of the book of Job, even to those who may not agree with its teaching and conclusions. It is in every respect a great book. It deals with some of the deepest problems of man and directs us to the existence of a sovereign God for their solution. It treats these problems not in a doctrinaire fashion, but wrestles with them and gives us answers to proclaim to a troubled age, to a generation that recognizes the antinomies of life, but cannot find a meaningful solution for them. We hope in these studies to see how the ancient godly philosopher and prophet explores deeply the basic questions of life and offers to the man of faith answers far wiser than much which passes for wisdom today. But first to turn to some technical questions.

The Date of Job

Probably the most common view of the date of Job in conservative circles has been that the book is very old. For example, the Scofield Reference Bible points to the patriarchal period. The Jewish tradition enshrined in the Talmud (Baba Bathra 14b) says Moses was its author. This Jewish tradition is quite late. The Talmud was not codified until

The material in this article was originally presented at Grace Theological Seminary as comprising the Louis S. Bauman Memorial Lectures, February 8-11, 1972.
the 5th century A. D., and our manuscripts of it come from a still later period. The tradition may have some value however. It may not be that the data on authorship was correctly remembered by the Jews but that they came to the conclusion of early authorship from various factors that we too can observe.

That there was an ancient worthy by the name of Job is sure a from Ezekiel 14:14, 20, which mentions him along with Noah and Daniel. The reference is similar to that in Jeremiah 15:1, which uses Moses and Samuel as ancient types of righteousness. It used to be remarked that the verses in Ezekiel mean little because Daniel is one of the trio, and the book of Daniel is now regularly placed in the second century B. C. We are, of course, not willing to concede the late date of Daniel. A newly discovered Targum, a Targum of Job, interestingly, argues that the Aramaic of Daniel does not reflect the language of the second century B. C. in Palestine as has been so widely believed. It is claimed that this Targum of Job was translated about 100 B. C. and shows a later stage of Aramaic than Ezra or Daniel. In any case, this passage in Ezekiel is no longer held to be against the early date of Job, for the reference to Daniel is now differently understood. It is now said that the Daniel of Ezekiel refers not to the canonical Daniel, but to the Daniel mentioned in the Ugaritic Texts as an ancient wise man, the father of the hero, Aqhat. Here again, we may enter a disclaimer. The Daniel of Ugarit is quite different from the righteous man of Ezekiel 14. Actually Ezekiel does not appeal to these men because they were ancient, but because they were righteous. But in any case, the verses do assure us that Ezekiel, about 600 B. C., did know the story of Job.

The only other external evidence for the antiquity of the book would come from cross references and allusions in other Biblical books. Proverb 3:11 is one such passage, with the wording quite similar to Job 5:27. Job says, "Despise not the chastening of the Almighty." Proverbs says, "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord." The wording of the two passages is identical in Hebrew, except that Job has the divine name, Shaddai, which it very frequently uses, and Proverbs uses the more common name, the Tetragram. It also adds a characteristic proverbial touch, "my son." The force of such a parallel is debatable, because it is hard to know which book quoted the other, granted that there was some verbal dependence. The whole chapter is an encomium of wisdom in terms of a search for wisdom in places which only God knows. The conclusion is that "the fear of the Lord that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." This conclusion is quite like Proverbs 1:7; 9:10; 15:33 and Psalm 111:10. Again the question is, did Job build a beautiful poem on the subject of wisdom as defined in Proverbs and use it in his context? Or did Proverbs and the Psalms take a theme already developed in Job and allude to it in various verses? We
cannot be sure, but it does seem a little more probable that Proverbs and Psalms did the borrowing. The matter is somewhat complicated by the problem of the position of Job 28 itself. Critical commentators feel that the whole chapter is intrusive. It is indeed distinctive, but there is no need to object to such a poem being included in Job's asseveration of his righteousness. Actually the chapter is an important part of Job's argument. It builds up to a great climax in which Job establishes his ethical- and moral standard.

Another parallel is between Job 71:17 and Psalm 8:5. Job says, “What is man that you magnify him? The Psalm says, "What is man that you remember him?" The word "man" in each case is the less used word for man, 'enosh making literary interdependence more likely. Another parallel is Job 2:13 and Proverbs 10:28. Job says, "The hope I of a profane man shall perish." Proverbs puts it, "The hope of a wicked man shall perish." The two statements differ only in the words for a wicked man. The word "profane" is found several times in Job. It would be more natural for the somewhat unusual word to be found in the original passage. Another parallel is Isaiah 19:5 with Job 14:11. The last half of each verse "the waters shall fail from the sea" is identical. The verses are in different contexts, however, and it would be it hard to prove which is copied from the other. Another passage showing a literary parallel is the section in which Job curses his day (Job 3:1-11). Jeremiah does likewise (Jer. 20:14-18). Driver, referring to this passage, quotes Dillmann as arguing that Job is earlier because more powerful and vivid. Driver questions this conclusion because, he says, Job was written by a greater poet in any case (Introduction to the Literature of the O.T., New York: Doubleday, ed. of 1896, p. 408). One could now support Dillman's argument by reference to allusions in this passage to Ugaritic motifs (Vs. 8 refers to Leviathan) of which we shall speak again later. Also, there is a parallel between Job 18 :5, 6 and Proverbs 13:9. Driver believes that Bildad borrowed from Proverbs. But Bildad has a four line poem against the "lamp of the wicked." Proverbs uses only this one phrase as a contrast to the bright shining of the lamp of the righteous. It is just as likely, perhaps more so, that Proverbs did the borrowing.

There are also interesting verbal parallels of Job 27:1 and 29:1 with Numbers 23:7, 18; 24:3, 15. Four times the book of Numbers says Balaam "took up his parable and said." It is probable that the verbal parallel is only due to a common linguistic usage. But it is interesting to date that the parallel is with Balaam, another man of the eastern area, and one living in Moses' day. To sum up, there are a few interesting verbal parallels with Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, and the Balaam oracles. These are not conclusive, but incline somewhat toward a pre-monarchy date for the writing.
There is also considerable internal evidence for a pre-monarchy date, or even for Mosaic times. This evidence is of two kinds--comparison of the book with Biblical data and comparison with the general archaeological picture of early times. On the first point, it has been widely noticed that the picture of Job's sacrificial ritual is like that of the patriarchs and bears no relation to the tabernacle ritual of Moses' day and later. Job served as a priest in his own house, as Abraham did, and as Melchizedek seems to have done. Of course, this may have been due to Job's locale as a righteous man off in the East believing in Israel's God, but not allied with Israel. But it is easier to say that the scene is patriarchal. At the same time, the book mentions names of the patriarchal circle. The land of Uz was presumably named after Abraham's nephew (Gen. 22:21) and Elihu the Buzite belonged to the clan headed by the brother of Oz. Bildad the Shuhite was a descendant of Abraham himself, by Keturah (Gen. 25:2). Presumably, the reason this record got into the circle of Israel's scriptures is that Job and his people were distant cousins of the Israelites. We may even get a glimpse here of those other godly men of Abraham's day who like Melchizedek, worshipped the true God though they were not in Abraham's immediate family. When God called Abraham to found the theocracy, there were others around who shared Abraham's faith.

There is another ancient touch, hard to evaluate. It is the use of the divine name Shaddai. This and Eloah are the characteristic names for God in Job and are used sparingly elsewhere. Shaddai occurs some thirty times in Job, six times in the Pentateuch and seldom elsewhere. The matter is complicated first because we are not sure of its origin, and secondly, critics have argued that the P document teaches in Exodus 6:3 that all instances of "Jehovah" before Moses are anachronistic and are therefore useful for separating out Pentateuchal documents.

Personally, I am of the opinion that the word is borrowed from the Akkadian or Amorite and was indeed used early in Israel's history. I feel the derivation from the word for "breast" is fanciful and does not explain what seems to be an archaic Lemedh-He ending. The hard "d" need not be a doubling, but a preservation of the old Akkadian pronunciation which had no soft "d." And the Akkadian shalu means mountain, which would be a very suitable expression of the eternality of God. The Psalmist often applies the Hebrew word, mountain, zur to God. If this be the etymology of the word, its use would be an archaic touch. We need not agree with critical source division of Genesis to believe that "Jehovah" was more widely used in late Hebrew than in early times. It may have been a Hebrew word and if so, would have been less used by the patriarchs who learned Canaanite as their second language. It is notable that none of the patriarchal families use the
element Jehovah in their names. Shaddai—names also are rare, though the two we know are Pentateuchal, Zurishaddai and Shedeur.

There is little else internally to date the book. The mention of domesticated camels in 1:3 would indicate to the Albright school that the book was later than the 13th century. But the date of domestication of camels is in dispute. It may be that in the settled areas camels were not common, but that nomads of the desert used them earlier. At least Abraham also had his camels. The mention of iron (19:24; 20:24; 28:2; 40:18; 41:27) also might indicate a date after 1200 B.C. when the iron age began. But the occasional mention of iron at an earlier day is not surprising for iron was used in small amounts long before the discovery of better methods of iron working which made its use common in about 1200 B.C. Two talents of iron—about 150 pounds—are mentioned in a Ugaritic tablet from Moses' day. Marvin Pope, in his Anchor Bible Commentary on Job, points out that the unit of money (or item of jewelry) mentioned Job 4:11 qēsita is mentioned elsewhere only in Gen. 33:19 and its parallel, Josh. 24:32. Job's longevity also—140 years after his trial—is of the patriarchal vintage.

Secondly, as to the historical background of Job, it seems to fit well with ideas and literature of the second millennium B.C. Pope remarks that "the ideas championed by Job's friends were normative in Mesopotamian theology from the early second millennium B.C." (p. XXXV) and he compares several works on suffering: From Egypt, the Dispute over Suicide and the Tale of the Eloquent Peasant, and from Mesopotamia, a lament called by S. N. Kramer The First Job. The Akkadian work I will Praise the Lord of Wisdom, also called The Babylonian Job, describes a sufferer who recovers, and the Dialogue About Human Misery sometimes called the Babylonian Ecclesiastes is on a similar topic. Pope offers extracts from these works. They can be read conveniently in ANET. It should be noted that these works consider the problem of suffering, as does the book of Job, but their answer is quite different. Pope is accurate in stating that they agree by and large with the viewpoint of the three comforters. That is, they teach that wickedness brings suffering and righteousness blessing. But the real answer of Job was distinctive and far above his comforters and different from these early treatments. However, it is of importance to notice that the Subject received extensive treatment in early times and thus Job fits well against the background of that day.

Many, however, including Pope, have given a later date. Pfeiffer (Introduction to the O. T. ) gives a date of about 600 B.C. Driver dated think "most probably to the period of the Babylonian captivity" (Introduction to the Literature of the O. T., New York: Scribner's ed. of 1892, p. 405). A. Bentzen is uncertain. He places the date of the book
after the discussion of retribution in Ezekiel 18 and before the refer-
cences to "the prophet Job who maintained all the ways of righteousness" ft, in Ecclesiasticus 49:9. (Introduction to the O.T. 4th ed. Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gad, 1958 Vol. II, p. 179). Eissfeldt is not positive, but says "we should probably think of the post-exilic period, and perhaps most probably of the later period rather than the earlier, i. e., about the fourth century. The language of the book fits in with this, for it often reveals an Aramaic coloring," (The O.T., an Introduction tr. by Peter R. Ackroyd, New York: Harper, 1965, p. 470). Both Eissfeldt's date and his arguments seem now to be invalidated by the Dead Sea Scrolls and better knowledge of the Aramaic language. Fragments of Job are found among the Dead Sea Scrolls actually dating from about 200 B. C. They are written in the paleo-Hebrew Script implying that there was a considerable history of copying behind them. And now to the further surprise of many, the Targum referred to above, an Aramaic transla-
tion of Job, has been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. The copy is from about A. D. 50, but the translation itself is dated by the editors at about 100 B. C. Evidently Job was already a loved and famous book in the second century B.C.

More scholars have now veered toward a pre-exilic date. Al-
bright dated it in "the sixth or fifth century B. C." (Supplement to Vetus Testamentum 3, 1960, p. 14). Pope hesitatingly suggests the seventh century B. C. before the movements that brought the destruction of Israel (p. xxxvii) as the date of the dialogue but does not commit himself on the unity of the book. As we hope to show later, there are cross references from the main body of the book to every other part. There is therefore no need to question its unity and to say that it existed for centuries in partial form. Some have declared that the references to Satan betray Persian influence. Strange then that there are no Persian words in the book! Satan is a name of Hebrew derivation, not Persian. Actually, the theology of the book should not be used as a datum for dating because opinions will differ as to whether advanced theology indicates late borrowing or early revelation.

It would be nice if the language of Job could be used to indicate the date, but we do not have contemporary Hebrew--or eastern--dialects to use as a standard. The language of Job is difficult and must be dis-
cussed shortly, but it has been variously evaluated and can give us little help on the problem of dating.

In the absence of definite evidences for late dating and in view of numerous indications of a patriarchal milieu, it seems possible to hold to a Mosaic or slightly pre-Mosaic date in accord with much old Jewish and Christian sentiment. However, the New Testament does not speak on either Job's authorship or date, and the date is not of theological
concern. We may therefore hold our conclusion provisionally expecting further light, especially from linguistic studies.

Job and the Canon

In our Hebrew Bibles, Job is the second or the third book in the third division called the writings. Practically all the works on O. T. introduction, both conservative and critical, trace this three-fold division back as far as the prologue to Ecclesiasticus about 130 B. C. Critical scholars suppose that the third division in the canon was placed last in the collection because it was latest in time. The canon is said to have developed in three stages with the law being canonized first at about 400 B.C., the prophets second at 200 B.C., and the writings last at about A. D. 90. This final canonization was the work of the council of Jamnia. The idea is that the books of the third division were not generally enough accepted to be included in the second division at 200 B. C., On this view, Job was finished at least at a relatively late date and attained canonical status only after 200 B. C. Some more recent scholars who would place Job in pre-exilic times do not face the question as to why it was not included in the earlier canonical divisions.

Conservative scholars like E. J. Young and R. K. Harrison suggest that the tri-partite division was due to different types of authorship, rather than to different stages of canonization. (E. J. Young, An Introduction to the O.T., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949, p. 41; R. K. Harrison, Introduction to the O.T., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969, p. 284.) The claim is that the second division was written by prophets and the third division by men who had the prophetic gift, but not the prophetic office. This characterization would apparently apply to the author of Job. I have elsewhere argued against this view (R. L. Harris, Inspiration and Canonicity of the Bible, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957, pp-129ff, 170ff). There is no biblical support for the distinction made between a prophet by office and a prophet by gift. Of course, in the case of Job, the matter is the more uncertain because, if Job were not the author, we have no valid information as to who was. Ecclesiasticus speaks of "the prophet Job" but his witness is too late to help, except that it reveals the attitude of Judaism of the second century B. C. Harrison relieves the problem somewhat by emphasizing the self-authenticating character of the Biblical books. These books and no others Won their way first into Hebrew hearts, and therefore into the Jewish canon. Job is surely a book that would have commanded wide acceptance by the people of God.

A further point, however, is important and is usually neglected by O. T. students. It is by no means certain that the division of books
found in Our Hebrew Bibles is the division common among the ancient Jews. Indeed, there is positive evidence that it was not. The present three-fold division with five books in the law, eight in the prophets, and eleven in the writings, cannot be traced back of the Talmud which was codified in the fifth century. There is a three-fold division mentioned in Ecclesiasticus, as stated above, but there is no proof that it was our three-fold division. On the contrary, Josephus, earlier than the Talmud, evidences a differing three-fold division with five books in the law, thirteen in the prophets, and only four in the writings. From his terminology, it is clear that Josephus regarded such a book as Job—also Chronicles, Daniel and others—as among the prophets. This evidence fits much better the reference in Ecclesiasticus to Job as a prophet and in Matthew 24:15 to Daniel as a prophet. Far too long, the Talmud has been used as the point of reference in canonical studies. Earlier Witness leads to quite different results.

Actually the three-fold division of the canon was not the only one. The N. T., the LXX and the Qumran evidence combine to show that there was also an ancient two-fold division of the canon into the Law and the prophets. This too I have argued elsewhere and need not pursue. But, according to this division, Job would have been from early times accorded the place of a prophetic book. As a consequence, we cannot use the position of Job in the Hebrew Bible to argue either for a late or early date of its composition. Job was accepted, as far as our scanty evidence goes, from the time of its writing. If its prophetic authorship were acknowledged then, as it was believed later, this would doubtless have settled the matter of the acceptance of the book. In any case, the majesty of the style of Job and its other marks of divine inspiration would have commended itself to the ancient Hebrews. We need not doubt that it was accepted as canonical from the time of its writing, although the details are lost in the mists of antiquity.

The Language of Job

It is agreed on all sides that Job is a great book, as well as a beautiful one. It is also agreed by students beginning work in Hebrew poetry that Job is a difficult book to translate. Those who specialize in statistics say that there are more *hapax legomena* used in Job than in any other O. T. book. And the problems of translation are not entirely lexical either. There are unusual forms and some strange usages which, unless recognized, will lead the translator astray. An extreme example: of the difficulty of translation is exhibited in the strange verse of the A V in 36:33. "The noise of it showeth concerning it; the cattle also concerning the vapor"—a verse which as it stands is quite meaningless! The language is so unusual that some (F. H. Foster referred to in M. Pope, *Job*: The Anchor Bible, Garden City: Doubleday, 1965, p. XLIV
hereafter called: Pope, Job) have supposed that the book was written in Arabic and what we have is a translation into Hebrew. If this be true, I would suggest that the translator did a poor job of rendering the work into Hebrew! On the face of it, such a view is unnatural. The first written Arabic we have is from the 5th century A.D., and the first literature of any extent comes after the Hejira. It would be odd if our only monument of ancient written Arabic were in Hebrew!

It is true, however, that there are some words in Job that are neatly explained by reference to Arabic. For instance in 23:9, the words "work" and "hide" in the AV may be derived from words meaning "turn" in the Arabic. Also the word "drops" in the AV of 38:28, "the drops of dew" is found elsewhere only in Arabic. Again in 30:7, 17, the word for "flee" or "rest" in the AV and found only here has an Arabic cognate "gnaw." (Though the sense hardly fits--to gnaw the wilderness! Commentators must supply something!) Actually, the Syriac has the same word, so an Arabic origin is not proved. Indeed, this example shows the difficulty of proving an Arabic original for a word. A root may be known at present only in Arabic and in Job, but our known vocabulary of ancient Aramaic is woefully small and the word in question may have been used in Aramaic also. Only occasionally can the phonetic differences between Aramaic, Arabic and other languages be used to identify the original language of the word concerned.

An example may be given from Job 35:10. The word "songs" of AV is translated by Pope as "protection" deriving it from the Arabic root *d m r* "who gives protection in the night." But the root also is now recognized in this sense in Ugaritic as a name of Baal (though not so recognized in Cyrus Gordon's *Ugaritic Textbook, Glossary*) (Pope, *Job* in loc.).

A word on the place of Aramaic. There have been others who thought Job was written in Aramaic and translated into Hebrew. On the face of it, this view would be more natural, for Aramaic was used to the east and north of Palestine in pre-exilic times. According to Genesis 31:47, Laban spoke Aramaic and it would be quite possible to hold that Job did too. There are several Aramaic touches in the book. In 16:19, the same pair of words for witness is found, as is used by Jacob and by Laban in Genesis 31:47, Galeed and Jegar-Sahadutha, and the word *sahed* is used nowhere else in the Bible. Students of beginning Hebrew will be relieved to find that the verb *qatal* does occur in Biblical Hebrew--twice in Job and once in Psalm 139, which has several Aramaic touches. By contrast, it occurs seven times in the short Aramaic sections of Daniel and Ezra. Again, *milla* meaning word occurs several times in Job. This in itself is not surprising. It also occurs a number of times in other Hebrew poetry as a synonym of *dabar*. But in Job,
the plural of *milla* thirteen times has the typical ending of the Aramaic noun--*iyn*. Job also uses the Hebrew masc. pl. form in--*iym* ten times. The force of this example is slightly blunted by the fact that Phoenician and Moabite also use this ending. It was not peculiar to Aramaic.

Other words cited as rare in Hebrew, but appearing in Aramaic are *hap* "clean" (33:9); *naka* "smite" (30:8) and *začak* "extinguish" (Job 17:1). The last example is curious for it presents an argument in reverse. This word is the same as another word *dačak* "extinguish" which is used five times in Job, three in Proverbs, and once in Isaiah and in Psalms. The two words are cognate roots. But according to ordinary Semitic phonetic law, the root with "d" should be Aramaic and the one with "z" should be Hebrew. So it is Job that shows a variety of usage and the other books which use only the Aramaic form.

There is another Aramaic form of some interest for it shows mixture. In 37:4, the AV "stay them" (*yecaqqebem*) comes from an Aramaic root *cqَb* meaning to "hold back." But it now seems that the final "m" is not the pronoun "them" but the enclitic "m" common in Ugaritic. It would therefore seem that the form is not an Aramaism but an archaic form sharing some features of Ugaritic and some of later Aramaic. It should be pointed out that several grammatical features formerly thought to be Aramaic are now seen to be native to old Canaanite, as evidenced in Ugaritic--so much so that Albrecht Goetze even classified Ugaritic as Aramaic. Most now hold that these features were simply early Canaanite, some of which survived in or were borrowed into Aramaic. In short, many features formerly called Aramaisms (and words called "late and poetic" in Brown, Driver and Briggs Hebrew Lexicon) are now seen to be archaic.

It should be recognized that Job's peculiarities are not limited to Arabic and Aramaic evidences. The word for "vapor" in Job 36:27 (A V) is used elsewhere only in Genesis 2:6. The old translation "mist" or "vapor" was a guess. The word can now be identified as borrowed through the Akkadian from the Sumerian. It means "river" and refers to the river of Eden (see R. L. Harris, "Mist and the River of Eden," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol. II, (1968) p. 177). Another Sumerian word may be concealed in the word for the constellation Mazzaroth (39:32 and "north" in 37:9 A V). It is possible that the reflects the "1" of the Sumerian word for stars which still appears in the Jewish greeting "Mazal tov"--good luck!

There are also Akkadian influences in Job. In 33:6, man is said to be a creature "nipped from clay" i.e., created from, or of, the earth. The same expression occurs in the Gilgamesh Epic. Interestingly, it also occurs in the hymns of the Dead Sea Community, doubtless in

In 29:4, the word "secret" in A V is difficult but is cognate to the Akkadian sadadu meaning "to protect." "The protection of God was over my home."

In other cases, however, words in Job which are cognate to Akkadian are also found in Ugaritic. An example given by Pope (Job in loc.) is the root ‘mq which usually means "valley" and is so translated by AV in 39:21. But a better sense is gotten from the meaning "strength" attested in Akkadian and Ugaritic both.

One could well wonder if the peculiarities of Job were due more to similarities to the old Ugaritic material than to either Arabic, Aramaic or Akkadian. The borrowed Akkadian words concerned are few, although we have an extensive Akkadian vocabulary for comparison. Our vocabulary of old North Arabic is nil, and of Aramaic is limited. Even our Ugaritic comprises only a fraction of that dialect. So it is well to be cautious. But Ugaritic influences are of various kinds, both in vocabulary, grammar, and concept. It would seem more likely that Job was more indebted to the northern and western Ugaritic neighbors.

Only a few of the Ugaritic parallels need be given --more are pointed out by Pope who has made an important contribution to the study of Ugaritic in his book *El in the Ugaritic Texts* etc. The word "acquaint" of AV in 22:21 is better taken with the sense "yield" as in the shaphel conjugation in Ugaritic. The word "one" of A V in 23:13 could perhaps be the Ugaritic ḫd cognate to Hebrew ḫz and the phrase would mean "He, when he takes hold of a person. . . Pope prefers a slight emendation looking in a different direction. In 36:28, the word "abundantly" of AV is better taken as the Ugaritic rb "showers." In 39:14, the word "leaveth" of A V is better taken as the Ugaritic ḏb cognate to Hebrew ḥb meaning "set," "part" (Gordon, *Ugaritic Studies in Glossary*) and refers-according to Pope (Job, in loc.) following M. Dahood to the ostrich laying her eggs in the sand. In 39:25, the word "among" of the AV is read ḏb by Pope and NEB with the Ugaritic significance "song" or trumpet "blast"--"at the blast of the trumpet he saith Aha!"

A more significant borrowing from the Ugaritic is found in 36:30, 33 where the preposition "upon" or "concerning" of AV is taken to be a shorter form of Elyon, the Most High as is witnessed to in Ugaritic. This rendition of the preposition ḡal is used repeatedly by Dahood in his studies on the Psalms, also in the Anchor Bible Series. The difficult vs. 33 would read: "The Most High speaks in thunder; his anger burns against evil."
There are other similarities of Job to the Ugaritic literature. The use of an enclitic "m" on the end of verbs occurs in Ugaritic as it does in Akkadian. The occasional use of this feature in Biblical poetry is now widely recognized and several instances where "m" formerly was thought to be a 3 masc. pl. objective pronoun are now classed as the enclitic "m." One instance has been noted above, job 37:4. Other probable cases are 4:19, 17:1 and 24:1. Also, Gordon remarks (C. H. Gordon *Ugaritic Studies--Grammar*, Rome: Pontifical Bib. Inst. 1965, p. 138) that "waw" always stands first in a coordinating situation, but may be delayed if it is in a subordinate clause. The Masoretes punctuated 36:7 so that the second "waw" began a new clause. Pope gets better sense by translating "with kings on the throne he seats them." Also the later "waw" in this verse may be so treated: "and they are exalted forever."

There are some cases of Ugaritic phrases used in Job. In the difficult poem on wisdom, 28:11 the AV says "He binds the floods from overflowing." The context apparently speaks of mining operations where precious stones are found but not wisdom. The phrase in 28:11 mibb'kiy n'haroṭ has been taken as the preposition min, plus the root "to weep." But there is another root nebek meaning "spring" used only in Job 38:16. This root was suggested already in Brown, Driver, Briggs for 28:11 and now the phrase is found in Ugaritic as the word for the "sources of the two rivers" where the dwelling of the Ugaritic deity El stood. The idea is that the miners reach the deep springs of water in their search for treasures.

Another such instance is 36:13, where the phrase "hypocrites in heart" AV is the same phrase "impious-minded" (Pope, Job in loc.), applied to the evil actions of the goddess Anath.

From this brief survey of lexical and grammatical features, we come to the astonishing conclusion that the book of Job is difficult Hebrew! But it may be said with some confidence that it is not difficult because it is late and Aramaic, or late and Arabic in flavor. It shares some of these peculiarities regardless of their date or origin. But it, also evidences touches of Mesopotamian language and clearly shows similarities to the old Canaanite dialect of Ugarit. It need not be supposed r that the author lived in Ugarit. It may be remembered that Hinter Syria was a crossroads of caravans from Ugarit, from Canaan, from Arabia and from Mesopotamia. If Job wrote the book and was a rich and learned gentleman of the sons of the East, he would have had an international outlook and connections such as the book of job shows. We do not know enough about ancient dialects to date Job by its language. But there are indications that it would fit an early date, better than the later.

*The Literature of Job*

The structure of the book is well known. There is a prose introduction and conclusion. In between, there is an extensive poetic dialogue. Job, in great affliction raises the problem of innocent suffering.
There are two rounds of speeches of Job and his three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. On the third circuit, Eliphaz speaks, then Job, then Bildad speaks very briefly. Job gives a long speech ending with an oath of innocency.

The place of a third speech by Zophar is taken by a young upstart, Elihu, who is amazed that older heads have not put Job in his place. When Elihu is finished, or perhaps interrupting Elihu, Jehovah speaks to Job out of the storm. He speaks twice with Job and Job briefly responds each time in faith and humility. This leads to the final prose section chronicling Job's restoration to God's favor, to health, and to prosperity.

There is no Biblical parallel to the structure of Job, and no close parallel in ancient literature to the format, although, as mentioned earlier, there are other treatments of the problems raised. The problems of the suffering of the innocent and the prosperity of the wicked have perplexed many and are treated by the Psalmists. Asaph asked "Will the Lord cast off forever?" but confessed "this is my infirmity, but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High" (Ps. 77:7-10). He trusted that his affliction would be removed in God's time. Psalm 88 is full of complaint, but does not see through the problem to an answer. Psalm 37:35 complains that the wicked prosper "like a green bay tree." But the answer is that the wicked man is soon gone. Psalm 73 comes closest to the thought of Job. The double problem of the suffering of the righteous and the prosperity of the wicked is solved in the sanctuary of God and, like Job, the Psalmist's thought is directed to God alone in heaven. But Job draws out the argument in extensu and reaches a grander expression of his conclusion.

Efforts, of course, have been made to fragment the book of Job, as has been done with almost every other O. T. book. The prose parts at the beginning and end have been cut off. The speeches of Elihu and of Jehovah at the end have been called additions. Chapter 28 on wisdom has been questioned as an intrusion.

Some conclusions are not only unnecessary, they go against the positive indications in the book of a unity. And there are other ancient compositions (e. g., the Protests of the Eloquent Peasant, ANET, pp., 405ff) which have a poetic body sandwiched between a prose introduction and conclusion.

It is true that the Tetragram YHWH is used in the introduction and conclusion, but not in the poetry. But 38:1 uses it to introduce Jehovah's highly poetic reply to Job from the storm. Also it seems that Bildad in Job 8:4 refers to the catastrophe that killed Job's sons as related in the introduction. There are many places where one speaker in the dialogue refers to what another has said. The reference to man born
of woman being born to trouble is given by Eliphaz in 5:7, by Job in 14:1 and by Eliphaz again in 15:14 and by Bildad in 25:4. Job's long speech in 38:34 quotes a line of Eliphaz, 22:11. Also Job in 27:20 repeats a previous phrase of 21:19. The Elihu speech of 34:3 repeats Job's remark of 12:11. The same is true of 33:11 with 13:27. Even the wisdom chapter 28:26 is paralleled in the speech by Jehovah in 38:25. It is of some interest that the newly discovered Aramaic translation of Job (J. P. M. Van der Ploeg and A. S. Van der Woude Le Targum de Job, Leiden: Brill, 1971) follows the Hebrew text very closely. It is of course fragmentary. There are only two or three such instances of dislocation covered by the preserved text of the Targum (e.g., Pope's insertion of 26:1-4 between 27:1 and 2 and the dislocation of 31:38-40 in N.E.B.). But to the several dislocations alleged by the New English Bible, by Pope and other commentators, the Targum gives no support. On the other hand, the Targum has one verse dislocated in Job's second response to the Lord (40:5 replaces 42:3). The witness of the Targum, of course, cannot be pressed. It only goes back to about 100 B.C., but such as it is, it is in the direction of the integrity of the text of Job.

The LXX text of Job presents problems of its own. Origen and Jerome say that it was considerably shorter than the Hebrew, but our major manuscripts do not show these lacunae. They presumably have been filled out from Theodotion or some other Source. The Old Latin witnesses to the shorter text, but this witness is fragmentary and it is hard to evaluate Origen's witness without more information. The Witness of the new Targum is the more welcome, as it reaches back almost to the days of the original LXX translation.

As to the poetry and style of the book of Job, it may be helpful to apply to it remarks I have made elsewhere on the Psalms ("The Psalms" in The Biblical Expositor, ed. C. F. H. Henry, Phila: Holman, 1960, Vol. II). It is well known that Hebrew poetry is characterized by parallelism and the use of synonymous expressions to gain repetition. But the secret of great Hebrew poetry is not its rhyme and meter. Mere rhyme and meter may be found in English doggerel like the Mother Goose rhymes for children. Humpty Dumpty had a great fall. But we can hardly say that he fell in great verse! So it is with Hebrew poetry. The poetry of Job is great because it deals in magnificent ways with great subjects. The thought and conception is great. For this reason, it is great poetry, even in a fairly literal translation, such as that of the A V. I once had a friend, in the family, not a Bible student or scholar, who characterized the lines in Job 38:7 as the most beautiful in the English language. . . ."Who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" The intensity of Job's trial is shown in the introduction with the successive reports of calamity punctuating his peace like pistol shots in the night.
The depth of his trial is revealed in his facing in its stark reality the awfulness of the problem of a good God who grants no justice. Note that Job spends very little time on his physical ailments. Not once does he tell us where it hurts! Because Job's hurt is the hurt of the heart of lost humanity. And by the same token, the book rises out of the depths of despair to confident heights of faith and revelation of God. Some commentators profess to find contradictions in Job's speeches and even assign part of his last speech to Zophar. They fail to realize that Job is grappling with what some today call the antinomies of existence. He sees the problem deeply. But he never lets go completely of his faith that these problems of earth have an answer in God. And he rises almost to the beatific vision in his assurance that he himself with his own eyes will behold God and then all will be well. But as in the case of Martha, whose hope was for her brother's future resurrection, God graciously gave a larger promise. Jesus said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life." And to Job, God said I am the Almighty God. In my protection you are secure. Pope is correct that the "book presents profundities surpassing those that may be found in any of its parts. . .the values men cherish, the little gods they worship--family, home, nation, race, sex, wealth, fame--all fade away. . . confidence in this One is the only value not subject to time." (Pope, *Job*, p. lxxvii). Job is great literature. And it has answers from God.

**Mythology? or Revelation?**

In addition to all the problems raised by the unusual dialect of the book of Job and the problems of the theology yet to be considered, there are problems that we turn to now concerning the alleged mythical background of the rook.

A prominent feature of the book of Job is the reference to Behemoth and Leviathan in Chapters 40 and 41. What are these creatures? They are famous enough that an ocean liner was named after one and the other has become a synonym for something of jumbo size. It is possible that these are ancient names for actual animals and the hippopotamus and crocodile have most often been nominated. However, advancing study of ancient times and, especially the discovery of the mythology of Ugarit, has inclined many to find here and elsewhere in Job a reference to the mythology of the cultures surrounding Israel. The question before us is, must we recognize in Job such mythology and if so, does it present theological problems?

The problem concerns not only Job, but Psalms, Isaiah and passages in a few other books as well. Leviathan is mentioned by name in Psalm 74:14; 104:26 and Isaiah 27:1, as well as in Job 3:8 and 41:1. The reference in Isaiah calls Leviathan the fleeing serpent, the crooked
serpent. The former expression is found also in Job 26:13 in a context that also may be mythological. Pope <IDE. in loc.) says that the reference in Job 26:13 is to the dragon that causes eclipses! The line in Isaiah is very much like a Ugaritic text: "Because thou didst smite Lotan, the writhing serpent/didst destroy the crooked serpent/the accursed one of seven heads" (C. H. Gordon Ugaritic Literature, a Comprehensive Translation, Rome: Pontifical Bib. Inst. 1949; cf. also ANET p. 138). The words "writhing" and "crooked" are: those used in the Isaiah passage. Furthermore Leviathan in Psalm 74:14 is pictured as multi-headed. It looks very much as if Leviathan sometimes in the Bible is a name for a mythological monster. This seven-headed monster is pictured on a seal and on a piece of shell as a somewhat dinosaur-like creature with seven heads placed one below another on the long neck. A hero with a spear is seen on the seal having pierced the lower four heads of the dragon. Apparently the seal depicts the conquest of Leviathan, or Lotan as the Ugaritic pronunciation has it. It is pictured in ANEP.

The question is, how does such a description of Leviathan fit in with Biblical revelation? The answer is not too difficult. The Bible uses the mythology of antiquity without approving of it. The symbolism of Daniel is instructive. In Daniel 7. the first kingdom, the Babylonian, is symbolized by a lion with eagle's wings. This symbol is well-known from Mesopotamian architecture. In Daniel's vision, God used this symbol to identify Babylon, but there is no approval or disapproval of the symbol. Actually the dreadful fourth beast of Daniel 7 with ten horns; is pictured again in Revelation 13 as a dragon with seven heads and ten horns. The devil in Revelation 12 is also pictured as a dragon with seven heads. Presumably these instances tell us that the old mythological symbol of an evil dragon is used as a symbol of the devil and his minions. We may conclude that mythological symbols are used in the Bible for purposes of illustration and communication of truth without in the least adopting the mythology or approving of its ideas.

Albright argues that this process was widespread in ancient Israel and calls it "demythologizing," though rejecting the Bultmannian overtones of that word. (Albright, Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan, Garden City: Doubleday, 1968, pp. 183-207). He gives examples of pagan deities or practices which were part of Israel's background, but were robbed of their pagan meaning before they were made a part of Israel's religion. His example is the word "cereal" which we use daily without in the slightest taking part in the worship of the goddess Ceres or believing that she spent half of her time in the underworld.

Albright makes the flat statement, "It may confidently be stated that there is no true mythology anywhere in the Hebrew Bible. What we
have consists of vestiges—what may be called the 'debris' of a past religious culture" (*op. cit.* p. 185). Actually Albright goes farther than is necessary in finding examples in the Bible. He assumes that the word *tehom* in Gen. 1:2 comes from the ancient myths of Marduk's fight with Tiamat when he created the world from her carcass. Albright believes the old story was demythologized. Actually, we should remember that many of the ancient deities were named after natural objects and forces. Deus means sky, Chronos means time, Tiamat and *tehom* mean fresh water, Yamm means sea. All of these items were deified probably because of animistic ideas. It is not clear that *tehom* first meant the deity of the water, then became demythologized into water. Rather it was the reverse. There was a god Yamm in Ugaritic who was god of the sea, but the meaning "sea" in all probability came first, not vice-versa. And usually when the word *yamm* is used in the Hebrew Bible, it is used without any reference to a deity of the sea at all.

Nevertheless, it is true that in Job there are several instances where mythological items are referred to and we should recognize these without concluding that the book had pagan overtones in its make-up. These are studied in a perceptive article by Elmer B. Smick, *Mythology and the Book of Job,* "*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*" Vol XIII part 2, 1970, pp. 101-8.

Job cursed his day at the beginning of his dialogue. In the process, he calls for a curse from those who curse the day (*yom*)" or "those who curse *yamm* (God of the Sea), those skilled to rouse Leviathan. "This mythological reference is only an allusion and means no more than our use of Norse deities for the names of the days of the week. But it is probable that there is here an allusion to evil deities.

Other references to the sea as a deity may be found in 7:12. "Am I the Sea God (*yamm*) or the Sea Serpent (*tannin*) that you set a guard over me?" asks Job, and in 9:8, Job acknowledges God as creator of the stars "who treads on the high places of the sea." The idea of "high places of the sea" is peculiar. The corresponding word in Ugaritic means the "back" of an animal or man or god (C. H. Gordon *Ugaritic Studies—Glossary*). Therefore, the suggestion is that God the creator is pictured as trampling on the back of the god, Yamm, in confining the sea to its borders. A word of caution may be expressed. These may be references to mythology, but again, the words *yamm* and *tannin* have literal meanings which are not impossible in these two contexts. We may find here the mythological motifs, but also we may have some reservations.

In 9:13, close to the *yamm* context, there is the mention of the "helpers of Rahab" who bow under him. Rahab is mentioned again in
26:12: by his strength he put the sea (or the Sea God Yamm) to rest; by his wisdom he smote Rahab. The following verses speak of his conquering the fleeing serpent as already mentioned. It is true that Rahab can mean "proud ones," and to quell the sea is a natural figure, but it is perhaps more likely in these contexts that Job celebrates the power of God in conquering the evil and proud mythological deities of the heathen.

Another pair of deities is found by some in Job 38:36. "Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts (tuhot) or who hath given understanding to the heart (sekwiy)?" Here Pope (Job, in loc.) and others find mention of the Egyptian god of wisdom Thoth and Mercury (Coptic: Souchi). Albright accepts the translation Thoth, but declares the alleged Coptic name of Mercury arose by a modern mistake (op. cit. p. 245ff). The traditional translation of the words seems quite enough this passage.

Another alleged reference to a pagan god is in 5:7, "Man is born to trouble as sparks (sons of Resheph) fly upward." Resheph was indeed the god of burning and pestilence but resheph also referred to literal fire and pestilence. The sons of Resheph are not understandable in this context if it refers to a deity. The traditional rendering is satisfactory.

There are a few other alleged mythological renderings, but they are probably not necessarily so. The references to Behemoth and Leviathan in 40 and 41 remain to be considered.

The word Behemoth is merely the plural of the word "cattle." The plural of majesty or excellence could thus designate a big cow-like beast and the hippopotamus has been suggested. Pope (Job, in loc.) adopts the mythological interpretation and speaks of the human-headed bull of heaven pictured like the water buffalo of the swamps above Galilee. What was said above is applicable here. There was a bull of heaven in mythology and the Behemoth could have been that. This reference in Job if could be, on the other hand, a literal water buffalo. Or it could have been a hippopotamus with which Palestinians were familiar, even though these animals did not live in the Jordan area. Verse 23 does not demand that they did. Mention of the strong tail, however, fits neither the buffalo nor hippopotamus. I would suggest that most fearsome of beasts, the elephant. The elephant even more than the hippopotamus drinks up the river at a gulp and the African elephant is not tamed. It is true that the elephant's tail also is minimal, but the astonishing feature of an elephant is the appendage at the other end. Is it not possible that the Hebrew znh could refer to trunk equally as well as tail?

Leviathan is here pictured not as an evil deity, but as an animal. Again, we remember that the deity was usually invented by investing a
normal object or animal with divine powers. There was probably at some time a literal animal called Leviathan. If this reference in Job is the deity Leviathan, it is odd that his main feature, his seven heads, is not mentioned. Rather his natural parts and physical strength and ferocity are dwelt upon. The sparks and smoke from his nostrils surely are but hyperbole. Whether it refers to the crocodile or to a whale, we perhaps cannot be sure. Obviously, it is a creature of the sea which was so greatly feared that in mythology it became worshipped.

This is, I believe the extent of the mythology of Job. We turn now to its theology.

The Theology of Job: The Character of God

We come in this last section to the climax of the book of Job which is, as all realize, the revelation of God who speaks to Job out of the whirlwind. Job in his agony had sought for God and asked to set out his case before God. He had pleaded his innocence before God. Now at last God speaks and Job, though the confrontation is not what he had asked for, nonetheless has the answer to his deepest desire and he is satisfied.

There is somewhat of a problem in studying the subject of the character of God in the book of Job, for much of the book is fallacious in its revelation. We can say this reverently, of course. All of the book is inspired and actually all the characters except Satan express some elements of truth, but at least the speeches of the three comforters are not normative for theology. Job himself, as we have seen, grew in his faith and understanding. Surely Job's idea of life after death progressed greatly during the course of his trial. Some things Job said about God are true. Some things are not. So, much of the dialogue is not divine teaching and for fully authoritative teaching about God, we are restricted to the speeches of Jehovah at the end and to the prose framework at the start and finish of the book. We may remark that the case is somewhat like that in Ecclesiastes. There also, there is much in the book that is preliminary to the conclusion. The author there tries various philosophies of life and finds them false. He is shut up to the final conclusion that the chief end of man is to fear God and keep His commandments. So also in Job, it is the final answer that we want. It was the ultimate vision of God that satisfied the patriarch's heart.

God reveals himself first to Job as creator. It is of interest to compare God's first revelation in Genesis. The sacred scriptures begin with the creative activity of God. Here God is superlatively shown to be God without competitor or equal. The corollary is that God is the only eternal one and all else sprang into existence at God's command. The
first chapter of Genesis outlines a procedure in God's creation. Job
gives none of these details. The teaching is contained in highly figu-
raive rhetorical questions that remind us how puny man is in comparison
to the power of God, the Creator of all. One need not explore the use
of time as a fourth dimension to realize that time for us is very short.
We are creatures of a day. The Psalmist says that we are like grass
which grows up in the morning and is cast down in the evening (Ps. 90:6).
But God is eternal. A thousand years to him is but a watch in the night.
Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth (Job 38:4)? How
we would wish to know at least some of the secrets of God's creation!
How old is the universe? Is the big bang theory of the origin of matter
correct? And if so, did the original fireball spring into being when God
first enunciated the laws that govern time, space, energy and matter?
What is matter and what is energy after all, now that we have found to
our horror that they are interconvertible? We have begun to see in re-
cent years something of the ferocity of elemental force, as well as some-
thing of the immensity of the reaches of space. We might remember that
we are not the first ones to know a little something of these things.
Lightning probably awed the ancients as much as it frightens us. And
among the Greeks at least, there was at least an idea of the distances
of space. Two hundred fifty years before Christ, Eratosthenes in Egypt
had measured the circumference of the earth to within ten percent of the
correct figure (see the article "Eratosthenes" in the Encyclopedia Brit-
tanica). And Ptolemy, the astronomer, shortly after Christ, assures us
that the distance to the stars is so great that the earth in comparison
is a point without magnitude. His estimate" was around a billion miles.
We know now that his estimate was far too small. But man is about as
puny beside a billion miles as beside ten-billion light years.

It is hardly necessary to add that God does not tell Job that the
world is set on foundations with supporting pillars and a cornerstone.
The morning stars do not really sing and the bounds of the sea are set
not by doors and. bars. Its bounds are set by gravitation--if only we
knew what gravitation is! Elsewhere (26 :7) Job had confessed that God
hangs the earth on nothing. But how God hangs the earth and how he
formed the earth and the world are still mysteries which we attempt to
probe, but how little we understand of the power of God the creator.

I am convinced that one great problem of modern thought is the
result of a determined denial of God's creatorship. Evolution is now in
the popular mind today an explanation of how God created (a false ex-
planation, I believe.) But it has become an alternative idea to God's
creation. Evolution, however, cannot explain the beginning of things.
It is accompanied by purely philosophical concepts of origin by chance,
the eternality of matter, etc., and a flat denial of God. One result is
that human personality is unexplainably alone in a sea of chaos. Thought
has no basis for validity. Art has no reason or coherence. Life has no meaning and death no hope. Against this torrent of despair comes the clear revelation of God. "Before the mountains were brought forth or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God" (Ps. 90:2). It is significant that when John hears the angels in heaven praising the Father, their song is "thou art worthy...for thou hast created all things and for thy pleasure they are and were created." If God be really the Creator, we are assured that he is the ultimate reality. There is none behind or over him. Job no longer seeks an umpire. There is none beside Him.

But God is not only transcendent Being. He reveals himself to Job in his providence. The Westminster Shorter Catechism defines God's works of providence as his "most holy, wise and powerful, preserving and governing all His creatures and all their actions." God is immanent in the sense that He is active in His creation. He is not a part of the world process. But He directs the world process in wisdom that we are only beginning to appreciate. Because there are second causes, some men now stop with second causes and leave God out. The result is a material universe that can never explain itself or satisfy man who, if he has any significance at all, has a non-material aspect we call the soul. Does Job know the weather? Can he direct the thunder? I understand that the force of a hurricane is equal to several atomic explosions each minute. The mere force required to make the wind blow at sixty a hundred miles per hour over a diameter of some hundreds of miles is staggering. It is no contradiction in the Bible when Isaiah 5:6 says that clouds bring rain and Job 38:28 asks "Hath the rain a father? Or who hath begotten the drops of dew?" Again the poetry of Job is striking in its figures of speech. And the thrust of it is that puny man can observe the stars, but it is the Almighty God who guides the stars in their courses. There is matter of great comfort here. We are not alone in the fell clutch of circumstance and we do not suffer under the bludgeonings of chance. We live under the protecting shadow of a Sovereign God.

The providence of God extends to the remarkable and peculiar phenomena of the animal world. Do you understand the gestation of the wild goats? Obviously, as an ancient cattleman, job knew something of the mating and birth of his animals. We know much more. We know that sperm and ova are produced and that they unite in the miracle of life. The chromosomes and genes intermingle, then the cells multiply. Some become liver tissue, some nerve cells, some bones and some blood. And how is it and why is it that it all happens just this way? What man would have dreamed up the ostrich, that peculiar bird. The only bird, I understand, with eyelashes! Why, I have no idea. The only bird, I understand, equipped with a bladder! Again, why? There surely is a reason, but how strange are some of God's creatures! Some have
questioned if the ostrich is as dumb as the verses seem to say. I suppose that depends on what you compare it with! Most would not think of turkeys as dumb, but I have seen young turkeys hang themselves getting out of the tree where they roosted! The ostrich is dumb on some counts. Yet as the passage says, when she lifts herself up, or as Pope (Job in loc.) explains it, when she spreads her tail feathers and runs, she can outdistance any horse with ease. The wild ass, the ox, the ostrich, the horse, the hawk, the vulture--these are but samples of the varied, specialized and peculiar creation which God controls. And if God controls these creatures of the wild, he can care for me. Bryant said of the waterfowl,

"He who from zone to zone guides through the distant air thy certain flight.
In the long path that I must tread alone can guide my steps aright."

The example of Behemoth and Leviathan have been dealt with already. The teaching is that he who made Behemoth the chief of the ways of God can make his sword to approach unto him, (40:19). Is it not a powerful thought that God is. in control? And remember that this control depends not just on power, but on infinite wisdom as well.

The essential affirmation of the book of Job, however, is not the more power and wisdom of God, marvelous as these are, but the, affirmation of the righteousness, the rectitude of God. This was Job’s problem. He was ready to acknowledge the power of God. Indeed, that God's power was far beyond Job's was part of his problem. But is God good? Abraham confessed that the judge of all the earth will do the right (Gen. 18:25). Job had questioned. It is not right for God to destroy the perfect and the wicked (9:22). But God cannot let pass that charge. Job humbles himself in his first answer. But God demands a further answer. "Wilt thou annul my judgment? Wilt thou condemn me that thou mayest be justified?" (40:8). Job could see but the tiny fringe of God's purposes. God reveals himself as one who above all is holy, righteous and just. Job's sin was not final. His faith burned low at times but was never out. He trusted God even when he doubted God's ways and God led him through the sea, even if not on dry land.

But there comes a day when others must meet God. I quoted above from Henley's poem, "I thank whatever Gods may be for my unconquerable soul." I am told that later, Henley lost his ten year old daughter and was broken up by the tragedy. Our souls are not unconquerable. Some day all will stand before the judgment seat of God in an experience not like job's, and not like the alleged person to person encounter of existentialism, but in the dark. And in that dread day,
all men will lay their hand upon their mouth for the judgments of God are true and righteous altogether and they are final. No man then will annul God's judgment and Satan will then be put away, and death and hell consigned to the lake of fire, and God's power, wisdom, glory, and righteousness will be fully revealed.

There is one more point. The conclusion of Job, like the prologue is part of the book and has a lesson. God is merciful. You have heard of the patience (or endurance) of Job and have seen the end of the Lord that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy. Job was restored even in this life. He had come to trust in a future life. But even this life is blessed for the child of God. So Satan was overcome as he will be vanquished at last in God's good time. He will overcome him by the blood of the Lamb of God, for the accuser of our brethren shall be cast down who accused them before the throne of God day and night. Therefore rejoice ye heavens (Rev. 12:10-12).

The Theology of Job: Rewards

Pope is correct, "The issues raised are crucial for men and the answers attempted are as good as have ever been offered" (*Job*, p. LXXVII). Pope himself misses, I believe, one grand answer in Job---the doctrine of the future life. The name "theodicy" was applied, I believe, by Leibnitz to the question of the justification of the ways of God with regard to evil in the universe. It is a problem for theism. Beudelaire, seeing the injustice in the world and hearing that God was in control, remarked that "your God is my devil." He was not so far wrong! The Bible says that in a sense the devil is in control of much that goes on in this world. The indispensable prologue to Job makes it clear that Satan has much power here and now---with the necessary caveat under God. This is not the best of all possible worlds. That was the deists' perversion, not the Christian teaching. "In the world, ye shall have tribulation" is a further statement of Job's complaint: "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward." We ask in our groaning, why does not God do something in Vietnam, in Bangladesh, or with the Berlin warn. We ask, worse yet, why did God do what he did years ago in the Lisbon earthquake, or today in the Calcutta tidal wave? Is God cruel? Is Krishna the destroyer actually a part of the deity? These were the awful thoughts that crowded in on Job when he was called upon existentially to face the question posed in Ecclesiastes 4:1, "the oppressions that are done under the sun."

Job did not know and the comforters did not know that Job was suffering for the honor of God himself and to the shame of Satan, the author of sin. A groaning world today has not read the prologue of Job. It does not believe in Satan as really evil, or in God as really good.
As a result, a European leader like Hermann Hesse turns to Eastern philosophy denying, as he does in his *Siddharta*, all distinctions of right and wrong, of pain and pleasure, of man and God and eternity. All becomes merged in a river of indistinction. There is no meaning. As Matthew Arnold had said in Dover Beach,

We are here as on a darkling plain swept by confused alarms of struggle and of flight where ignorant armies: clash by night.

Job cursed his day. Pope remarks (Job. p. xiii) that James 5:11 gives an unbalanced view in referring to the patience of Job. That, however, was when the book began. Job gave absolute submission to the will of God. Because God was God, Job was at first content. And it "should be noted from 1:22 and 2:10 that this is the truly acceptable attitude before God. But theory is one thing and life is another. God would give the world an example in extremis. He does that sometimes. Paul called himself an example of God's deepest grace. Ananias and Sapphira were made an example to the early church. D. L. Moody heard a preacher say, the world has yet to see what God can do with a fully yielded Christian. Moody said, I will be that man. And God made him a great example to bless the hearts of multitudes. God made Job an example and a comfort to thousands since his time. God may have even laughed as he used Satan to direct Job's longing, and ours also, to higher things than children, and sheep, and camels and oxen. God had a plan for Job's life—and for yours.

But Job now descended into the valley of the shadow. And in his misery, he longed for death as the final answer. In lines of great beauty he sought the grave "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest." Hamlet pondered suicide. There are only two cases of suicide in the Bible—Ahithophel and Judas. Suicide is not the way out for one who believes that there is a God and that our life is sacred because we are made in God's image. And these great verities Job could not forget. But Job's first three speeches each end with the longing for the oblivion of the grave.

Eliphaz confronts Job with a different view. He even claims a revelation (4:13) though he was clearly a false prophet. He declares that foolish men, i.e., sinners, are the ones who suffer and that therefore God must be chastening Job. If Job repents, God will wonderfully restore. Eliphaz here, as far as I can see, speaks for the other friends including Elihu. I can see little progress in the argument of the "miserable comforters as Job called them. They declare that Job must have sinned and therefore he suffers. If he will rectify his conduct, God will restore him. Actually this is the view expressed in those several
related treatises on suffering from Egypt and Babylonia which was referred to in the first lecture. This is really the view of the world today. If there be a just God, he must punish sin now and reward righteousness now. If this is not done, we cannot believe that God is real. This attitude was dramatized by the skeptic, Robert Ingersoll. On the platform, he would dare God to strike him dead in one minute. The audience waited in silence and at the end of a minute, he pocketed his watch declaring that he had proved that there was no God. On one occasion, a newspaper editorial the following day asked if the little man had thought that he could exhaust the patience of the Almighty in sixty seconds! But twentieth century man is not noted for his patience. We expect judgment now or else not at all. Really the view of the three comforters amounts to the idea that you get all your hell and all your heaven in this life!

There has been some question about Job's doctrine of resurrection. But note that not one verse in the speeches of the three friends or Elihu direct Job's eyes to the hereafter for bliss or blame. Their's is the little quid pro quo of the disciples, "Master, who did sin this man or his parents that he was born blind?" Christ's answer applies also to Job, "Neither but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." And God's works in Job at the last were manifest to devils, angels, and men.

In Job's first round of speeches, he doesn't get much further than an anguished cry to God for relief and a plea for death. He declares that he is not wicked (10:7) and complains that God destroys the perfect and wicked alike (9:22). Job has no chance, for there is no possible umpire between him and God (9:33); he therefore asks God to take away his hand before he goes to the land of no return (10:21).

The picture of the grave that Job draws thus far is close to oblivion. Indeed this is his only hope (3:13-22). It is a place of quiet, of sleep, death (maweth) and the tomb (geber) are in parallelism. In his second speech, Job pictures the grave as the end and therefore he will give rein to his complaint (7:11). He expects to "go down to Sheol" and not come up (7:9). He will "sleep in the dust" and he will not be. The same thoughts recur in his third speech. He wished he had been "carried from the womb to the grave (geber)" (10:19). He longs for the land of darkness, disorder and gloom:-It--; may be. noted that job's concept of that land differs notably from that of the Babylonian underworld, (cf. the description in ANET, p. 109). Here are no monsters, gods or goddesses. It is not a peopled place of consciousness. It is as near soul sleep as we can get. But from another angle, it does n?t describe soul sleep. It does not describe the soul at all. It describes rather" the tomb to which the body goes. This was, just then, the extent of his concern. Death, the tomb (geber), Sheol, and the land of darkness are the terms used. The Palestinian tomb was cut in the rock. It was, of course, dark; it was down. It held the bones and dust of many generations. One decayed body was pushed back in the crypt when another was
laid in. The body of course slept. The soul was not then in Job's view. Neither was any Babylonian place of departed spirits.

In Job's second round of speeches, he continues his bitter complaint, but something new has been added. Job now does not long for death. He holds on to his innocence and is sure of justification (13:18). He is confident that God will be his salvation (13:16). But there is a problem in the key verse, "though he slay me, yet will I trust in him". (13:15). RV translated "He will kill me, I have no hope." NEB says, "If he would slay me I should not hesitate." The problem concerns the word lo’ (not) which may also be read lo’ (for it). The Hebrew consonantal text gives the first reading, the vocalic text the second. Most of the versions read it the second way. Unfortunately, the new Targum does not cover this section. In view of the uncertainty, it is not wise to be dogmatic, yet it may be pointed out that the verb "hope" or "wait for" usually is used with a prepositional complement "I" (for). If this be the case, the A V reading "though he slay me yet will I trust in him" is the true reading. It would fit the context very well.

In this same speech, Job rises to further heights which are often not noticed because translations do not always bring out the structure of the passage (14:7-15). Job is still in great distress. But now, like Hamlet, he looks beyond the moment of death and asks what dreams may come when we have shuffled off this mortal soil. Here for the first time in the book, someone raises the question of a future life. That alone is highly significant. Here is a new phase of the argument. "If a man die shall he live again?" The question of God's justice and acceptance of a man is here raised off the mundane plane into the sphere of the future. Job trembles on the threshold of a new hope. Is it perhaps that although this is not the best of all possible worlds, that there is another one to come? Job sees, as it were, a light in the keyhole of the door in heaven which John the apostle saw opened full wide.

Job's argument begins where it should begin. Job is God's child. He considers a tree, an insensate thing, yet it has persistent life. If it is cut down, though it seems to die, it will by water at the roots, put forth a second growth. The verb is halap. It will bud and grow. This is for a mere tree. But man! Of greater worth, a child of God, the word of God's hands. Man dies and never rises till the heavens grow old. He does not awake (qys) nor rise (cwr). Then Job wishes to be hidden in Sheol, until God's wrath passes over and God might remember him. Surely Sheol here means the grave. But will God remember him? Job answers his great question by a declaration that he would "wait" (same word as "trust" in 13:15 treated above) until his second growth (helipah) would come. Job seizes the thought that man is of far greater worth to God than a mere tree. "Thou shalt call and I will
answer thee; thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands." Here Job in a pinnacle of faith looks beyond the tomb to the resurrection call of God. It is a pinnacle. Job does not maintain this hope undimmed. But he has cried out in faith and he has begun to see that the answers to the great questions after all lie in God who made us for himself, and we may reverently reverse Augustine's famous remark. God made us to fellowship with himself and he is not satisfied until he brings us to rest in him.

Tur-Sinai (The Book of Job, in loc.) is very unsatisfactory here. Tur-Sinai does not associate the two words for second growth. He re-arranges some lines and emends others. On verse 13, he makes the surprising comment, "Job interrupts the presentation of facts (i. e., of man's eternal death) with rhetorical unrealistic wishes; would that the fate of man, and my own fate, were like that of a tree by the water, so that, after a period of waiting in Sheol, I might return to life." This quotation is simply an admission that some modern commentators find Job's affirmation of resurrection hopelessly unrealistic. But then perhaps the commentators have not had to think as deeply as Job did.

The next speech of Job, the fifth, does not advance. He castigates his miserable comforters and complains that God has turned him over to wicked men. But he declares that he is innocent and calls heaven to witness as he cries unto God for relief. Then he returns to the thought of death. This time he does not seem to long for death as he did earlier, but regards it as the end of his hope (17:15). The word "wait" (AV) of 17:13 is the same root as "hope" in 17:15. The persons of the verbs in the last verse of the chapter can be read differently in agreement with Pope Job, in loc.) and NEB. But Pope's question marks need not be adopted. I offer this translation:

If I have hope, sheol (the grave) is my house.
I will spread my couch in the darkness.
I have called corruption my father and the worm my mother and sister,
Where then is my hope? and who will see my hope.
When my hope goes down to sheol (the grave) and we descend together to the dust.

Job here plays with the word hope, which he had used in 14:7. There is hope for a tree that it will have a second growth. Is Job's only hope extinction in the grave? No longer does Job seek for death and extinction. Now he reaches for every glimmer of hope beyond the darkness of the tomb.

Job's sixth speech is shorter than usual, but this one is a climax. Again he chides his "friends" with being his worst enemies. They should
pity him when the hand of God is heavy upon him (19:21). And so he looks beyond the present. His friends have turned against him, but he would have his words engraved upon enduring rock. For his vindicator will arise at last.

These verses, 19:25-27, are both very important and very difficult. They are taken in Handel's Messiah as a great prediction of Christ. In the NEB translation, they say nothing of resurrection. Pope (Job. in loc.) and many modern commentators find no hope of resurrection here, feeling that to do so would contradict 14:12. But as shown above, 14:12 is in a context where Job poses the question of resurrection and answers it with the affirmation of faith.

Verse 25 begins, "Por I know that my vindicator lives." The word is "and" and refers to the next of kin who avenges a murder or, relieves the oppression of the destitute. Job obviously is not referring to a mere man. God was Israel's go'el who redeemed from Egypt (Exod 6:6) from exile (Isa. 43:1) and from death (Hos. 13:14 quoted in I Cor. 15:55). In view of the fact that the vision of God is Job's desire (19:26), it seems proper to take the redeemer to be God himself--but probably not the messianic redeemer. Pope on the other hand declares that the redeemer whom Job hopes for is the umpire of 9:33 who will force God to come to terms. He compares Mesopotamian subdeities who thus interceded for men. But of all this, the verse says nothing. That job actually hoped for help outside of God is against the whole tenor of this passage, regardless of his earlier outburst.

"And that he will stand at last upon the dust." "Upon the dust" may mean the earth, or it may mean the dust of job's tomb (cf. 17:16). "Stand" or "rise" may be a legal term. The vindicator will appear on job's behalf. But it is not to save Job from death--the "at last" argues otherwise. The vindicator will redeem Job in some future day of his expectation.

"And though after my skin Worms destroy this body," note the italicized words of the A.V. It is a difficult line. The preposition "after" refers to time or place, and neither in Hebrew or English is the word "after" appropriate for the noun "skin"! The context wants the infinitive construct of a verb. Pope takes the preposition with the verb "destroy" and translates it "after my skin is flayed." But then with the final pronoun "this" would be out of place and the verb following the pronoun should agree with it, but it does not. The NEB ad libis here with a footnote that the Hebrew is unintelligible. It is possible, however, to read the word "my skin" (root ʾwr) as a verb in the infinitive construct. The same verb was used to mean "awake" in a resurrection context in 14:12 (see above). The reading would then be "after my awaking." The
verb "destroy" is difficult. It is only used three times, though it is used in a second meaning "to encircle." It may be translated, "After my awakening when this (sickness or body) is destroyed."

"Yet in my flesh I shall see God." Pope, and others, translate "without my flesh, I shall see God." This translation is interesting, for it would make the passage refer not to resurrection, but to spiritual life in heaven--an equally happy thought for Job. The preposition min can indeed mean "apart from" as well as "from the standpoint of," and many examples of the latter use are given in the lexicon. E. g., the Lord roars min Zion (Amos 1:2). In view of the next line, it seems hard to adopt Pope's idea. The whole thrust is that Job will see God in his resurrected body. Tur-Sinai (The Book of Job, in loc.) takes it to mean from the standpoint of his body--but before death.

Whom I shall see for myself
and my eyes shall see and not a stranger.

(NEB, "I myself and no other.") This verse put the capstone on Job's declaration of faith. Job at long last, after his body is consumed will see God in a resurrection day. The following words are probably correctly placed with the later verses as the NEB and with them we are not now concerned.

How does this doctrine of the resurrection bear on the date of Job? Does this imply a late date because it would involve a borrowing of Persian ideas? Here much depends on one's background and viewpoint. If one is convinced that the doctrine of resurrection is late, then Job will be given a post-exilic date, along with Psalm 49, 73, 16, Isaiah 26, Hosea 13:14 and other passages. It would seem better to face the claims of revelation given in the Bible, rather than thus to restructure the O.T. on subjective grounds. Surely the argument in Job does not look like an item borrowed from an alien creed. The teaching of the resurrection in Job is hammered out by facing in a unique way the problems of life against the background of the revealed character of both God and man. Job seems rather to have the marks of an early and original treatment of this wonderful doctrine. It is easier to think that the Psalmists and prophets stood on the shoulders of Job in their resurrection doctrine.

And after all, what do we know of the Persian religion in the early days? We have some monuments of Persian grandeur and some reports of their kingdom and wars. But we have no early copies of the religious books of the Persians. We know not when or by whom these books were written. They were copied and recopied in lands where Christian influence was very strong in the first centuries of our era. 'What interpolations...
may have occurred and what influences may have been absorbed, who knows? Eventually these books were taken to India and brought to the modern world. But it is quite uncertain that Job could have been actually influenced in this, its basic doctrine, by such alleged teaching.

There is, further, a dark side to Job's insights on the future life. For Job had two problems to face. First, why do the righteous suffer, but secondly, why do the wicked prosper. For the wicked do prosper. Honesty is not always the policy that succeeds, and sometimes crime does pay. Job now attacks his comforters with the declaration that they are wrong also on the second count. "The wicked live, become old. _yea are mighty in power" (21:7-16). The translation of the rest of the passage is in debate. The AV seems to make Job say that although the wicked seem to die happy, yet later (vss. 17-22) they shall drink of God's wrath. Then again (vss. 23-34) he says wicked and righteous, die alike. The NEB and the NASB by the use of judicious quotation marks and question marks make Job consistently say that the wicked do not get the judgment the three comforters assign to them. The question is one of detail, but I rather favor the AV at this point. It is true that the wicked go to Sheol in peace (21:13). All lie down alike in the dust and worms cover them (21:26). But what then? Verse 30 is the key verse. It has two "I" prepositions, which can mean "to" or as we now know" from Ugaritic "from." The AV takes the meaning "to" and says the wicked is spared from disaster. This is also the meaning of the NASB, though the "I" is translated "to." But the conclusion of the chapter in the AV seems to say that despite appearances, God will judge the wicked--and this thought is later developed.

Then Eliphaz viciously attacks Job again and accuses him of many sins. Job responds to this that God knows he is innocent and when God has tested him, "I shall come forth as gold" (23:10). Very different, however, is the case with the wicked. He out lines the extreme wickedness of some men and now he veers to the thought that indeed they will receive their judgment. (Sheol and the worm will consume them (24:19-20). Their exaltation is short (25:24). Tur-Sinai (The Book of Job, in loc.) escapes this conclusion by saying Job is quoting from the three friends. Pope (Job, in loc.) also cannot follow the argument here. He believes that Job has contradicted his previous statement and that this speech should be attributed to Zophar. Pope is correct in recognizing a shift in the argument, but it seems quite possible to hold that Job himself is looking further. Especially so because after Bildad's short and final speech, Job returns to this argument" in 27:13-23. Here he is a bit more explicit. The wicked man will not merely die, perhaps easily, He will be given a reward from the Almighty. His children shall suffer, his widows shall not mourn him, he suffers the terrors of God. Tur-Sinai (op cit.) escapes this conclusion by saying Job "used to say" this.
Pope, of course, ascribes this also to Zophar, but it seems that Job himself may here be expressing in incipient form the even harder doctrine that the wicked, who seem to get by, will actually receive in the end the judgment of God. It cannot be said that Job expresses with any clarity the doctrine of future punishment for the wicked. But it is involved in his view and some of his statements look in that direction.

As for Job himself, he brings his argument to a grand conclusion. He summarizes his moral principles in words already referred to as taken up by Solomon. Wisdom may be found, but not by worldly search. Surely Job wanted wisdom. His friends claimed understanding. But Job declares that real wisdom is to worship God in reverence and holiness of life. The claim is distinct that Job did this and in his final speech, Job lifts his hand in a solemn oath of abjuration that before God he has lived in innocence of the great sins of which he has been so bitterly and unjustly accused. If he be guilty, he says at last, let thistles grow, instead of wheat and weeds instead of barley! The words of Job are ended.

Elihu returns to the argument, but in a sense, he seems to parrot the argument of the rest and thus to be an anti-climax. Job has nothing more to say. But Job has stood his trial. He has trusted God. He has continued in his principles of righteousness and he has seen beyond the grave to the final justice of God. It remains for God himself to answer Elihu and the three friends and to both humble and bless his servant with a vision of God in His greatness.
JOB: REPENTANT OR REBELLIOUS?

B. LYNNE NEWELL

ALTHOUGH differing in their views about a number of issues with regard to the Book of Job, m general scholars have agreed that Job's replies to Yahweh in 40:4-5 and 42:2-6 indicate that Job repented,1 or at least relented and changed his attitude. Even scholars such as K. Fullerton, C. G. Jung, and D. A. Robertson, who reject the possibility that Job could have repented, nevertheless agree that 42:2-6 in particular indicates that he did. K. Fullerton maintains that 42:2-6 is absolutely opposed to the content of the dialogues and could not have been written by the author of that section, hence he rejects the whole of 40:6-42:17 as a gloss.2 C. G. Jung and D. A. Robertson see Job's replies as hypocritical. C. G. Jung says that most probably Job prostrated himself before God as if he were a defeated antagonist, realizing that God was a being who could not be judged morally.3 D. A. Robertson says it is only a "tongue-in-cheek" confession, made to calm God's whirlwinds.4

A few scholars do not believe that Job is expressing remorse or regret in any sense in his final reply. For example, M. Tsevat says that Job only acknowledges in 42:2-6 that he now knows, from the content of God's speeches, that justice is not an integral part of the universe and that one cannot, and should not, expect anything for one's behavior. Freed from that misconception, Job is then prepared to live a truly pious and moral life with no such

1 Of what Job repented is debated. Most scholars favor the view that he repented of his words and/or attitude towards God during the dialogue with his friends.

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false hopes or claims.\textsuperscript{5} Dale Patrick translates 42:6, "Therefore I repudiate and repent of dust and ashes," and interprets vv 2-6 as Job declaring that, because of the wonder of God's ways, he will change his speech from lament and accusation of God to praise and rejoicing.\textsuperscript{6} Although not seeing Job as repentant in the usual sense, these views nevertheless agree that Job changed his attitude, speech, and behavior, and that he worshipped God.

In 1979 J. B. Curtis presented a radically different translation and interpretation of Job's responses.\textsuperscript{7} He argued that Job did not repent, but totally and unequivocally rejected Yahweh. This represents a complete reversal of the traditional interpretation. He paraphrases 40:4 as follows:

\begin{quote}
Although I dealt with matters that to you are trivial when I spoke earlier, I will now with contemptuous revulsion cease speaking altogether. He sees Job here sarcastically expressing his hostility by saying it is useless to try and talk to a god who is so concerned with great things that he is not even aware of the existence of such small problems as the suffering of the innocent. He views 42:3a and 4 as Job "daring to hurl back in God's teeth his own words," and "sarcastically attacking the god who thinks that his might answers all questions."\textsuperscript{8} J. B. Curtis adds that 42:4-5 indicate that God had wanted to question Job, and he did, but about irrelevancies. The experience of seeing God had confirmed the reports Job had heard about God and had proved his injustice. So, according to J. B. Curtis's translation of 42:6, Job, "totally disenchanted with this god," said:

\begin{quote}
Therefore I feel loathing contempt and revulsion (toward you, O God); and I am sorry for frail man.
\end{quote}

Job thus totally and finally rejects this unjust, unfeeling, and irrelevant deity.\textsuperscript{9}

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., 509.
\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., 510.
The variety of opinions about Job's response to Yahweh and especially the radically different translation and interpretation by J. B. Curtis demand that we reexamine and reevaluate this portion of the text of Job. That is the purpose of this article.

To understand the meaning of Job's responses, we need to consider them within their context. So, before focusing on the Hebrew text of Job's replies, we shall first consider relevant factors from the literary context of the Book of Job (ancient Near Eastern parallel literature), and then the immediate context (the meaning and intent of the Yahweh speeches to which Job responded).  

I. Ancient Near Eastern Literary Parallels

The date of composition of the Book of Job is much debated, nevertheless its setting is generally considered to be in the second millennium B.C. Archaeology has provided from that era several other wisdom texts that consider the issue of human suffering. These texts are commonly referred to by scholars as the "innocent sufferer" texts and are often considered to be a subgenre within the Wisdom Literature.

Although these "innocent sufferer" texts originated in Mesopotamia, they, as with other Mesopotamian literature, were probably known throughout the Near Eastern area. The findings of archaeology have demonstrated that economic and cultural exchange took place. In the field of literature, a fragment of the Mesopotamian Gilgamesh Epic from about the thirteenth century B.C. has been found at Megiddo in Palestine. Mesopotamian wisdom texts have also been found at Ugarit. Among them is one Nougayrol has called "Juste Souffrant" because it presents an innocent man struggling with the problem of his experience of suffering. The suggested date for this text is ca. 1300 B.C. Similarties of literary format, poetic style, and certain theological

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10 A fuller discussion of these factors and related issues can be seen in my Th.M. thesis, "Job, Repentant or Rebellious ?" (Westminster Theological Seminary, 1983).
concepts (e.g., divine retribution according to man's behavior) as well as of theme, indicate that these texts may constitute part of the literary context of the Book of Job. So, we shall examine these texts to see what attitudes they present as acceptable in a sufferer. If these documents do not allow for attitudes of revulsion and rejection of the deity as their conclusion, then it is less likely that Job responded thus to Yahweh. That would lessen the likelihood that J. B. Curtis's interpretation is correct. Conversely, if repentance and submission are found consistently in the sufferers, more likely Job's attitude would be similar and the historical conventional interpretation correct.

The oldest extant text which deals theologically with the problem of human suffering is from Sumer. Its title is "Man and His God" and it is often referred to as "The Sumerian Job." The "hero" is a righteous man who nevertheless is stricken with severe sickness and bitter suffering. He describes his suffering, then laments over it. He concludes with three pleas for deliverance alternating with two confessions of sin. The first is just a general confession of his sinfulness as a human being, but the second is a confession of the sins his god made known to him. His lament and repentance are accepted by the god who then restores his health and prosperity. The Sumerian "Letter to Enki" shows this same pattern--the need for confession of sin and repentance so that the god would end the man's sufferings and restore his happiness.

Three Babylonian texts, AO 4462, "Ludlul bel nemeqi" ("I I will praise the Lord of Wisdom," often called "The Babylonian (Job)") and "The Babylonian Theodicy," resemble the Book of Job thematically. The attitude considered to be correct for a sufferer

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16 J. Nougayrol, "Une version ancienne du 'Juste souffrant,'" RB 59
is clear from these texts. He should examine himself to see if he had committed any errors, and if he had he should repent of them. Whether or not his own sin was the cause of his suffering, he should accept the suffering and not complain, rebel, or blaspheme his god. He should continue to serve his god faithfully and seek his god's compassion. The Akkadian "Righteous Sufferer" text found at Ugarit demonstrates the same concept of the correct attitude in a sufferer.

If we accept the consensus of scholarly opinion which holds that the Book of Job is also one of the "innocent sufferer" texts, then we expect to find this same attitude from Job. After the theophany, Job's wrong attitude would change, and he would praise and worship God once more. He would no longer complain, nor would he rebel against God and reject him. Conversely, he would repent of any sin God showed him. This, I maintain, is what did occur.

The general interest in "the fear of the Lord" found in Wisdom Literature introduces another factor relevant to Job's response to Yahweh. At the beginning of the Book of Job, Job was a man who feared the Lord and shunned evil. The book's genre as Wisdom Literature requires that Job repent and return to fearing the Lord when at the end of his suffering Yahweh charged him with wrongdoing. He would not rebel.

II. Immediate Context

Understanding and interpreting Job's responses in the light of their immediate context involves taking account of the specific, content and purpose of Yahweh's speeches to which he was responding. To understand the purpose, and hence the meaning, of the Yahweh speeches, we must see them, too, in context. They are addressing specific statements, questions and attitudes of Job in the preceding dialogues.

Actually, Job's speeches in the dialogues exhibit a mixture of features, e.g., questioning, agony, faith, hopelessness, perplexity, and confidence. He argues with his friends, defending himself against their accusations and maintaining his righteousness. He

addresses God, and speaks about him, as he wrestles to reconcile his theology and past experience of God with his present experience of suffering and the wickedness he sees about him. Job believed God was the sovereign Lord, and he recognized no second causes. So, as he wrestled to reconcile this with his loss and suffering, he concluded that God had changed from being his friend (29:2-4) who cared for him to his enemy who persecuted and maltreated him (10:8-12; 13:24-27; 30:21).

Throughout the dialogue, as he wrestled to reconcile his theology with his experience and to refute the accusations of his friends, Job accused God of a number of things. He said God oppressed him while he smiled on the schemes of the wicked (10:3), attacked him in anger and shattered him (16:9,12), wronged him and counted him an enemy (19: 6-11 ), denied him justice (27:1) and maltreated him ruthlessly (30:19-21).

Although he may not have been conscious of the full implications of what he was saying, Job was actually passing judgment upon God by thus accusing him. Job also passed judgment on God for not fulfilling his duties as a ruler when he allowed the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the needy to be oppressed by the wicked and did not intervene on their behalf (24:1-12). In thus judging God, Job was in fact exalting himself above God and implying that he would be a better ruler.

However, we need to remember that these things were said within the context of Job's wrestling to reconcile his beliefs about God with the reality he was experiencing and witnessing. Alongside the above statements we find others that reveal Job's continued faith in God and in his righteousness and justice (e.g., 12:13; 13:15; 14:15-17; 17:3; 19:25; 23:6,7, 10-12). In all that he said, Job does not appear to be spurning God but rather Job is seeking God and his answers.

In Yahweh's speeches every pericope except one begins with

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17 1:21; 2:10. He knew the Sabeans and Chaldeans had robbed him (1: 15,17) but he did not mention them. Cf. 9:24, "If it is not he, then who is it ?"

a question. That one, the behemoth pericope, closes with a question. The use of questions is a very effective teaching method. They involve the "learner" by calling forth from him a personal response. So, Yahweh's use of them may indicate that his speeches were not designed to be merely a display of his power and authority, but also for a relationship purpose. They were designed to teach Job about God and about himself, and to draw forth a response.

In his speeches Yahweh brought three accusations against Job, all of them relating to Job's words and attitudes in the dialogue with his friends. In his first speech Yahweh charged Job with using words without knowledge (38:2), contending with God and accusing him of wrongdoing. Job had done all of this, thus, as it were, putting himself on at least equal footing with God. Yahweh dealt with Job's sin here by asking him a series of questions centered around his work of creating and sustaining the universe and some of the animals that inhabit it. Yahweh asked Job repeatedly what his part was in this work, both past and present, and whether he had the knowledge, power, and authority to perform it. Each question was so framed that Job could only answer that he did not possess those qualities, only God did.

As well as thus emphasizing that he is infinite in wisdom, power, and authority, God also spoke to Job of his care of and concern for his creation, both animate and inanimate. He sends rain on the dry land, provides food for lions and ravens, and cares for other animals. All of creation is shown to be in the control and care of God. At that point, Yahweh challenged Job with "Let him who accuses God answer him" (40:2), and Job makes his first response (40:3-5).

In his second speech Yahweh focuses on his third charge against Job: "Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself?" (40:7). Job was guilty of this too, so that, though he may have been unconscious of the implication, it was as if he were a rival god.

So, Yahweh challenges Job to take over the administration of justice on earth in his stead, if he can (40:9-14). It is clear he

cannot. Yahweh then confronts Job with behemoth and leviathan, creatures and/or chaos forces before whom Job as man was helpless and over whom he had no control. Once again Yahweh revealed Job's weakness and inadequacy and at the same time showed his, Yahweh's, power, authority, and control, not only over the natural creation but also over chaos forces and evil. Yahweh stated explicitly that no man had a claim against him that he must pay (41:11). Yet God had come to Job and spoken to him, to teach, rebuke, correct, and enlighten him. All of this, from God's own initiative, was not because of some "claim" but of grace. To this God, Job responded.

III. Job's Responses

Now we shall consider the text of Job's responses in 40:4-5 and 42:2-6 to establish a translation and an interpretation of them. We shall, of course, establish word-meanings that are in line with the meanings of those words in other parts of the OT, and interpreting Job's replies in the context described above.

As we examine the text of Job's responses, we find that the LXX and the Qumran targum of Job (11QtgJob) differ from the MT in some verses. However, the nature of the LXX translation of Job causes most careful scholars to agree that great caution is needed in the use of it for textual criticism.19 Certainly with regard to the text of Job's responses the weight of evidence is not in favor of the variant translations found in the LXX.

11QtgJob is, on the whole, a sober, literal translation, supportive of the MT.20 However, some divergences from the MT


are found in Job's response in 42:1-6. The most significant of these is the replacing of 42:3 by 40:5. We cannot consider this as proof, though, that originally Job made only one response to Yahweh. Although in the targum 40:4-5 is illegible, in 40:6 Yahweh answers Job, thus indicating clearly that Job must have spoken in at least v 5.21 Also, Job's expressed intention in 40:5 to say no more seems to better fit the interpretation that his first response ends there rather than continuing for a number of verses more.

For the translation of 42:6, 11 QtgJob has "Therefore I am poured out and boiled up (or dissolved), and I am become dust and ashes," a translation differing from both the LXX and the MT. The translator has taken different roots for both of the verbs --mss instead of m's, and hmm (Nifal) instead of nhm.22 Whereas divergences from the MT are not common in this targum, the accumulation of divergences in these verses witnesses to the difficulty the translator was having here. His obvious difficulty and his choice of roots that would not yield the words in the MT without some emendation decrease the value of his translation for determining the meaning of the MT in these verses.

1. Job's First Response, 40:4-5

hen qalloti mah 'asibeka yadi samti lemo pi
'ahat dibbarti welo' 'e’eneh ustayim welo' 'osip

The translation I suggest for these verses is:

Indeed, I am worthless (of no account), What (How) shall I answer you? I put my hand to (over) my mouth, I have spoken once, but I shall not reply (again) even twice, but I shall not add more (I shall not continue).

Scholars agree that the relevant basic meaning of the root qll is "to be light, to be small, to be of little account."23 M. Tsevat draws our attention to the fact that the root qll is antonymous

to *kbd*. Used of a person, the noun *klbd* can mean "weightiness, splendor, distinction, honor." Job had spoken of his *kabod* in 29:20 (also 19:9). In 31:37 Job had said he would approach God like a "prince," and a prince would be a man of *kabod*. But after Yahweh's first speech, which brought Job to realize his finitude and his lack of knowledge, power, and authority, Job responded that he was the opposite of *kabod*, i.e., he was without intrinsic honor and worth. The LXX has *outhen on*, "(I) being nothing," which is the same basic idea.

Two scholars give different translations for *hen qalloti*. E. Dhorme translates, "If I have been thoughtless," although he too states that the basic meaning is "to be light." He chooses that translation to suit the interpretation he gives for the meaning of Job's responses, i.e., he has spoken out of ignorance. His translation does not really convey the meaning of the Hebrew word.

J. B. Curtis translates v 4a as "Although I was too light in what I answered you." He considers that "this is bitter sarcasm, slashing out against a god who is irrelevant." His argument for translating *hen* as "although" cannot be sustained. Also, the Hebrew here does not require the translation he gives. He states that v 4a should be rendered in this way so that it is in keeping with the meaning he proposes for 42:6. He then suggests as a paraphrase for v 4a, "although I dealt with matters that to you are trivial when I spoke earlier." This paraphrase moves further toward subjective interpretation.

The expression "to put the hand to the mouth" is found six times in the OT. There is some variation in the Hebrew expressing this phrase, but the variations are not significant. In Judg 18:19 the expression follows immediately after a command to be quiet, and is really a repetition of that command. It appears to add emphasis. The writer of Prov 30:32 says "hand to mouth"

26 Kubina, *Die Gottesreden im Buche Hiob*, 78.
29 See the Appendix on "The Particle hen" in my Th.M. thesis, "Job, Repentant or Rebellious?"
verb is not used. Again it is a command, apparently emphatic, to be silent.

In Job 21:5, having asked his friends to listen carefully to his words, Job then says, "look at me and be astonished, and put your hand over your mouth." Here too the expression indicates that they should be silent, probably because of feeling astonishment and horror. When describing the respect paid to him in his presuffering days, Job says that "the chief men refrained from speaking and covered their mouths with their hands" (29:9). Again the expression means that they were silent but this time because of a feeling of deep respect. Mic 7:16 describes how, as a result of seeing the Lord's wonders, nations will be ashamed, lose their power, "lay their hands on their mouths and their ears will become deaf," and then (v 17) they go on to fear the Lord. Once more this expression indicates that the nations become silent, apparently because of feelings of shame and awe, and possibly as a sign of submission.

Two ancient reliefs contain scenes which portray the placing of the hand to or upon the mouth as a sign of respect and in one of them possibly amazement. One of those reliefs shows a man being carried skyward on a lion-headed eagle. To our left of that eagle is a man with his hand up towards his mouth. This gesture could be because of amazement or because of respect.31 In the other relief, King Danus is seated on his throne with Crown Prince Xerxes, attendants and guards standing behind him. In front of King Darius is a Median dignitary who is bowing slightly from the waist and with a hand upon his mouth.32 Clearly this posture shows respect and homage.

In summary, the five biblical uses examined above all indicate that a person putting the hand to the mouth signifies silence. With the usages in Judg 18:19 and Prov 30:32, no emotional involvement is evident, though they may be considered emphatic. In the other three usages, the person is silent because of a feeling of astonishment, shame or awe, or as an indication of deep respect or even submission. The association of this gesture with respect and homage, and possibly with amazement, is confirmed by the reliefs described above.

31 ANEP, #695, pp. 222, 333.
32 ANEP, #463, pp. 159, 303.
So, as we consider Job's use of that expression in 40:4, we expect it to mean that Job is saying he will be silent. This certainly fits the immediate context as Job emphasizes in v 5 that he is not going to speak. Also the question "what (how) shall I answer you?" indicates that Job is not going to speak. Job uses this expression in responding to Yahweh's first speech. It follows Job's acknowledgement that he is "worthless, of little account." So, to say that with this gesture Job was conveying his feeling of unworthiness, shame, awe, reverence, and even submission to Yahweh, accords well with both the context and other usages of the gesture.

J. B. Curtis gives a different interpretation of this expression. He agrees that its basic meaning is "to become silent" but says this meaning is usually "overlaid with strongly emotional overtones." Although he mentions the feelings of awe, profound respect, and remorse as the emotions seen in other biblical uses of the expression, yet apparently he feels free to suggest any feeling as long as it is a strong emotion. He says that the emotion Job feels here would be that of "profound revulsion." So, he paraphrases v 4b as "I will now with contemptuous revulsion cease speaking altogether." By interpreting the gesture in this way, J. B. Curtis has introduced an emotion which is the opposite of feelings associated with the expression in all other places extant. To do thus is to contravene sound exegetical procedure.

Scholars agree about the basic meaning of 40:5, although they differ about the interpretation of it as part of Job's response. Some scholars would emend 'e'eneh to 'esneh which means "I shall repeat it." However this emendation is unnecessary. The idea of repetition is frequently left unexpressed in Hebrew. For example, in both Ps 51:20 and Isa 9:9 bnh only is used to mean "build again." In the same way, 'e'eneh in the MT can mean "respond again."

The use of ascending numeration, such as "... once... twice..." in v 5, is common in biblical and Semitic poetry. It is particularly a feature of Wisdom literature. It may simply mean "several" as it does here. See, e.g., Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; Eccl 11: 2.

34 Gordis, *Job*, 466.
35 Ibid., 58.
How do we interpret this first response of Job's? First, Yahweh's speech to which Job was responding was designed to teach him his lack of knowledge, power, and authority—i.e., his finitude—and at the same time remind Job of God's omniscience, omnipotence, and benevolence. This purpose was accomplished and Job responded, "indeed, I am worthless [of no account]." As Job was confronted by his Creator, he recognized once more, and in fuller measure (as seen from his second response), his "creatureliness."

Secondly, Yahweh accused Job of speaking "words without knowledge" and of "accusing God." Job responded to this accusation by what he said in vv 4b and 5. I would suggest that by putting his hand over his mouth he was acknowledging the truth of God's accusation and expressing shame for this. In v 5, also, Job was acknowledging that he had indeed spoken as God charged, but he would not do so again. Job repeatedly expressed the desire to come before God so that God should present his charges against him, and Job was sure he would be able to answer those charges. Then God would declare him not guilty. Now God has confronted Job, he has presented charges (though not those Job expected), and Job has no answer. He is guilty of these charges, and he thus acknowledges it.

2. Job's Second Response, 42:2-6

Most scholars now recognize that vv 3a and 4 are virtual quotations of Yahweh's challenges to Job in 38:2-3 and 40:7.36 However, some regard them as misplaced variants.37 I concur that they are Job's words quoting God's challenges in order to respond to them.

In the Kethib of the first word in 42:2, we find a defective spelling of the first person singular form of the verb. The yod is missing from the end of the word. The Qere gives the full spelling. The text itself clearly requires the verb to be in the first person and not the third. Also, both the LXX and 11QtgJob translate it

"I know." The same type of defective spelling is found in other verses, e.g., Ps 16:2; 140:13; Ezek 16:59. So, we do not hesitate to accept the Qere form.

The translation of 42:2-5 presents no problem. Verse 6, however, contains three problems which we shall examine in some detail. I suggest the following translation for 42:2-5.

I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

"Who is this obscuring counsel without knowledge?"

"Indeed I have spoken, but I did not understand, of things too wonderful for me (which) I did not know.

"Listen, now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you answer inform me!"

(By hearsay) my ears had heard of you, and now my eyes have seen you.

These verses indicate that Job now reaffirms his belief in God's omnipotence and sovereignty. In Yahweh's second speech, Job was confronted with situations he could not handle. God, however, could handle them. As a result of both speeches Job acknowledges that, as Yahweh said, he has spoken from ignorance and lack of understanding. God revealed to Job something of his ways and purposes in creation, in the functioning of the natural elements that he controlled, and in his care of the animals. Job had not understood these--they were too wonderful and difficult for him. As a result of Yahweh's second speech Job realized that he did not understand God's mercy in judgment. He had not comprehended the exaltedness and might of God the Creator. And he did not understand God's restraint of chaos powers. He confesses here that he had indeed spoken from ignorance and lack of understanding.

God came and spoke directly to Job. God began each of his speeches, "I will question you, and you answer me!" God did question Job. Job summarizes his answer in vv 5 and 6. Formerly, Job knew of God only by hearsay. Yet he believed in God and lived for him, fearing, worshipping, and trusting him. Now Job has had a personal, direct encounter with God. God has revealed himself to Job. What Job's physical eyes saw we do not know--that was not important. Undoubtedly the storm from which God spoke gave some physical impression of God's presence. But Job's

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38 *Mezimmah* is used for God's purpose in Jer 23:20; 30:24 and 51:11.
increased knowledge of God from what God said to him and the awareness of the immediacy of the divine presence as God spoke were such that Job said "now my eyes have seen you." Verse 6 begins with "therefore" and hence is a result of Job's "seeing . God":

'al ken 'em'as wenihamti 'al 'apar wa'eper:

Before I propose a translation for this verse, it is necessary to investigate the usage and probable meaning of the verbs $m's$ and $nhm$, the object of $m's$, and the significance of the phrase associated with "dust and ashes."

(1) $m's$. In Holladay's Lexicon (p. 180) the meaning is given as "refuse, reject." In BDB (p. 549) the meanings "refuse, reject" are given and also the meaning "despise." An examination of seventy-three usages of this word in the OT shows that in the vast majority of cases its meaning is "reject." In twelve verses the meaning "despise" is preferable. In a number of places an element of both meanings seemed to be involved, though one or the other is prominent. In the verses where it means "reject" the "rejection" is due to a variety of causes.

J. B. Curtis mentions fourteen verses in which he says $m's$ is used with great emotional depth. He says nothing about the other fifty-nine verses. On the basis of the few verses he mentions, and the emotion he see in them, he concludes that m's "has a fundamental meaning like 'to feel loathing contempt and revulsion.'" However, his argument cannot be sustained. In a number of the verses he mentions the word simply means "reject" (e.g., Ps 15:4; 36:5; 118:2; Isa 7:15-16; 33:15). Other connotations he mentions are only his subjective speculation, e.g., that in Judg . 9:38 and Jer 4:30 “m's connotes malicious hatred with intend to kill.” In any case, one cannot take an emotion that may accompany an action and substitute it for the action itself. They are

39 Judg 9:38; Job 9:21; 19:18; Ps 53:6(5); 106:24; Prov 3:11; 15:32; Isa 33:8; Ezek 21: 15(10), 18(13); Amos 5:21; and possibly, Jer. 4:30. The "meaning of m's in Job 7:16,36:5 and 42:6 is discussed later in this chapter.
40 Jer 14:19; Lev 26:43-44; Lam 3:45; Judg 9:38; Jer 4:30; Job 30:1; Ps 15:4; 118:22; Isa 7:15-16; 33:15; Ps 36:5; 89:39. See Curtis, "Job's, Response," 503.
42 Ibid., 503.
not synonymous. Many other usages of m's are not related to an emotion at all. See, e.g., Isa 7:15-16; 33:15; Jer 31:37; Ezek 5:6; 20:13, 16, 24.

Although it is clear that m's means "to reject" and/or "to despise" there is still a problem in Job 42:6 because the object of the verb is not specified. In four verses in the OT the Qal of this verb does not have its object expressed. All of these verses are in Job 7.16, 34.33, 36.5 and 42.6.

A comparison of Job 9:21 with 7:16 confirms that in 7:16 Job is despising and rejecting his life of suffering which he described in the preceding verses, so that he wants no more of them. This meaning is also clarified by the statement that follows m's, "not forever would I live."

In 34:33 also, the context makes it clear that the object of m's is what has just been described in the preceding verses, i.e., to repent. So, Elihu is saying of Job "when you refuse/reject to repent." Similarly with 36:5, the context indicates what the object of m's should be, but this time from the verses that follow it, not those that precede it.

(2) nhm. Before we can understand what the object of m's in 42:6 may be, we need to consider the meaning of the verb nhm in this verse. It is in the Nifal. Holladay's Lexicon (p. 234) gives as its meanings, "to regret, have a change of heart, relent, turn from a former attitude, and hence repent; to allow oneself to be sorry; to comfort or console oneself." The meanings given in BDB (pp. 636-37) are similar.

The Nifal form of nhm is used forty-eight times in the OT. God is the subject of thirty-four of those occurrences,43 man is the subject of the other fourteen. Sixteen of the verses in which God is the subject speak of his relenting, and a change of action or situation takes place as a result. Thirteen other verses speak of God's feeling grief, sorrow, regret, pity, or compassion, and again there is action to change the situation.

Eight of the verses in which man is the subject are concerning his being comforted after bereavement and are not relevant to our concern. In Judg 21:6 and 15 nhm indicates sorrow ("grieved

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43Gen 6:6-7; Exod 32:12,14; Judg 2:18; 1 Sam 15:11, 29(2), 35; 2 Sam 24:16; 1 Chr 21:15; Ps 90:13; 106:45; 110:4; Isa 1:24; 57:6; Jer 4:28; 15:6; 18:8, 10; 20:16; 26:3, 19, 19; 42:10; Ezek 24:14; Joel 2:13, 14; Amos 7:3, 6; Jonah 3:9, 10; 4:2; Zech 8:14.
for") over a situation such that the sorrow instigated action to change the situation. Exod 13:17 indicates as its meaning, regret that produced a change of mind which was followed by a change of plans. The context of both Jer 8:6 and 31:19 indicate probable sorrow or regret because of doing wickedness or straying from the Lord, accompanied by the change needed to remedy the situation, i.e., turning from wickedness or returning to the Lord. Hence in both of these verses nhm is translated "repent."

So, in Job 42: 6 we would expect nhm to have a similar meaning. This means that Job would feel sorrow or regret over something and that he would either turn from the cause or make necessary changes.

From the above investigation of the usage of nhm we see that it is the quality of feeling, be it compassion, grief, or regret, that is either accompanied by change-generating action, or which instigates it. It does not necessarily mean "repent." However, it may do so. Whenever nhm is caused by sin or by turning or straying from the Lord, it means "repent." The connotation of sub is more particularly that of "returning" to the Lord, without any necessary designation of emotion. On the other hand, nhm meaning "repentance" implies sorrow and regret because of the sin together with the action of leaving sin and resulted in turning to the Lord.

J. B. Curtis denies that nhm ever means "repent," maintaining rather that it means "to be sorry." On the basis of Gen 18:27 and Job 30:19 where Job says he has become like dust and ashes (but note: because he says God has thrown him to the ground!), he says that the expression "dust and ashes" has the idiomatic meaning "man in his utter frailty before the divine."44 So, he translates Job 42:6 as follows:

Therefore I feel loathing contempt and revulsion [toward you, O God];
and I am sorry for frail man.45

Once again his conclusions are based on too little evidence and reveal a strong subjective bias. An example of this is his statement that "there can be little doubt that the unexpressed object of the

45 Ibid., 505.
loathing is God," with only brief and speculative suggestions as support for his statement. His translations cannot be sustained, therefore his argument that Job did not repent collapses.

Dust and ashes, separately or together, were often associated with mourning or with humbling oneself in the OT. When Job's friends came, they wept, tore their robes, and sprinkled dust on their heads (2:12). Joshua and the elders of Israel tore their clothes and put dust on their heads as they humbled themselves before the Lord (Josh 7:6). See also Lam 2:10. After Job was afflicted he sat among the ashes (2:8). The wearing of sackcloth and ashes when mourning and humbling oneself is mentioned in 2 Sam 13:19; Esth 4:1, 3; Ps 102:9(10); Isa 58:5; 61:3; Jer 6:26; Dan 9:3; and Jonah 3: 6. The use of both dust and ashes together is mentioned in Ezek 27: 30. So, strong support exists for seeing this connotation in Job 42: 6 also and for translating 'al 'apar wa'eper literally, "upon [or with] dust and ashes."

So, I would translate Job 42:6 as follows:

Therefore I will have nothing more to do with (i.e., despise and reject) the sins of which you charged me which I committed by my speaking without understanding, and I repent upon dust and ashes.

From the examination of the text of Job's responses that I have presented, I believe it is clear that Job did respond to Yahweh's speeches as Yahweh desired. Job recognized that he had sinned and he repented of that sin. This sin was not committed prior to his suffering--it was not the cause of his suffering. Rather, his sin was in the words he spoke, accusing and condemning God, though in measure unconsciously, as he justified himself. He also sinned in thus exalting himself as a "rival god."

Job's responses also reveal that he came to a deeper, more intimate knowledge of God and relationship with him. He reaffirmed his confidence in the supreme power and sovereignty of God. He accepted the fact that he could not understand God's works and his ways.

Job's relationship with God was renewed by his repentance, and enriched and strengthened by God's self-revelation to him. Now, not only did Job know that God is sovereign, but also he knew, in-

46 Ibid., 504. See also n. 25 on this page.
timately, the God who is sovereign. In that knowledge and that relationship is the resolution of life’s problems.47

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47 I wish to thank Dr. R. B. Dillard, Dr. T. Longman III, and Dr. M. Silva for their helpful suggestions, which have served to improve this paper.
Literary Features 
of the Book of Job

Gregory W. Parsons

Literary Genre

The consensus that Job is a literary work of the highest magnitude does not make the task of classifying it with regard to its literary type any easier. Many literary critics have attempted to place the Book of Job into one overarching literary genre or category. However, this writer views all attempts to fit the book into one category as failing to do justice to the complex nature of its literary fabric.

Suggestions as to the basic (or comprehensive) literary genre of Job normally have fallen into three major categories: the lawsuit (םור), which is a legal or judicial genre; the lament genre, which is frequent in the Psalms; or the controversy dialogue or dispute, which is similar to the wisdom genre of contest literature in the ancient Near East.

BASIC VIEWS

Lawsuit. Because of the occurrence of legal terminology in Job, many scholars have argued that the juridical sphere is the backdrop of the book. Richter understands the Book of Job as a secular lawsuit by Job against God whereby the friends serve as witnesses (who apparently place a counter-suit against Job). Chapters 4-14 are viewed as a preliminary attempt at reconciliation out of court, and chapters 15-31 are seen as formal court proceedings between Job and the friends. The resumption of the
case against Job by Elihu and the judgment of God (38:1-42:6) in the form of a secular counter-lawsuit between God and Job result in the withdrawal of the accusation by Job.3

Scholnick has presented a scholarly argument for viewing Job as a "lawsuit drama" whereby the man (Job) takes his opponent (God) to court. The issue of the legal guilt or innocence of the two parties involved is resolved through a lawsuit in which the friends are judges and witnesses.4

Lament. Although Westermann recognized the existence of a controversy dialogue in Job 4-27, he argued that the most important element in the book is the lament (the personal lament well known in the Psalms). The lament by Job, which begins (chap. 3) and ends (chaps. 29-31) the dialogue proper, completely encloses the controversy speeches.5

Gese suggested that the original "folk book" of Job, now allegedly extant only in the prose sections--the prologue, the epilogue, and in 3: 1 and 38:1--was a "paradigm of the answered lament" patterned after three Mesopotamian texts in which an answer of God came to the sufferer.6 However, Gese argued that the author of Job changed the original intent of the "paradigm of the answered lament," whose form he ironically employs, by substituting in the poetic sections a demand for a trial with God I instead of the allegedly original plea for mercy.7

Controversy dialogue. Some scholars have proposed that Job is a variant of the philosophical dialogue, namely a controversy dialogue similar to the disputation or contest literature in the ancient Near East.8 Although Crenshaw acknowledges that Job cannot be squeezed into one narrow genre, he considers the controversy dialogue, which is influenced by its function within prophetic literature as self-vindication, as the major literary type in the book.9

CONCLUSION

Three views which have been proposed to describe the comprehensive literary genre of the Book of Job have been cited. However, the realization that each of the three positions has at least some validity underlies the fact that none of them succeeds in adequately accounting for the diversified nature of this complex literary work.10 As a matter of fact, the author of the Book of Job skillfully interwove at least three major literary genres into the fabric of his composition. Using the terminology of Leveque, the author skillfully played from three different "keyboards" in
his polyphonic work--wisdom types, a genre from Psalms, and a
genre from the legal sphere. Consequently it can be concluded
that the Book of Job is a "mixed genre" in which its author
expertly blended a variety of literary types in order to serve the
function of the book.12

Literary Devices

Two key literary devices which are employed by the writer of
Job are the usage of irony and of mythopoetic language. The
present author will analyze the significant manner in which
these two major literary devices are utilized to assist the develop-
ment of the argument and purpose of the book. Also less impor-
tant literary devices will be briefly noted.

IRONY13

The Book of Job is truly a study in irony. Irony is a significant
literary feature which saturates nearly every portion of the
book.14

It is interesting that dramatic irony (similar to that used in
Greek tragedy)15 plays an important role in the basic format of
Job. The readers and the heavenly court share the knowledge
presented in the prologue, of which Job and his friends are not
aware--namely, that Job is innocent of wrongdoing and is being
tested as part of the cosmic purpose of God.

It is precisely because of the reader's knowledge of Satan's
statement that God had put a protective hedge (תַּחַת) about Job
(1:10), that the irony of Job's words in 3:23 becomes evident. Job
bemoans that God had placed a hedge around him (גָּבוּר)16 so that
he could not die. The very protective hedge which (although
removed to a greater distance by God) prevents Job's death (cf.
2:6) and which was intended for good is conceived of as a restric-
tive hedge intended for evil.17 Job consciously speaks ironically
about this "hedge" or security guard (מַעַל) in 7:12. His question
drips with irony as he asks God the himself was so dangerous as
the sea monster that he must be put under twenty-four-hour
surveillance (vv. 17-20). In 13:27 Job again alludes to God's
guard being restrictive. It is ironic that Job (in 29:2) longed for
the bygone days when Yahweh's guard was a blessing rather than
a restrictive hindrance.18 It is this background which enables the
reader to understand the full impact of the irony of the Lord's
words in 38:8 when He asks Job who hedged in the sea with
doors (cf. 7: 12). The Lord here uses the same verb—[םו]—Job employed in 3:23.

The "comforting" friends make use of irony in a subtle attempt to prove that Job is wicked. Their words are aimed at the wicked man with whom they implicitly identify Job by means of verbal irony, whereby they twist Job's words in an attempt to incriminate him.19 For example, Eliphaz's statements in 4:7-11 are an attempt to equate Job with the wicked man whose lot is trouble (םי--cf. Job's usage of the same word in 3:10, 20 to describe his own condition).20 In 4:10-11 Eliphaz obliquely refers to Job's "roar" (or "moaning," cf. 3:24) as actually the roar and groan of a lion (as a symbol of the wicked)21 whose cubs had been scattered and killed because of God's anger.22 However, a deeper irony (of which the reader is aware) overshadows this passage. Eliphaz's question, "Were the upright ever destroyed?" (4:7b) which implies, according to the retribution dogma, that no upright person was ever destroyed, is disproved by the very fact that Job sits before him on the ash heap (cf. 1: 1, 8; 2:3 where Job is designated מ).23 Rather than proving Job to be a sinner, Eliphaz displays his own naive acceptance of an invalid dogma. This not only reinforces Job's innocence in the eyes of the reader24 but also emphasizes the absurdity of the retribution dogma. In similar fashion, Bildad's possible ironic twisting of Job's words (7:21) in 8:525 rebounds against him by the deeper irony of Bildad's own statements of 8:6 and 8:20.26 Job counters the ironic jibes of the friends with his own ironic remarks. In 12:2 Job retorts sarcastically (or perhaps satirically)27 that his friends had such a monopoly on wisdom that wisdom would cease when they died. On the other hand he ironically states that what they say is common knowledge to all men (12:3c). Job says that he himself was not inferior to them in knowledge (12:3b and 13:2b). Beneath the irony of this retort and his statement "what you know, I also know" in 13:2a lies the deeper irony that the equality of their knowledge (especially with regard to the assumption of the retribution dogma) consisted of virtual ignorance of the Lord's ways.28 Once again Sophoclean irony reinforces the absurdity of the dogma of divine retribution. Here it also illustrates the futility of a "dialogue" between Job and the three friends and adumbrates the necessity for the divine perspective which comes in the Lord's speeches.29

The usage of irony in the dialogue of Job, although especially frequent in the first cycle, occurs almost throughout the three
cycles. For example, from the second cycle, Bildad in 18:4 reverses the meaning of Job's words of 14:18 that the "rock is moved from its place." Then Bildad seemingly presents the simple orthodox view of the wicked and his fate (18:5-21). However, it is more likely "a masterpiece of irony" in which Bildad fits the words Job had already spoken about his own condition into the description of the wicked man's fate. Job, who apparently sensed the irony of Bildad's words, responded in 19:2 by mocking Bildad's introductory words of his last two speeches (πόσος "how long?").

In the third cycle, for example, Eliphaz in 22:15-18 turns around Job's quotation of the wicked man (21:14-16) to support his contention that Job has ironically fallen into the same path as wicked men of old (cf. Job's statement in 7:19). Consequently, Eliphaz counsels Job to put away his wickedness in order that "his prosperity would be restored (22:22-30). He concludes by stating (in 22:30) that if Job would repent his prayers would once again become efficacious, not only for those who are innocent, but even for the guilty (those not innocent). This would later find ironic fulfillment (in a way not envisioned by Eliphaz) when Job's prayer for his three friends (including Eliphaz himself-42:8-10) was heard so that they, who were not innocent, were forgiven. Again the reader is enabled to see the incongruity of the retribution dogma which Eliphaz champions.

Job's words in 27:5-6, where he insists that he would cling to integrity and maintain his righteousness till death despite the allegations of his friends, bears ironic resemblance to the Lord's analysis of Job in 2:3. The irony that results from the use of the word "integrity" (יֵשׁ עֲרֵץ) causes the reader to wonder if the Lord would still describe Job in the same way after Job's long and blasphemous attacks on God. The usage of this literary device causes the reader to desire (and anticipate) the voice of God from the "whirlwind."

There is a noticeable lessening of irony in chapters 29-31. Apart from the mild "self-irony" of 29:2 and 29:18-20, which contrasts Job's former state with his present state (chap. 30), there is almost no irony either about God (cf. perhaps 31:3-4) or toward the friends. There may be an "implied ironic slap" toward the friends in 29:25c ("like one who comforts mourners." This technique of "deironization" (which allegedly verifies the spurious nature of 29-31) is fitting for Job's soliloquy in which he ignores the friends and turns his hopes toward God (though
indirectly) in an almost hopeless "last-ditch" appeal for vindication. The brunt of the irony, which is directed toward Job, consists of a dual contrast—between his former expectations (chap. 29) and his present state, and between his earlier flagrant attacks on God and his present somber appeal for vindication. These contrasts are indicative of Job's desperate situation and prepare the way for the Lord's speeches.

The speeches of Elihu are particularly ironic (or even sarcastic) toward the friends for their failure to deal properly with Job (32:7, 9-11, 15-16). They also contain a few gently ironic utterances directed toward Job (cf. 34:33 and 37: 17-20). This may illustrate the somewhat neutral (or perhaps mediatorial) role of Elihu.

The Lord's speeches (particularly the first) are permeated with obviously ironic remarks which border on sarcasm (38:4-5, 18,21). However, they also contain more subtly ironic remarks. For example, the Lord's usage of הַמָּדֹר in 40:2 seems to be an implicit reference to Job's hypothetically מַדֹּר (9:33).

MYTHOPOEIC LANGUAGE

The observant reader of the Book of Job is struck by the prevalence of mythopoeic language (the poetic usage of mythological allusions) which is perhaps more prominent in Job than in any other biblical book. Smick has divided the mythological terminology into four categories: (1) the forces of nature (the fire, the sea, etc.); (2) "creatures cosmic or otherwise"; (3) cosmography; and (4) pagan cultic practices. How do these various mythological allusions fit with an evangelical view of the origin and purpose of the Book of Job?

The only reference to Smick's last category occurs in Job 3:8 where Job calls for enchanters to curse the day (of his birth) by arousing Leviathan (presumably to swallow the sun). (Thus the context supports the retention of יָם in the Masoretic text instead of its emendation to יָם [sea or the god Yamm!--a chaos force in Ugaritic as the counterpart of Leviathan, the sea monster.) However, there may indeed be a subtle play on the similar sound of יָם ("day") and יָם ("sea") and the parallel between Leviathan and Yamm in Ugaritic mythology. Job apparently employed "the most vivid and forceful proverbial language" available to him to emphasize the depths of his despair and the intensity of his anguish. Because of Job's clear statement of his monotheism, (in 31:26-28), this mythological allusion (as well as others in the
book) should not be considered as indicative of Job's belief in the validity of pagan cultic practices or of the existence of other deities. As a matter of fact, at least two passages where Job speaks contain possible polemical overtones. The first passage (9:5-13), which includes a host of mythological allusions, emphasizes the sovereignty of the Lord over the sea and the uniqueness of the Lord as the God who alone (יהוה) made the heavens, which are worshiped by pagans (9:8). Also 9:7 makes it clear that it is the Lord, not a monster, who is the cause of the eclipse of the sun. The sun (here denoted by שמש) is never referred to as מזון by the man Job, which seems to be a conscious but subtle polemic against sun worship.

The second passage, 26:5-14, also contains several mythological allusions. However, the emphasis is clearly on the sovereignty of God over all the forces of nature. Verse 7 seems to contain a merism whereby the Lord's creation of the north (probably the "heavens" or "skies") and His establishment of the earth upon nothing indicate His total control of the universe (see vv. 8-14). Therefore verse 12 which refers to ים (the sea with definite article indicating not a proper name) seems to be at least an effort at "demythologizing," if not antimythical polemicizing.

In the speeches of the friends and of Elihu, besides the few references to cosmography very little mythopoeic language is used. Eliphaz (in 5:7) speaks of בני-רשף "the sons of Resheph" to describe the "flames" or "sparks" which fly upward. Resheph is well-attested as the Northwest Semitic god of plague and pestilence. Similarly Bildad in 18:13 refers to Death's firstborn (היה עם). The mention of "holy ones." (by Eliphaz in 5:1 and 15:15) is reminiscent of the "divine council" motif (cf. 15:7-8) of the ancient Near East in which the lesser divine beings participated in an assembly of the gods who made the decisions (cf. "the sons of God" in the prologue--1:6; 2:1).

Now that the basic data concerning mythopoeic language in Job have been cited, how does one explain the usage of such mythological language? The fact that the mythopoeic language is much more frequent in the speeches of Job (where polemical overtones appear to be present) than in the friends' speeches strongly suggests that these allusions are merely borrowed imagery from the ancient Near Eastern cultural milieu. Corroboration of this may be indicated by noting the presence of mytho-
poeic language in the Lord's speeches. Mythopoeic allusions are clearly present in the descriptions of the restraining of the sea with bars and doors (38:8-10), of Leviathan breathing fire and smoke (41:19-21 [11-13]), and probably of the underworld as having gates (38:17). It is also probable that mythopoeic language occurs in the personification of the stars (38:7--parallelism with מִילָה בָּעָלָה), of Dawn (שָׁם) in 38:12, and of the constellation Orion (כְּפָרָה) in 38:31.

Why did God use mythopoeic language in His speeches to Job? The present writer has argued elsewhere that polemical overtones exist in the usage of this language. These polemical nuances stress the contrast between the uniquely sovereign Lord who operates by grace and the ancient Near Eastern gods who were bound by the dogma of retribution.

A twofold purpose may be seen in this subtle polemic against the gods: (a) to endorse Job's monotheistic stance in the process of exposing the inconsistency of Job's action (unconscious self-deification) with his theological position; and (b) to emphasize that the Lord cannot be manipulated according to the dogma of retribution which bound the gods of the ancient Near East.

The scope of this article permits only one example of polemic from the Lord's speeches, namely, the subtle reaffirmation of Job's implicit polemic against sun worship. The Lord's control over the sun is shown by His daily command for sunrise and sunset, although the word "sun" (ם,ם) is never directly mentioned in His speeches. This polemic against the sun, however, does much more than endorse Job's monotheistic stance. Since the sun god was almost universally considered to be the guardian of justice in the ancient Near East, the Lord's control of the sun (and its limiting of the activities of the wicked--38:13-15) demonstrated that the Lord (and the Lord alone) was the guarantor of justice. Explicit in this was the fact that the Lord, not Job, was responsible for meting out justice (see 38:12-15 and 40:8-14). Furthermore the portrayal of the Lord's sovereignty over Leviathan, not only a symbol of chaos and of the wicked and proud (see 40:12), but also of Satan himself, may involve a subtle double entendre for the reader which implies God's victory over Satan who has been proved wrong.

OTHER LITERARY DEVICES

The author of Job also employed several other literary devices in the composition of his masterpiece. Only some of
these can be noted, and then very briefly, because they do not contribute in an obvious way to the overall purpose of the book.

Several somewhat related literary devices employed in Job may be conveniently lumped together under the general term "paronomasia." Selected examples of various types of paronomasia which occur in Job will be briefly noted. Some indication of the existence of alliteration is found in 5:8 where every word begins with the letter כ except the last word. Another common literary device is assonance. This is used, for example, in 12:2 where six of the seven Hebrew words contain the humming sound ("m") which accentuates Job's mocking sarcasm. Rhyme occurs occasionally as in 10:8-18 and in 19:3-4, 17-21.

The use of assonance in Job 3:8 borders that of a play on words (or "sense"--paronomasia) where the use of זָר (which is suggestive of יְז) is heightened by the pun between מְזָר ("those who curse") and עָר ("those who arouse"), two virtual homonyms. Eliphaz's play on the words "ground" (הָרְמָא) and "man" (קִז) in conjunction with the repetition of the word עָר "trouble" (5:6-7) serves as an effective device to aid his clever argument that trouble does not spring from the ground but from man.

Job 13:24 may contain a pun by Job on his own name (יוֹב with the use of יָב "enemy") to describe his relationship to God. This pun is similar to the subtle device of double entendre or what Gordis designates talhin, after the Arabic rhetoricians) which sometimes occurs. The author wished to bring both meanings of a word (especially when homonyms existed) to the consciousness of the reader simultaneously. For example, in 7:6 the use of אֹקֶט ("hope") also brings to mind its homonym which means "thread" because of the figure of the weaver employed in the verse.

Conclusion

It has been argued that the Book of Job does not fit into a single literary genre; rather, its author skillfully interwove literary forms from at least three major genres (the lawsuit, the lament, and the controversy dialogue) into the fabric of the book in order to serve its function.

In a previous article the present writer suggested that the purpose of Job (stated in a negative fashion) was the refutation of the retribution dogma and its corollary that man's relationship to
God is a business contract binding in court. In the present article this contention is supported by demonstrating how two major literary devices (irony and mythopoetic language) were expertly employed in the development of this purpose. Furthermore several other literary features (such as assonance, alliteration, and double entendre, which may be collectively called paronomasia) were noted. These less obvious strokes from the poetic brush, which often do not contribute significantly to the overall purpose, may be called the "finishing touches" to the literary masterpiece known as the Book of Job.

Notes

1 Even scholars who attempt to fit Job into one literary genre normally acknowledge the presence of other elements. However, they modify what they view as the overall genre in an attempt to include these other literary elements.

2 However, as noted by Michael Brennan Dick, "legal language, itself does not constitute a distinct literary form, for the juridical sphere encompasses a broad area of human life and does not correspond to a specific situation (Sitz im Leben)." ("The Legal Metaphor in Job 31; Catholic Biblical Quarterly 41 (1979): 37).

3 Heinz Richter, Studien zu Hiob: Der Aufbau des Hiobbuches. dargestellt an den Gattungen des Rechtsleben (Berlin: Evangelisches Verlagsanstalt, (1958)).

4 Sylvia Huberman Scholnick, "Lawsuit Drama in the Book of Job" (Ph. D. diss., Brandeis University, 1975). Scholnick's view is the most persuasive of any writer who tries to fit Job into one Gattung; however, she fails to recognize that the Lord's speeches actually serve to discontinue this metaphor. See this writer's previous article ("The Structure and Purpose of the Book of Job;" Bibliotheca Sacra 138 (April-June 1981): 139-57). Scholnick provides a convenient summary of some other scholars who have noted the idea that Job represents the proceedings of a lawsuit ("Lawsuit Drama," pp. x-xi; cf. also Crenshaw, "Wisdom," pp. 253-54).


10 For instance, none of these adequately accounts for the prose framework of the book. Note the interesting suggestion of Francis I. Andersen, that Job stands closest to the epic history of Israel in which a major point of interest is the speeches, often in poetic form (cf. Genesis and Samuel) (*Job: An Introduction and Commentary* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976], pp. 36-37).


12 The Berlin Papyrus 3024 from Egypt, which bears a resemblance in form to Job with its prose framework surrounding its poetic body, also employs several different literary genres. The theme of the dispute between the man and his Ba is developed by using three or four different literary forms including a legal dispute, a direct dispute, and two prose allegories. See Hans Goedicke, The Report about the Dispute of a Man with His Ba: Papyrus Berlin 3024 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), pp. 14-17. Thus it should be recognized that literary types are not frozen forms but are utilized in various situations which may deviate from the supposed original Sitz im Leben.

13 A concise definition of irony is practically impossible because it involves several nuances of meaning. There are at least three major types of irony: (1) Socratic irony (or irony of character) which is closest to the meaning of the Greek word εἰρωνεία--"dissimulation" (i.e. ignorance purposely feigned to provoke or confound an opponent); (2) verbal irony, which is a figure of speech in which the intended meaning is the opposite (or a modification) of the literal sense of the words used; and (3) irony of events (in drama being called dramatic or Sophoclean irony and in real life called cosmic irony or irony of Fate), which involves an audience (or onlooker) who "perceives that a character is acting in complete ignorance of his true condition." The last type of irony was prominent in Greek drama in which the audience knew in advance the outcome of the legend being enacted in contrast to the actor's own limited understanding of his own actions. See William Joseph Ambrose Power, "A Study of Irony in the Book of Job" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1961), pp. 19-26. Holbert, a student of Power, has suggested another classification of irony in Job, namely, "formal irony" to designate those instances in which it is assumed that Job borrowed Old Testament literary formulas and then altered them in such a way as to heighten the ironic intent of the verbal ironies (see Holbert, "Function and Significance of the Klage in the Book of Job," p. 4, n. 6). However, Holbert's suggestion is too subjective and involves too many assumptions which cannot be proved. His assumption that elements in Job are parodies on the biblical Psalms depends on a date of Job after the Psalms and ignores similar forms in the ancient Near East from a much earlier date. Thus only verbal irony and irony of events are clearly present in the Book of Job.

14 Since an exhaustive study of irony is impossible here, only selected examples will be noted. For other possible examples (some of which are questionable) see the excellent studies by Power ("A Study of Irony in the Book of Job") and Holbert ("Function and Significance of the Klage in the Book of Job"). See also Edwin M. Good, *Irony in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), pp. 196-240.

15 See supra, n. 13.

16 The root יִסָּד used in 3:23 is related to the root יִסָּד used in 1: 10. Between three and ten Hebrew manuscripts have יִסָּד (from the root יִסָּד) in 1:10. For a concise

17 This is technically called Sophoclean irony since the use of the root יָוָא in this verse is a device which brings the reader's attention to his superior understanding of Job's situation in contrast to Job's complete ignorance of it (see Power, "A Study of Irony in the Book of Job," pp. 39, 25). The irony is accentuated by the fact (that, when the hedge is moved outward, Job interprets it as becoming unbearably restrictive (cf. 13:27).

18 Power notes that the Sophoclean irony is "the the hedge and guard that once were forsaken and despised but now are desired and esteemed have throughout the long and tortuous struggle at all times been present" (ibid., p. 138). It is not necessary to emend יָוָא to יָוָא in verse 4 (as Power, p. 136, and others do) to gather this from verse 2 and the overall context.

19 See Good, Irony in the Old Testament, pp. 201-12.


21 See Pritchard for the comparable usage of the lion as a symbol of the impious in the "Babylonian Theodicy" (Ancient Near Eastern Texts, p. 602, lines 48-55, 11 59-64).


23 Holbert calls this verbal irony ("Function and Significance of Klage in the Book of Job," p. 122). However, this is more accurately dramatic or Sophoclean irony since Eliphaz is unaware of the events of the prologue.

24 Ibid., p. 123,

25 It is possible that Bildad intentionally reverses the way יְוָא is employed by implying that Job should be more concerned with seeking God than with Gods hypothetically seeking him (ibid.,p. 157, and Power, "A Study of Irony in the Book of Job, pp.57-58)."

26 Holbert, "Function and Significance of Klage in the Book of Job, p. 157.

27 Sarcasm, which is often used interchangeably with irony, often can only be differentiated from it by the tone of voice used. Its tone is ordinarily very heavy and seldom hides its feelings in contrast to irony which uses a lighter tone and has a far more ambiguous effect (Good, Irony In the Old Testament, p. 26). The distinc- tion between irony and satire seems to be that the latter, which involves subtle ridicule, is "militant irony." It has a bit of fantasy which the reader recognizes as grotesque or absurd (i.e., inconsistent with reality). See Northrup Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (Princeton,NJ: Princeton,?n Uni-versity Press, 1957), pp. 223-24, and The Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. Satire. Sarcasm, a biting and cutting criticism, is similar to satire in that its intention is to wound and even destroy, which is not usually the case with irony .(Good, Irony in the Old Testament, pp. 26-29, 214; and The Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. Sarcasm .


29 Also it neutralizes Job's ironic exposition of God's wisdom and power (12: 13-25). It seems clear from the context of verses 14-25 and from Job's earlier attacks) on God that verse 13 was spoken "tongue in cheek" by Job. I

30 See Good, Irony in the Old Testament, p. 206, for the precise meaning of this reversal.

31 For an elaboration of how this was done, see Power, "A Study of Irony in the Book of Job," pp. 100-102.
32 See 8:2 (ץ-לע) and 18:2 (פ-לע). Job is tired of hearing Bildad's "how long?" (ibid., pp. 102-3).
34 Cf. Job 1 where Job offered sacrifices on behalf of his children. The retention of the Masoretic text (both in its text and vocalization), as found in the NIV, is preferred for two reasons: (1) it is theologically more difficult, that is, it appears to contradict the argument of the friends that the innocent—not the guilty—are saved; and (2) the versions (namely the Theodotionic addition to the Septuagint, the Vulgate, and the Syriac) had to change the person of verse 30b to fit their translation of "innocent one." Cf. Lester L. Grabbe. Comparative Philology and the Text of Job (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977), p. 85. As Gordis has proved, this understanding of verse 30 is in perfect harmony with the Jewish doctrine of corporate responsibility (as in Abraham's appeal to God to save Sodom) (Robert Gordis. "Corporate Personality in Job: A Note on 22:29-30," Journal of Near Eastern Studies 4 [1945]:54-55;)
37 Cf. supra, p. 215. !
39 See Holbert's allegation, "Function and Significance of Klage in the Book of Job," pp. 258 ff.;
40 Good, Irony in the Old Testament, pp. 208-12.
41 Ibid., pp. 234-36. See the present writer's "A Biblical Theology of Job 38:1-42:6," pp. 110-12, for the significance of these and other ironic remarks. See also Elihu's use of ר-ל in 32:12 where he says that there is no ר-ל for Job. See Power, "A Study of Irony in the Book of Job," pp. 139-40.
42 Matitiahu Tsevat, "The Meaning of the Book of Job," Hebrew Union College Annual 37 (1966):86. Although obviously genuine mythological allusions are innumerable, one must be careful not to be victimized by the mythological approach of Walter L. Michel. "The Ugaritic Texts and the Mythological Expressions in the Book of Job" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1970), which attempts to read mythology (esp. Ugaritic) into almost every verse by textual emendation and by speculation. Pope is also often guilty of a mythological approach to Job (Marvin H. Pope, Job, 3d ed. [Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1973]). However, neither ought one to go to the extreme to deny that any mythological expressions occur in Job "in a strained attempt to remove the writers of Scripture from such contamination." (Elmer B. Smick, "Mythology and the Book of Job," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 13 [1970]:101-2).
44 Ibid. The amazing thing is that the mythological allusions abound most in Job's speeches and in the Lord's speeches (where one would least expect them). In contrast, the friends employ little mythopoeic language.
by Koshar-wa-Khasas (in the Ugaritic text--UT 62:35-52) belies a similar concept (Thespis, pp. 228-30).


47 Ibid.

48 See, for instance, the use of רֹאֶה in 3:9, "the eyelids of Dawn," a personification of dawn which is equivalent to the Ugaritic goddess šrt ("Dawn"). See also Job 38:12 and 41:18 (10).

49 However, Job's error in chapter 3 was questioning the sovereign purpose of God by condemning the day of his birth (Smick, "Another Look," p. 215).


51 Although the absence of the article permits 0: to be a proper noun, the article is not mandatory in poetry. The presence of the plural "":11 (lit., "backs") emphasizes that Yamm has many "backs" or waves because he is actually nothing more than a natural force (the waves of the sea) and not a deity at all.


53 Ibid., p. 218.

54 רֹאֶה is cognate to Akkadian samas and Ugaritic sps, both of which are employed to designate the "sun" as well as the "sun deity."

55 רֹאֶה is a rare Hebrew word for "sun" used elsewhere only in Judges 14:18 (except for place names) (Brown, Driver, and Briggs, A Hebrew Lexicon, p. 357). In Job's disavowal of sun worship (31:26), he employs the word רֹאֶה "light" (cf. Elihu's usage in 37:21); in 30:28 he uses the word הָבֵר "heat" which is rarely used in the Old Testament to describe the sun (see Song of Sol. 6:10; Isa. 24:23; 30:26) (Brown, Driver, and Briggs, A Hebrew Lexicon, pp. 328-29). The only occurrence of רֹאֶה in the Book of Job is in 8:16 where Bildad speaks.

56 מ" (In 26:7; 11:21:4:11; "the north") was the cosmic mountain in Ugaritic mythology verses 10-11 may denote a primitive cosmography of the earth as a flat disk floating in the subterranean waters (cf. v. 7) and of the mountains as pillars I supporting the heavens. However, this is more likely phenomenological language (language describing the way things appear--such as meteorologists use "sunrise" or "sunset"--without necessarily endorsing this scientifically). Verses 12-13 describe Rahab, the chaotic monster (see supra, n. 50) which the Lord smashed to pieces. (See the similar description in UT 67:1: 1-3, 27-30, where Mot seems to question the possibility of Baal's defeating the chaos monster.) In 26:13 the monster is designated הָבֵר שֶׁ֫שֶּׁנֶּ "the fleeing serpent" whom the Lord pierced (cf. Isa. 27:1 and also Anat's claim of destroying the serpent in 'nt 111:38-39),


58 This assertion of faith supports the probability that 26:10-11 (and other verses where Job speaks) describe the cosmos in a phenomenological manner.

59 The present writer uses this term to describe a neutralization of the mythical concepts of the ancient Near East. This usage in 26:12 is in contrast to 7:12 where
Job asked if he were Yamm (יָם, without the article) or the sea-monster (נִניָת) that God placed a guard over him (cf. ‘nt III:37 where Anat claims to have muzzled the dragon, tmn). See Smick, "Another Look," p. 223. נניָת, unlike Leviathan and Rahab which are personal names for the monster, is more properly a generic term for the sea-monster (Wakeman, God's Battle with the Monster, p. 79).

See 22:14 and 37:18 where the sky seemed to be a solid dome (יָם הָאָרֶץ) over the earth. This is also probably phenomenological language.

Thus the term "sons of Resheph" describes the various types of pestilence (here "flames") (see Smick, "Mythology," p. 105, and "Another Look," pp. 219-20; also Pope, Job, pp. 42-43). For references to Resheph, see Gaster, Myth. Legend, and Custom, pp. 670-71, 789.


The evidence from the Lord's speeches has been deliberately omitted so far. Also some evidence was not included from the rest of the book such as several instances of personification of the forces of nature (cf. נוה אב --(28:22; 31:12) and מַעְנָה [28:14]).

This is consistent with the strict monotheism of Job (31:26-28) and his friends as well as all the Old Testament writers. Allen's excellent analysis of the Leviathan motif concludes that the mythopoeic language of the Old Testament was merely literary allusion, not "borrowed mythology" ("The Leviathan-Rahab-Dragon Motif in the Old Testament," pp. 60, 63; cf. Bruce K. Waltke, Creation and Chaos [Portland: Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1974], pp. 13-14).

If one assumes that these speeches are really the words of the Lord and not merely words placed in His mouth by the poet (the typical neoorthodox view), the presence of mythological language is a cogent indication that mere imagery is being employed.

In the so-called Akkadian creation epic Enuma Elish, the goddess Ti'amat (Old Akkadian word for "sea"), who apparently represented the powers in the primeval salt water ocean, was slain and bound by Marduk in his storm chariot. After her corpse was cut in half to make the sky out of one half, Marduk provided for bars and posted guards so that her waters could not escape. (See tablet IV, lines 93ff., and esp. 139-40 in Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts, p. 67.) Also see Alexander Heidel, The Babylonian Genesis: The Story of Creation, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951; reprint ed., Phoenix Books, 1963), pp. 40-42. Heidel interprets the guard to refer only to the waters contained in the sky (see p. 42, n. 94).

See Job's allusion in 3:8 to the mythical Leviathan as a force of chaos.

The stars were worshiped as mighty gods in pagan cults of the ancient Near East (cf. Deut. 4:19). For instance, the Ugaritic poem sometimes called "The Birth of the Gracious Gods" (UT 52) celebrates the birth of the astral deities Dawn (סינ) and Dusk (סינ),--lines 52 and 53 -probably the brilliant star Venus regarded by many as both the morning and evening star (cf. Pope, Job, p. 292). For a transliteration and translation of UT 52 (= SS), see G. R. Driver, Canaanite Myths and Legends (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956), pp. 120-25. The mention of "the sons of God" (cf. Job 1:6 and 2:1) bears a resemblance to the assembly of lesser gods in the ancient Near East.

See the reference to the Ugaritic god Sahar in n. 69. See also the reference to the "eyelids of Dawn" (יָם הָאָרֶץ) in Job 41:18 (10) and 3:9. The starVenus, likely called Sattar in Ugaritic, was also venerated and associated with Inanna in (Sumerian myths, with Ishtar in Akkadian, and with Attar (Astarte) in Ugaritic myths. See Helmer Ringgren, Religions of the Ancient Near East, trans. John Sturdy (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973), pp. 9, 59-60, 141-42.

In ancient mythology Orion was a giant hunter. According to Dhorme (Com-
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Orion was the Babylonian god of the chase and war called Ninib (equivalent to Sumerian Ninurta, the stalwart warrior god with his hunting gear of bows and nets). In Egyptian literature the god Osiris (forebear and prototype of all dead kings) was alive in Orion. The dead king could go to the "Field of Rushes" (the Hereafter) with Orion; even the common (nonroyal) men rose and set with Orion as night stars. See Henri Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion: An Interpretation (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), pp. 102-3, 105-6, 109-11.

This included not only a belief in the sovereignty of God (see the writer's article, "The Structure and Purpose of the Book of Job") but even polemical statements against other gods (Job 9:5-13; 26:5-14).

Job's failure to part with this dogma (see 40:8) was not only inconsistent with his theology, but also caused him to adopt a distorted view of God's sovereignty, namely, that it was cruel caprice.

Indirect mentions occur in the use of רַבַּד ("morning") and רַבָּעִים ("dawn") in 38:12-15 and of רָאָה ("light") in 38: 19-20.


In the ancient Near East, it was believed that the sun god drove the demons and other chaotic forces (often embodied in animals) back into their hiding places each morning. See the representation of the god of light (probably Shamash) in opposition to demons in Othmar Keel, The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms, trans. Timothy J. Hallett (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), p. 54, fig. 53. See also Shamash seated in judgment of a lion-headed demon (ibid., p. 208, fig. 286). In Egypt the concept was that of Re in his sun boat emerging victoriously over the underworld serpent of darkness, Apophis (see Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion, p. 18 and fig, 8).

Job 38: 12-15 is an answer to Job's objections of 24:13-17 that wickedness was rampant at night.

Job assumed that the Lord was bound to the dogma of retribution like the sun god and in doing so unconsciously placed himself as judge.

See Revelation 12:3-17 (esp, v. 9)and20:2 where Satan is called a serpent and a dragon. See also Allen, who argues that the Leviathan motif is consistently an emblem of Satan in the Old Testament ("The Leviathan-Rahab-Dragon Motif in the Old Testament").

See Smick, "Another Look at the Mythological Elements in the Book of Job," p. 227. (While the present writer arrived at virtually the same conclusion independently of Smick, it was a real encouragement to find another evangelical who recognized the significance of the mythological overtones of Leviathan for understanding the Book of Job. Except for Allen ("The Leviathan-Rahab-Dragon Motif in the Old Testament," pp, 82-84), other evangelicals have minimized the mythological aspect of Leviathan for the Lord's speeches and have ignored the possible significance of it as a Satanic emblem.) It is only through the permission of the Lord that Satan was allowed to use his forces of chaos and evil against Job.

Although Job is quite ignorant of Satan's role as described in the prologue, it may be through the familiar anti-creation symbol of chaos (Leviathan) that the Lord communicated the fact that chaos forces (within the sovereign restraint set by the Creator) were responsible for the calamities which befell Job and the apparent injustices which Job had observed and lamented.

Immanuel M. Casanowicz (Paronomasia in the Old Testament [Boston: Norwood Press, 1894]) divides this term into "sound-paronomasia" and "sense-paronomasia." The former includes alliteration ("the recurrence of the same initial letter or its phonetic equivalent in two or more words in close or immediate succession"), rhyme (the agreement of sound at the end of words), and assonance (the coincidence of sound in the middle of words). The latter, sense-paronomasia,
is a "play on words" or pun in which the combination of words of similar sounds produces a witticism or jest (see pp. 3-4, 8, 12). Casanowicz lists some fifty-two examples of paronomasia in Job (pp. 91-93), but his list is far from exhaustive.

85 Ibid., pp. 166-67.
87 See supra, p. 218.
89 This was suggested as long ago as the Talmud (Baba Bathra, 15a). See Holbert, "Function and Significance of the Klage in the Book of Job," p. 182, and Good, *Irony in the Old Testament*, p. 230. The plene spelling of "enemy" (rather than ꝝ队伍建设) seems to confirm this.
The Structure and Purpose of the Book of Job

Gregory W. Parsons

It is common knowledge that the Book of Job is universally admired as a literary masterpiece in world literature. Although most of the superlatives have been exhausted to describe its literary excellence, it seems to defy more than a superficial analysis. There has been little agreement with regard to the purpose and message of the book. This article will seek to delineate the literary structure of the Book of Job in order to determine the major purpose of the book. The goal is to demonstrate how the author of Job utilized certain key themes in developing the purpose and message of the book.

Literary Structure

The unity of the Book of Job will be assumed in the analysis of its literary structure. It is believed that each component of the book has a necessary place in the overall design and argument of Job.

Job is a complex literary work in which there has been a skillful wedding of poetry and prose and a masterful mixture of several literary genres. The basic structure of Job consists of a prose framework (the prologue in chapters 1 and 2, and the epilogue in 42:7-17) which encloses an intricate poetic body. The prologue very concisely narrates how God's servant Job lost his family and his wealth in a rapid-fire succession of catastrophic events. Then it relates that when Job's health was removed his wife urged him to curse God and die. Job's three
friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, arrived to comfort Job who remained firm in his devotion to God in the midst of his intense suffering. The reader is taken behind the scenes and informed that the reason for these events is that God was permitting Satan to afflict Job in order to test the motivation for Job's piety. This is done by rapidly alternating between the earthly setting and the heavenly court.

The poetic body (3:1-42:6) begins with a personal lament by Job (chap. 3) in which he curses the day of his birth. This introductory soliloquy corresponds to the final soliloquy by Job (chaps. 29-31), and particularly to chapter 31 (his oath of innocence) which includes a self-curse: These two soliloquies enclose three cycles of disputations (Streitgespräche) between Job and his three friends. A cycle consists of speeches by the three friends (Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, in that order) which are interspersed by a reply of Job to each speech.

This pattern is followed for the first two cycles of speeches (chapters 4-14 and 15-21) but breaks down in the third cycle (when Zophar fails to speak following Job's response to Bildad (chap. 26)). Rather than subjectively attempting to restore the allegedly jumbled text, one should recognize that this alteration of structure contributes to the development of the argument of the book. There are two basic lines of interaction which run through Job--Job's crying out to God and Job's disputations with his three friends. The absence of the third speech of Zophar is consistent with the fact that each of the speeches of the three friends is progressively shorter in each cycle and that Job's responses to each of the friends (which also are progressively shorter) are longer than the corresponding speech of the friends. This seems to signify Job's verbal victory over Zophar and the other two friends. It is also indicative of the bankruptcy and futility of dialogue when both Job and the three friends assume the retribution dogma (which for the friends implies Job's guilt and for Job implies God's injustice). Consequently, this structural design marks a very gradual swing toward a focus on Job's relationship and interaction with God in contrast to the earlier primary interaction between Job and his friends.

This swing toward an emphasis on Job's dispute with God continues in chapters 27-31. Following a possible pause in which Job waited in vain for Zophar's third response, Job concluded his words to the friends in chapter 27 by collectively addressing them and declaring that they had failed to convince
him that he was a sinner who deserved his calamity. Chapter 28, a wisdom hymn, may be a kind of interlude which marks the transition between the two major parts of the poetic body—the previous dialogue between Job and his friends, and the forthcoming long discourses by Job (chaps. 29-31), Elihu (chaps. 32-37), and God (chaps. 38-41) which are almost monologues. 

Chapters 29-31 are comprised of Job's soliloquies in which he longs for his past blessed state of prosperity (chap. 29) and laments his present state of misery because of God's afflictions (chap. 30, which includes an aside to God in direct speech—vv. 21-23). The concluding chapter (31) consists of Job's loath of innocence (common in ancient Near Eastern juridical cases) in the form of a negative confession complete with self-imprecations. Job concludes the chapter with a legal indictment against God to present his charges in writing (31:35-37). The result is a pregnant expectation of God's response.

However, the Elihu speeches (chaps. 32-37), which seemingly interrupt the argument of the book, actually set the stage for the Yahweh speeches. Elihu appears as a type of mediator (an impartial witness) who speaks on behalf of God (36:2) by rebuking the three friends (cf. 32:3, 6-14; 34:2-15; cf. 35:4) and by suggesting that Job needed to repent of his pride which developed because of his suffering (cf. 33:17; 35:12-16). He recommended that Job should exalt God's works which are evident in nature (36:24-37:18) and fear Him who comes in golden splendor out of the north (37:22-24). These basic ideas of Elihu are either assumed or developed by the Lord in His speeches.

The climax to the Book of Job appears in the symmetrical Yahweh speeches (38:1-42:6)—the two divine speeches with Job's two responses—which are the culmination of the skillfully designed poetic body of the book. This pericope is comprised of two divine speeches (each of which is also divided into two principal parts) and two human responses. The precise symmetrical arrangement is illustrated in a comparison of the two "rounds" of divine-human interaction (see the following chart).

Thus except for the summary challenge in 40:2 for Job to respond (introduced by a transitional editorial remark), these two rounds are perfectly symmetrical in basic structure. That no summary challenge was needed at the end of the Lord's second speech is indicative that Job's second response (42:1-6) was a willing one in contrast to his initial reluctant reply (40:3-5).
First Round  |  Second Round  
---|---

Divine Speech  
---
Introductory editorial note  |  38:1  |  40:6 
Thematic challenge  |  38:2-3  |  40:7-14 
Main body (in two principal parts)  |  38:4-38  |  40:15-24 
|  (Inanimate creation) (Behemoth)  |  |  
|  (Animate creation) (Leviathan)  |  41:1-34  |  |  
(Transitional editorial note)  |  40:1  |  -- 
Summary challenge  |  40:2  |  -- 

Human Response  
---
Introductory editorial note  |  40:3  |  42:1-6 
Reply per se  |  40:4-5  |  42:2-6 

The epilogue (42:7-17) in prose is basically a counterbalance to the prologue. In the prologue Job offered intercessory sacrifices for his family; in the epilogue he offered an intercessory prayer for his three friends. In the former God commended Job as being of blameless character; in the latter God gave a qualified commendation of Job's words in contrast to the three friends. The prologue narrates the removal of Job's family, prosperity, and health, whereas the epilogue relates the restoration of Job's family and health and a doubling of his former wealth.

However, both Satan and Job's wife (who are prominent in the prologue as agents of evil who try to get Job to curse God)\(^{19}\) are intentionally omitted in the epilogue. This deliberate omission emphasizes a major teaching of the book, namely, that man's relationship to God is not a "give-and-get" bargain nor a business contract of mutual benefit.\(^{20}\)

Purpose of the Book

STATEMENT OF THE PURPOSE

It is this writer's belief that the purpose of the Book of Job is to show that the proper relationship between God and man is based solely on the sovereign grace of God and man's response of faith and submissive trust.
This involves (in a negative fashion) the refutation of "retribution theology" (a dogmatic employment of the concept of divine retribution so that there was an automatic connection between deed and state of being) and its corollary that man's relationship to God is a business contract of mutual claims that is binding in court. This statement of purpose involves the assumption that the relationship between God and man is the basic problem of the book. Although there are several sub-themes which have been cited by scholars as the main theme, it is the belief of this writer that only the basis of the proper relationship between God and man sufficiently encompasses these subthemes and qualifies, therefore, as the central focus of the book.

This problem is articulated in the prologue where Satan challenges the basis for Job's piety by claiming that he served God only for profit (i.e., because he prospers--see 1:9-11; 2:4-5). Satan's challenge is reinforced by the fact that Job's wife urged Job to curse God and die (2:9). That Job refused to curse God (2: 10) was graphic testimony that his worship was genuine and that Satan's allegation was false.

Thus Job's suffering as an innocent party was not the main focus but was introduced only as a means of isolating and intensifying the question of the proper basis of man's relationship to God.

KEY THEMES

Certain key themes are employed by the author to serve the purpose of the book and to assist in developing its argument. Perhaps the most important theme is the doctrine of divine retribution which pervades the Book of Job. Other main motifs which are utilized include the concept of a "mediator" and the persistent employment of creation and of legal metaphors. These major motifs relate to the purpose of the Book of Job. (The concept of a "mediator" will be mentioned in conjunction with legal metaphors since it seems to be employed in such a context.)

The dogma of divine retribution. The principle of divine retribution, which is operative in some portions of the Old Testament, and which lay at the core of ancient Near Eastern religions, became a dogma for Job's friends. Because the validity of this principle (namely, that Yahweh the righteous Judge rewards the righteous with prosperity and punishes the wicked with calamity) had become an unquestioned dogma with no
exceptions, it was automatically assumed that all suffering was caused by sin.

Eliphaz and Bildad asserted that since God, who is an impartial judge, did not punish the upright man nor preserve the evildoer, Job's suffering was a sign of hidden sin (see 4:7-11; 5:8-16; 8:3, 11-22; cf. 18:5-21). Thus it seemed evident to the three friends that Job was a sinner who needed to repent of his sins and to become piously obedient so that God would bless him again (see 22:4-11, 21-30, for Eliphaz's words and 11:13-20 for Zophar's similar sentiment). Bildad also stated that Job's children were killed as punishment for their sins (8:4). Both Eliphaz (15:17-35) and Zophar (20:4-29) argued from experience and the traditional wisdom of old that Job's initial prosperity was explained by the accepted idea that the wicked enjoy only temporary prosperity and bliss before God metes out retributive judgment.

Because of the friends' unquestioned acceptance of the dogma of divine retribution, they were championing the view that the basis of the relationship between God and man was "God's impartial, retributive justice and man's pious fear of God." As man related to God in obedient piety, so God would bless him. As in Satan's challenge of Job's motive for serving God, the demarcation between piety and prosperity became blurred. Job patiently denied the accusation of the three friends that he was guilty of sin for which he was being recompensed; he openly questioned the validity of the dogma of divine retribution because of the prosperity of the wicked (21:31). Yet it is ironic that because Job accused God of injustice in order to maintain his own righteousness (see 40:8)--operating on the assumption that God was punishing him for sin, though unjustly--he was unconsciously retaining the dogma of divine retribution. Because of this, Job could not harmonize his suffering with God's being an impartial judge. Rather, Job conceived of God as being an arbitrary and capricious Sovereign who abused His power (9:15-24; 12:13-25) and who maliciously treated innocent Job as a personal enemy (13:24-27; 16:7-17; 19:7-12). As a consequence of his suffering, Job viewed man's relationship to God as being based on God's sovereign caprice; therefore man could hope for happiness only by adhering to an ethical rightness superior to God's whereby he could demand vindication (Job 31; cf. 35:2b). Although Elihu was closer to the truth than the three friends because he seems to have sensed that Job was guilty of pride
and emphasized suffering as mainly remedial in purpose (cf. 33:16-30; 36:8-12), he also was wrong in assuming that Job was guilty of sin before his suffering (34:37) in order to defend God's justice. The explanation for this reasoning was Elihu's failure to divorce himself from the dogma of divine retribution (see 34:11,25-27; cf. 34:33; 36:17; 37:13). However, Elihu was right in pointing out the fallacious nature of Job's position which implied that God owed man something for his righteousness (35:3-8).

Although a major thrust of the Lord's speeches (38:1-40:2; 40:6-41:34) was to polemicize against all potential rivals to His lordship over the cosmos, there is also a subtle refutation of the dogma of divine retribution. Although granting that the control of chaotic forces of evil (which in some instances is inherent in the design of the universe--38:12-15) is somewhat consistent with the principle of divine retribution, God demonstrates that the universe is not always geared to this principle. Rain, which not infrequently appears in the Bible as a vehicle of reward and punishment (cf. Job 37:13 [NIV] and 5:10), is inherently designed to fall on the desert where it has no relevance for man (38:26). In Job 41:11 (3) the Lord may be refuting Job's apparent contention that God's relationship to man was a juridical relationship in which God was obligated to repay him.

The epilogue, which records the restoration of Job and a twofold recompense of his prosperity (42:10, 12-17), seems, at first glance, to confirm the doctrine of divine retribution, however, in actuality this restoration was not a reward or payment but a free gift based solely on God's sovereign grace. This is clear from the import of the Lord's speeches and from the fact that Job's original prosperity was not directly related to his piety.

The Book of Job shows that only by dispensing with the traditional dogma of divine retribution was it possible to reconcile Job's innocence with God's permitting him to suffer. The refutation of this dogma aids in the demolition of its corollary (which undergirds ancient Near Eastern religions) that man's relationship to God is based on a juridical claim. Consequently, it complements the purpose of Job which is to demonstrate the only proper basis for the relationship between God and man. Creation motif. During Job's lament in which he cursed the day of his birth and deplored its creation (i.e., wishing that he had never been born [3:1-10] or that he had died at birth
he summons the agents of chaos to annihilate that created day in order that he might live in peace (3:8-10). Job seems to have employed an anti-creation motif in which he wishes for the reversal of creation.\(^47\) This motif was apparently utilized to emphasize the depths of his despair and the intensity of his anguish as a result of his abrupt transition from a life of bliss to a mere agonizing existence. Because life and creation had become hopeless and inexplicable to him, he preferred to abandon the created order to the confines of Sheol (nonexistence) (cf. 7:15-16, 21).\(^48\)

Forrest has cogently argued that the reason Job desired nonexistence was his lack of perception of his own relationship to God or to the universe (i.e., Job's belonging within the universe). Thus Forrest has suggested that since creation must "somehow be explicable to him to be worthy of credence (i.e., illustrative of the divine-human relationship in a comprehensible manner so that Job would want to live in the universe)," creation provides the scenario for Job's basic inquiries into the nature of God's relationship to man.\(^49\) The evidence from the text seems to support this hypothesis,

Job said that the wondrous acts of God in nature are inexplicable to him. He could not perceive God's nature\(^50\) in these sovereign works (see 9:10-12; cf, 26:14 and perhaps chap, 28). Rather, God's sovereign control of nature (creation) appeared to indicate an arbitrary abuse of power and wisdom (9:12, 14-24; 12:13-25; cf. 30:18-23).\(^51\) At the same time, Job appeals to nature to be a witness for him of the obvious injustices of God against him (12:7-10; 16:18-19) and of his own ethical purity (see 31:8, 12, 38-40).\(^52\)

This latter tactic of Job was diametrically opposed to the friends' appeal to creation to support their theory of retributive justice as the basis of God's relationship to man (Eliphaz in 4:9-11; Zophar in 20:27-29; and Bildad in 22: 15-18 [cf. vv. 19-20]; cf. also 5:8-16), Eliphaz advised that if Job would submit under God's corrective punishment, even the wild animals (as chaotic forces opposed to man) would be at peace with him (5:23).

Elihu's speeches include a lengthy section on God's; sovereign and benevolent dealings in nature (36:26-37:24).\(^53\) Elihu cited these acts of God as proof that God's sovereign power and justice are beyond man's comprehension. (Thus he apparently empathized with Job's failure to perceive God's
nature in creation. Although Elihu acknowledged that God used nature for His retributive purposes (37:13, NIV) and that nature is sometimes in chaotic opposition to man (37:6-7), he argued that the proper response of man to the sovereign (though inexplicably just) God is reverential trust (37:23-24). In this advice to Job from creation, Elihu prepared the way for the Lord's speeches. The Lord's speeches (which are saturated with the creation motif) demonstrate that God's sovereign cosmic power was not the retributive justice (as the friends had argued) nor the "uncontrolled caprice" (as Job had perceived it) of an impersonal cosmos, but rather the majestic omnipotence and mysterious creative genius of a personal and gracious God.\(^{54}\) The absence of a reference to the creation of man is part of a polemic against Job (and man in general) which has as one purpose to show that God was not obligated to Job's defiant demand for vindication because of his ethical righteousness (cf. 41:11 [3].\(^{55}\) God could not be manipulated or coerced like the impotent and immanent gods of the ancient Near East.

Because of Job's perception of this and of God's active participation in creation, Job responded in repentance and trust (42:2-3, 5-6).\(^{56}\) Thus it is clear that the Book of Job teaches that the basis of the relationship between God and man is not one of mutual benefit or of a juridical obligation which binds God; rather, it is to be based on the Lord's sovereign "creative, life-affirming, joyous grace and of man's open, joyous trust"\(^{57}\) in Him.

Legal metaphors. The Book of Job extensively employs legal terms and metaphors in the process of its dialogue concerning the disputed innocence of Job before God. That the dialogue is saturated with judicial terminology is quite consistent with the prominent role Job had previously played in the legal affairs of his town (29:7-17).\(^{58}\) The use of legal metaphor also plays a part in illustrating the proper basis for man's relationship to God. Scholnick's valuable study of the legal terminology in the Book of Job has demonstrated that the terms נסה, ישאר,ピンך, and נט rowIndex (which can be employed in the Old Testament in the sphere of worship--"pure, clean"--or in the sphere of the court--"innocent, free of legal claim") are employed in Job almost exclusively in a forensic context to explore the question of Job's legal status, both before God and in his community.\(^ {59}\) Other legal terms employed include ישאר (1:1,8; 2:3; 8:6; 23:7), צד(rowIndex) (which is used by each speaker, e.g., 6:29; 8:6; 9:15, 20; 11:2; 22:3; 35:2, 7-8; 40:8) and נסי rowIndex (1:1, 8; 2:3; 27:5; 31:6).\(^ {60}\)
Perhaps the most significant single legal term used is the root בֵּיר which is used eleven times in Job (seven times as a verb --9:3; 10:2; 13:8, 19; 23:6; 33:13; 40:2; and four times as a noun --13:6; 29:16; 31:13, 35). As a verb in the Old Testament, it means "to make a complaint or accusation (by engaging in hostile unilateral speech activity) against an aggrieving party." As a noun, it denotes "a complaint or accusation by an aggrieved party against one held responsible for a grievance." Although the word בֵּיר in the Old Testament sometimes describes a dispute outside court, it is used in Job solely in a legal sense as a metaphor to portray a "lawsuit" between Job and God.

This idea of a man going to court with God is unprecedented in the Old Testament. Thus at first Job was somewhat dubious that he could raise litigation with God (9:3; cf. 9: 16) since he views God as a sovereign and unjust judge who has abused His authority (9: 19-24, 28; 23:7). But Job insists that God make His charges as a legal opponent rather than His verdict as an unjust judge (10:2). Job's legal plight before God, who is simultaneously his legal adversary and his judge, accentuates the urgency (and yet the hopelessness) of Job's cry for a neutral party to hear his case.

The concept of a mediator (or neutral party) is introduced in Job 9:33 where Job wished for an impartial מֹלַע to arbitrate a settlement between God and himself. This arbitrator was probably the ancient Near Eastern judge whose "verdict" was probably no more than a "settlement proposal" which could be accepted or rejected by the parties involved. Job's appeal for an impartial trial is continued in 13:7-12 where he accused the three friends of being partial witnesses on God's behalf who argue His case for Him. The theme of a mediator (or arbitrator) is continued in 16:18-21. Job expressed confidence that surely someone in heaven was his witness or advocate (v. 19, which uses מִלָּה followed by its Aramaic equivalent מַלָּה). The context (especially v. 21) supports the NIV translation of מַלָּה (v. 20) as "intercessor": "My intercessor is my friend as my eyes pour out tears to God; on behalf of a man he pleads with God as a man pleads for his friend.

Similar to Job's plea for an impartial "go-between" (9:33) and his confidence of a heavenly witness o~ intercessor (16: 18-21) is his confident assertion that his מִלָּה was alive (19:25). Because of the acknowledged complex difficulties and the diverse interpretations of Job 19:25-27,72 it is impossible to speak
dogmatically about verse 25. However, because of the widespread usage of the legal metaphor in Job, it seems likely that Job spoke metaphorical of the as one who was “helper in a lawsuit to see that justice was done to his protege” (cf. Ps. 119:154; Prov. 23:11; Jer. 50:34; Lam. 3:58). Job's thinking seems to have progressed somewhat from the thought of a mere impartial arbitrator (9:33) to a legal advocate who could present his case and vindicate him as innocent before God (cf. 16:18-21). Consequently it appears unlikely that Job conceived of his "kinsman redeemer" (or legal advocate) as being God Himself. Rather, by using the legal metaphor Job expressed his conviction that he would be vindicated as innocent (which in an earthly lawsuit might require a vindicator or legal advocate).

The point in Job 19:25 is that just as there is a vindicator in an earthly lawsuit, so in Job's dispute with God there must also be one who intercedes for him, but it does not make clear who this vindicator might be. Accordingly, what we have here is an inexact statement: Job wishes to express the conviction that he must be acquitted in the end, and he clothes this thought in the figurative language of the lawsuit: someone must vindicate him to prove his innocence.

However, in light of Job's legal plight in which God is both judge and legal opponent, Job realized that his hope for an impartial judge was futile. Thus Job could only wish for someone to hear him (31:35). (Possibly the concept of an impartial judge [or arbiter] is continued here.)

Elihu, who stated that he would be an impartial witness (32:21-22), suggested that if there were an angel, a (a mediator or intercessor), available to Job to plead for God's clemency, actually this "mediator would be on God's side, interpreting God's will and leading Job to repentance rather than defending his integrity (33:23-30).

The legal metaphor often employed heretofore in the Book of Job rarely appears in the Lord's speeches (38: 1-42:6). This rare usage of legal metaphor (cf. 40:2, 8 and perhaps 38:3 which is identical to 40:7, and the absence of legal metaphor in Job's responses) which may be used ironically (in contrast to the frequent usage earlier in the book) is significant.

Although impossible to prove, it seems likely that the Lord employed the verb "gird up [the loins]" in a forensic sense in 38:3 (and 40:7) in order to heighten the irony of his twofold interrogation of Job. A main function of the Lord's speeches is
to show the absurdity of Job's attempt to manipulate God by a "lawsuit," which assumed that his relationship to God is a juridical one. Consequently the Lord virtually ignored Job's allegations of His injustice (except for 40:8). 79

In 40:2 the Lord summarized His interrogation of Job concerning the universe by ironically asking Job, "Can he who contends with the Almighty correct (or instruct) him? Let him who accuses God answer all this'" (author's translation). Yahweh ironically challenged Job to teach (or correct) Him in the matters of the universe to prove that he was equal to God and thus capable of arguing with God in court. 80

In 40:8-14 God demonstrated the fallacy of Job's impugning His justice in order to vindicate himself. The Lord's usage of מָשָׁע (in the context of divine kingship over the universe, 40:8-10; cf. Elihu's usage in 34: 17 and 37:23) serves as a corrective to the misunderstanding of justice (מָשָׁע) by Job and his friends. The friends viewed מָשָׁע as God's retributive judgment on guilty Job (8:3-4; cf. Elihu's usage in 34: 11-12,23-30); Job considered מָשָׁע as litigation in court to prove his innocence (9: 19,32; 14:3; 19:7) or the processing of a case (13: 18; 23:4; 31: 13). 81 Both understandings were faulty because of an improper perception of the relationship between God and man.

This improper perception is refuted in the Book of Job. By the incongruity of the legal metaphor in which the Lord functions both as Job's judge and legal adversary and by the Lord's ignoring Job's plea for vindication (or even a trial), 82 the Book of Job "reveals the bankruptcy of conceiving the man-God relationship along the lines of legal justice." 83 Thus it is the legal metaphor "which most forcefully communicates the thesis of the Book of Job that religious piety is not amenable to the quid pro quo principle of divine retribution." 84

Conclusion

The basic literary structure of the Book of Job (a prose framework--prologue and epilogue--which encloses the intricate poetic body) is a part of the almost architectonic symmetry of the book which is also evident in the poetic body. Three cycles of disputation between Job and his three friends are enclosed by two soliloquies of Job (chaps. 3 and 29-31). However, the fact that the symmetry is lacking at the end of the third cycle of speeches (where Zophar did not speak) focuses the reader's
attention on the futility of dialogue between Job and his friends and aids in focusing on the interaction between Job and God. It also accentuates the need to resolve the main problem of the book (which was articulated in the prologue, 1:9-11; 2:4-5), namely, the basis of the proper relationship between God and man.

Thus the main purpose of Job is to show that the proper relationship between God and man is based solely on the sovereign grace of God and man's response of faith and submissive trust. This involves (in a negative fashion) the refutation of the retribution dogma and its corollary that man's relationship to God is a business contract binding in court. Three key themes (the dogma of divine retribution, the creation motif, and legal metaphors) were expertly employed in the development of this purpose.

Notes


2 In order to do accurate exegesis of the Old Testament, it is necessary that one examine the extant text in its final canonical form with emphasis on synchronic analysis as opposed to diachronic analysis. The latter dissects the text in an attempt to hypothesize about the original form of the text and its transmission but never seems to put things back together again (Allen Paul Ross, "The Table of Nations in Genesis" [Th.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1977], pp. 14-17). One definite contribution of "structural analysis" has been its stress on dealing with the text as it is rather than preoccupation with a "dehusking" process to eliminate "what does not fit" (Robert Polzin, "The Framework of the Book of Job: Interpretation 28 [1974]: 182-83). Cf. Robert Polzin, Biblical Structuralism: Method and Subjectivity in the Study of Ancient Texts, Semeia Supplements (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), for the nature of structuralism.

This "dehusking" procedure has been often employed (in varying degrees) on the Book of Job. The outer "folktale" is separated from the inner speeches because it contains "a patient Job... whereas the dialogue displays an Impatient Job." The speeches of Elihu are discarded as a later insertion because they seem to contribute nothing to the argument and appear to anticipate much in the Yahweh speeches. The hymn of wisdom (chap. 28) is isolated as a foreign insertion into Job's speeches (chaps. 27-31). The literary scalpel then slices off, at least, the Behemoth and Leviathan pericopes (40:15-41:26) from the Yahweh speeches because they seem unnecessary and are "obviously" inferior to the rest of the speeches. Others have even eliminated the Yahweh speeches altogether as irrelevant. It is ironic that with regard to the Book of Job (itself a study in irony), which teaches the mysterious nature of God's ways, man attempts to judge this divine book by subjective human standards. To fall into this trap is to miss one of the main teachings of the book.

3 As Andersen has noted, the Book of Job is an amazing mixture of almost every kind of literature which is found in the Old Testament (Francis I. Andersen, Job: An Introduction and Commentary [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976], p. 33). Besides the main genres -the lawsuit, the lament, and the controversy dialogue or dispute (see this author's forthcoming article in the July-September 1981 issue of
many riddles, hymns, curses, and proverbs can be isolated within the various speeches of the book.


5 Many different speculative attempts have been made to juggle the speeches of the final cycle or to attribute portions of chapter 27 (Job's reply in the extant canonical book) to Zophar. This has been attempted because portions of chapter 27 (esp. vv. 13-23) seem to be more consistent with Zophar's arguments than Job's. For a concise defense of retaining all of chapter 27 as Job's speech, see Roy B. Zuck, Job, Everyman's Bible Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1978), pp. 119, 121.

6 The only exceptions to the rule that both the friends' and Job's speeches are progressively shorter are the second speech of Zophar (chap. 20) and the third response of Job to Eliphaz (chaps. 23 and 24). See the similar conclusion of Zuck (Job, pp. 30.121). Cf. also Encyclopaedia Britannica, s.v. "Job," by Andrew Bruce Davidson and Crawford Howell Toy (reprinted in The Voice of the Whirlwind: The Book of Job, ed. Ralph E. Hone [San Francisco: Chandler Publishing, 1960], p. 93).

Note also the remarks by Elihu concerning the failure of the argumentation of the three friends (Job 32:3).

7 This dogma will be discussed later in this article.

8 This is not to say that Job's focus of attention was always on his friends. He was constantly either crying out to God for response (cf. 10:2-22) or making accusations against Him (16:7-17; 19:7-12; 24:1-12) but was constantly being sidetracked by the dogmatic and virtually unsympathetic speeches of the friends. From the first cycle of the dialogue onward, Job often directly addressed God (see 7: 12-21; 16:7-8; 17:3-4; and 30:20-23). Good argues that this indicates the hopelessness of appealing to God (Edwin M. Good, Irony in the Old Testament [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965], pp. 231-32). This appears at first glance to contradict the author's own sensing of a change to a focus on Job's relationship to God. However, Job often talks about God in the third person as an enemy, etc., in these sections, which indicates the impersonal nature of God to him. After chapter 27, Job ignored the friends completely (except indirectly in 29:25) and looked to God (though indirectly) in his soliloquy.

9 Zuck, Job, p. 119.

10 The plural personal pronoun "you" is employed in verses 5, II, and 12 and the plural verb in verse 12 (Zuck, Job, p. 119).

11 Moller argues that in 27:2-12 Job summarized his own basic arguments of the three cycles of speeches which he juxtaposed with the utterly nonsensical argument of the friends which he satirized in 27: 13-23 (Hans Moller, Sinn und Aufbau des Buches Hiob [Berlin: EvangelischeVerlagsanstalt, 1955], pp. 61-63).

12 Andersen suggests that this interlude was written by the anonymous author of the Book of Job (Job, pp. 222-29). However, it is possible to understand this wisdom poem as Job's words which summed up the typical wisdom teaching he had heard all his life (to fear God and depart from evil- see 28:28, i.e., to trust and obey Yahweh because He alone has the wisdom by which the world was created and is to be governed; cf. 42:5) (Robert Laurin, "The Theological Structure, I of Job," Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 84 [1972], 86-89).

This would sum up Job's stance before God (cf. 1:1,8; 2:3) in contrast to the friends' assertion that he must repent of his sins and fear God (cf. 4:6-11; 11:13-20; 15:4-5; 22:4-30). The last verse of chapter 28 (v. 28) may also serve as a fitting link to Job 29-31 wherein Job gave evidence that he had feared God (namely, his past virtues -chap. 29) and had departed from evil (his oath of innocence -chap. 31) (Zuck, Job, pp. 126-27).
13 These correspond to the initial soliloquy by Job (chap. 3).
14 Although this oath was common in ancient Near Eastern court cases, the emphatic nature of Job's oath is indicated by its length and its rare self-imprecation (Michael Brennan Dick, "The Legal Metaphor in Job 31," Catholic Biblical Quarterly 41 [1979]:42, 47). This is strikingly similar to the Egyptian "Protestation of Innocence" in chapter 125 of the Book of the Dead (Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts, pp. 34-36). Because Job denied some of the charges made by Eliphaz against him (cf. 31:16-22 with 22:6-11), it is evident that he was saying to God that he was innocent of the charges brought against him by his friends.
15 These speeches have almost universally been rejected as a later insertion into the book because the flow of the book is smoother without them, because Elihu is not mentioned in the prologue or epilogue, and because of the alleged differences in literary style and vocabulary. See William Ewart Staples, The Speeches of Elihu: A Study of Job XXXII-XXXVII, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1924), pp. 12-24. However, the present author holds that the Elihu speeches are a necessary complement to the Yahweh speeches. The speeches of Elihu, who served as a self-styled mediator in God's behalf, are assumed by Yahweh in His speeches; thus Elihu was not condemned since his arguments were essentially correct. For an excellent summary of the objections to the authenticity of the Elihu speeches followed by a rebuttal, see John Peter Lange, ed., A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, 25 vols., vol. 8: The Book of Job, by Tayler Lewis and Otto Zockler, trans. L. J. Evans (New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co., 1874), pp. 268-73; and H. D. Beeby, "Elihu--Job's Mediator?", Southeast Asia Journal of Theology 7 (October 1965):47-50. Also it seems providentially significant that three of the four manuscripts of Job which are extant from Qumran are portions of the Elihu speeches -namely two manuscripts from chapter 36 (4Q Joba and 4Q Jobb) yet unpublished (see Christoph Burchard, Bibliographie zu den Handschriften von Toten Meer, 2 vols. [Berlin: Alfred Topelmann, 1965], 2:327) and a tiny portion of 33:18-20 from Cave 2 (published by M. Baillet, J. T. Milik, and Roland de Vaux, Les "Petites Grottes" de Qumran, 2 vols., DJD [Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1962].2:13 [#15], cf. 1:71).
16 This theme, which is prevalent in Job, provides a connecting link to the previous dialogue and at the same time is proleptic of Yahweh's theophany.
17 Zuck, Job, pp. 141-42.
18 Because the double exchange between God and Job is similar to the double exchange between God and Satan in the prologue, Andersen has suggested an unorthodox division of the Book of Job: introduction (1:1-5), speeches (1:6-42:6) and conclusion (42:7-17) (Job, pp. 20, 49). The speeches would be divided as follows: the interviews of Yahweh with Satan (1 :6-2: 13), the dialogue of Job with his friends (3: 1-37:24), and the two interviews of Yahweh with Job (38:1-42:6).
20 Zuck, Job, pp. 15, 19, 189-90. This biblical concept, which is in direct contrast to the ancient Near Eastern concept of man's relationship to God, will be developed further in the next section of this article.
21 Others who have recognized this as the main problem of the Book of Job include Rowold ("Theology of Creation," pp. II, 19); John W. Wevers (The Way of the Righteous: Psalms and the Books of Wisdom [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961], p. 75. "The basic problem of Job... is the relation of finite man to an infinite God" [italics his]); and Robert William Edward Forrest who says that the main issue is "what, if any, is the nature of the divine-human relationship and thow may a man live in this universe" ("The Creation Motif in the Book of Job" [Ph.D. diss., McMaster University, 1975], p. 20). Cf. also Good, Irony in the Old
Testament, pp. 197-98; Zuck, who writes that "one of the grand purposes in the book" is "to deal with motive behind worship, to demonstrate that it is possible to View life as other than a give-and-get bargain with God" (Job, p. 189); and Alfred von Rohr Sauer, "Salvation by Grace: The Heart of Job's Theology," Concordia Theological Monthly 37 (May 1966):259-70.

22 These suggestions include the significance of the suffering of the innocent, the right behavior in suffering, the refutation of the principle of divine retribution, and the meaning of faith. Rowold gives a sampling of scholars who have held to these options as the main theme of Job ("Theology of Creation," p., 18). He notes that these subthemes have hindered the recognition of the real central problem.

23 Ibid., p. 20.

24 Zuck, Job, p. 189.

25 That this is true is demonstrated by the fact that the main problem of the book was posed before suffering entered the scene and was resolved (see 38: 1-42:6) before Job's suffering was removed (Rowold, "Theology of Creation," pp. 20, 29, n. 22).

26 Though these are not the only motifs used, they seem to be the most significant.

27 This principle occurs particularly in Deuteronomy and many of the prophets.


29 Cf. Job 8:8-10, where Bildad also appealed to tradition to support his argument.


31 Ibid.

32 In 21: 19 Job objects to the friends' argument that God stores up punishment for a wicked man's sons by questioning why God does not recompense the wicked themselves.

33 In Job 31:2-3 he assumes God punishes the wicked; in 19:11 and 16:9 Job's assumption that God was angry with him implies that Job subconsciously felt that God was punishing him for some unknown sin of which Job was unaware. He wished that God would reveal this to him (10:2). This is consistent with Elihu's interpretation of Job's position as believing that God owed him something (or was obligated to him) because of his righteousness (35:3: cf. Elihu's quotation in 34:9). He refuted Job's position by appealing to God's transcendence (35:4-8; cf. Eliphaz's similar understanding in 22:2-3, 12).

34 Rowold, "Theology of Creation," pp. 23, 27. Two possible translations of this verse are given in the NIV and its margin. Job's hope of vindication because of his valid legal claim of righteousness assumes that he considered his relationship to God as a judiciary one in which God was obligated to repay him.

35 Zuck, Job, pp. 148-49, 152.

36 However, this may be an ironic statement which shows that the wicked are indeed not broken but only controlled. Tsevat argues that this passage teaches that no provision for retribution nor its manifestation is found in the order of the world. He says that although "the dawn of every day provides an occasion to
punish the wicked, ...this possibility is not in practice realized and is therefore not in the plan of the world" (Matitiahu Tsevat, "The Meaning of the Book of Job," Hebrew Union College Annual 37 [1966]:99).

41 Ibid., p. 100. However, perhaps the main function is found in its implication man is not the center of the universe. This is part of the polemic against man (who is not even mentioned with respect to his creation).

42 The enumeration of verses in parts of Job 40 and all of chapter 41 of the Hebrew Bible differs from that in English Bibles. In this article the English verse numbers will be cited with the Hebrew counterpart in parentheses (when noted).

43 See Job 35:3 and supra, note 33. The NIV translates 41: 11 as follows: "Who has a claim against me that I must pay? Everything under heaven belongs to me."

44 Rowold, "Theology of Creation," p. 29, n. 22.

45 See note 25.

46 According to Tsevat, Job demonstrates the impossibility of the coexistence of the three ideas of an accessible God who turns His face to man (G), Job as an innocent man (J), and the philosophy of retributive justice (R). The friends eliminated J, and Job practically gives up G in order to maintain J. Only by giving up R can the other two be reconciled ("The Meaning of the Book of Job," pp.372-73).

47 Job seems to castigate light (3:20), the first act of creation (Gen. 1: 3-4), and r wished that it would become darkness (3:4-5, 9). Also he disparaged the goodness of life (3:20), which was extolled in Gen. 1:27-31; 2:7, wishing that he had perished at birth (3: 11-19) so that he would have tranquillity in the grave (Forrest, "The Creation Motif in the Book of Job," pp. 71-73). Fishbane's argument that Job 3:3-13 is a systematic bouleversement, or reversal. of the cosmic acts of creation lin Genesis 1: 1-2:4a by the use of magic spells and incantations is intriguing but lacks much evidence to support it (Michael Fishbane, "Jeremiah IV 23-26 and Job III 3-13: A Recovered Use of the Creation Pattern," Vetus Testamentum 21 [1971]: 153-54). It is probable that if Job had gone this far, he would have taken his wife's advice and perished or committed suicide (Forrest, "The Creation Motifin the Book of Job," pp. 68-69). However, in contrast to the "Dialogue of Pessimism" (Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts, pp. 437-38, 600-601) and to the Egyptian Papyrus 3024, it is doubtful that Job ever considered suicide.

48 Forrest, "The Creation Motif in the Book of Job," pp. 67, 74-75. 188-89. This is apparently the reason Job also identified himself with the forces of chaos (see 7:12).

49 Ibid., pp. 56, 67, 185; cf. p. 188. This is also a major reason the creation motif is employed in the Yahweh speeches. Job failed to see the significance of this doctrine for actual life situations.

50 Job admitted his inability to understand God's power and knowledge especially as manifested in creation. Apparently he could not truly appreciate God's role in creation because of the overtones of arbitrariness (ibid., p. 82).

51 Because of God's sovereign comprehensive power which includes even Sheol, Job had to abandon his wish for safety in Sheol as mere fancy (cf. 26:5-14).

52 This may be explainable in light of the ancient Near Eastern concept of the unity of the natural cosmos with the moral cosmos and the cosmos as a whole. See the author's "A Biblical Theology of Job 38:1-42:6," chapter 1.

53 Zuck, Job, pp. 158-62.


55 Ibid" p. 168. I

56 Job was shown the inconsistency of his theoretical knowledge of God's sovereignty and his haughty actions against God. The root cause was Job's faulty perception of Yahweh's sovereignty cf. notes 33 and 45).

57 Rowold, "Theology of Creation, p. 183.
58 Sylvia Huberman Scholnick, "Lawsuit Drama in the Book of Job. (Ph.D. f

diss., Brandeis University, 1975), pp. vi, 103-04.

59 These four terms are employed in the speeches of all characters except God.
Few exceptions occur to this forensic usage: יִפְסָל in the context of sanitation in 9:30
and in an "astrological" context in 15: 15 and 25:5, and הָלַע in a metallurgical
context (28:19) and in an "astrological" sense in 37:21 (ibid., pp. 3-4). In some
cases it is man in general whose lack of legal innocence before God is mentioned
(e.g., 25:4), but this is ultimately done to explore Job's innocence or guilt.

60 Ibid., p. 3.

293-95, 301.

62 In all but two instances Job is the speaker, Also in two instances Job
describes his previous judicial activity in the city gate (29: 16 and 31: 13).
Scholnick's suggestion that Job is a "lawsuit drama" is not comprehensive
enough to explain the multifaceted genres employed in Job. Scholnick overlooks
the possibility that the Yahweh speeches may discontinue the legal metaphor, See
the author's forthcoming article in the July-September 1981 issue of Bibliotheca
Sacra.

63 However, a servant could litigate against his master (Job 31: 13) or a subject
against his king (1 Sam. 24:8-22). See Scholnick, "Lawsuit Drama," p. 132. This
unprecedented act perfectly illustrates Job's audacity and hubris for which he
must repent.

64 See Scholnick, "Lawsuit Drama," pp. 133, 136, and Dick, "The Legal
Metaphor," p. 50.

65 In Job 31:35 God is called Job's בִּירֵי נַע (literally, "man of complaint"), a
technical term for a legal adversary (see Judg, 12:2; Isa. 41:11; Jer. 15:10) (Lim-


67 The NIV has suggested this nuance of the word.

68 Dick, "The Legal Metaphor," p. 46. Veenker gives a summary of scholars who
favor this as the function of the ancient Near Eastern judge and of those who
question it (Ronald A, Veenker, "An Old Babylonian Legal Procedure for Appeal," 
Hebrew Union College Annual, 45 [1974]:4, n. 14).

69 Scholnick argues that Job summoned the friends to act as judges and
witnesses, a role which apparently was not clearly differentiated ("Lawsuit
Drama," p. 138). In Job 31:21 Job himself spoke of his having previous legal help
in his city court.

70 Cf. the NIV, and see Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, Hebrew and

71 Job 16:20-21, NIV. Less likely (but possible) is the understanding of מָזַע לְפָר as
"scoffer" or "one who mocks" Job. Cf. NASB and the NIV margin. For the nuance "mediator" or "intercessor," see Job 33:23.


73 Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, s. v, "יַעֲשֵׁי", by Helmer Ringgren, 2.352.

74 Ibid., p. 355. It might be argued that verses 26-27, which mention Job's seeing God, indicate that the יַעֲשֵׁי Job expected was God. But since the legal advocate or vindicator (יַעֲשֵׁי) as previously sought for (9:33 and 16:18-21) was to be an impartial middle party between Job and God, the יַעֲשֵׁי need not be (indeed probably is not) synonymous with God. Although it is unlikely that Job conceived of God per se as his יַעֲשֵׁי, this is not to say, in the final analysis, that God was not his יַעֲשֵׁי (in Job 42:7 Job was vindicated to some extent). Also, in light of the New Testament (1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:25; 8:6; 9:15; 12:24), Zuck is undoubtedly correct in stating that Job's "longed-for Arbiter (9:33), Witness-Advocate (16:19)" and "living Redeemer-Vindicator" (19:25) was the person "whom we know as Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Job, p. 92). However, one must be careful lest he should be guilty of imposing the New Testament back onto the Old Testament by saying dogmatically that Job knew who his יַעֲשֵׁי was.

75 In light of Job's oath of innocence in chapter 31 (a common juridical procedure in the ancient Near East), Dick has suggested that the participle is the equivalent of יָדָעַה (9:33), the arbitration-judge. Second Samuel 15:3-4 may indicate that this person "was an official appointed by the king to mediate legal disputes" (Dick, "The Legal Metaphor," pp. 47-48). The forensic usage of the cognates of יָדָעַה to designate the activity of a judge (as documented by Scholnick, "Lawsuit Drama," pp. 188-89) seems to confirm this.

76 Because Elihu was apparently a mere bystander from the beginning (or a silent observer who came on the scene a little later than the friends), he qualified to be more neutral and objective in the dispute than either Job or his friends. Thus Elihu appears to serve as a type of arbiter who recommends a settlement. The fact that he was not actually a part of the dispute may explain why he was not rebuked (nor mentioned) by God in the epilogue nor mentioned earlier in the book. Beeby suggests that Elihu was Job's "covenant mediator" necessary for Job, a non-Israelite, to know God face-to-face ("Elihu--Job's Mediator," pp. 42, 48).

77 Norman Habel, "Only the Jackal Is My Friend," Interpretation 31 (1977):235. It is ironic that Job himself played the role of an intercessor in 42:8-9 when he prayed for his three friends at the Lord's beckoning.

78 It is possible that belt-wrestling as an ordeal in court (as found in a Nuzu tablet in which it was proscribed by the judges) lay behind the usage of "א~ as a legal metaphor (Cyrus H. Gordon, "Belt-Wrestling in the Bible World," Hebrew Union College Annual 23 [1950-51]: 131-36, esp. 134-36). Contrast Zuck, Job, p. 165, n. 6. The present author considers forensic overtones probable for "א~ because of the ironic usage of the legal metaphor in 40:2 and because of the function of the Yahweh speeches in showing that man's relationship to God is not a juridical one.

79 Zuck, Job, p. 163.

80 יָדָעַה ("the one who accuses or argues") is probably a "pun on Job 9:33 which prepares the way for the Lord's suggestion that Job had tried to be his own "mediator" or "redeemer" (esp. 40:14).

This is heightened by the infrequent (and ironic) usage of legal terminology in the Yahweh speeches (see nn. 79 and 80, and cf. nn. 59 and 62).

Dick, "The Legal Metaphor," p. 50.

Ibid. See also Job 41:11 (NIV).
GUIDELINES FOR UNDERSTANDING AND PROCLAIMING THE BOOK OF JOB

Greg W. Parsons

Though many writers have given lavish tribute to the Book of Job especially concerning its literary excellence,¹ many preachers tend to shy away from preaching the book. If they do preach on Job, the sermons focus on only one aspect of the book—the familiar "storyline" of the prologue (chaps. 1-2) and epilogue (42:7-17) in which Job is portrayed as the paragon of patience. Consequently Job has often been presented as a model for modern-day believers to "be patient" in the midst of trials. However, few expositors delve into the complex dialogue between Job and his friends. Preachers tend to skip over Job's cursing of the day of his birth (chap. 3), the intricate and often argumentative interaction between Job and his friends (chaps. 4-27), and other hard-to-understand passages. Sermons or lessons have mainly focused on Job's idealized faith and patience epitomized in the famous verse, 19:25. Yet this image of Job is a distortion of the overall story presented in the Book of Job.²

This general neglect in preaching from the whole Book of Job is partially caused by the difficulty of properly understanding the book.³ Because of the widespread misunderstanding of Job's mes-

¹ Essayist and historian Thomas Carlyle remarked concerning the greatness of Job among world literature, "There is nothing written, in the Bible or out of it, of equal literary merit" (cited by Robert Gordis, The Book of God and Man: A Study of Job [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965],3).
³ There is no consensus among scholars concerning its literary structure, unity, or essential meaning. A contributing factor to the distortion of the overall message of Job has been the difficulty of translating the Hebrew text into English. The Book of Job is probably the most difficult Old Testament book to translate since it has
sage, the biblical expositor finds a challenge in seeking to teach and preach the Book of Job in an accurate and relevant manner. Habel illustrates this predicament. "Preaching from Job is like nurturing a cactus garden. One is liable to recoil from constant prickles and miss the blossoms in the night." The temptation is to follow the traditional, distorted view of Job's life and to ignore the many hard questions Job raised in facing the mystery of his innocent suffering. Yet the candid record that Job began to question God strikes a chord familiar to humankind. To ignore Job's question "why?" (see 3:11, 12,20; 10:18; 13:24; 24:1) and his search for God's answer is to ignore basic issues of life everyone must faces. Thus a second reason many do not preach from Job is the difficulty of answering the various theological and philosophical questions raised in the book.

The present writer believes that it is worth the effort needed to understand the Book of Job. Continuing Habel's metaphor, one must cautiously approach the many prickly passages in order to gather the blossoms-messages that "touch the faith and fears of contemporary listeners. The spines and spikes of Job reflect a real world with which we can identify." Yet there is a paucity of tips for the biblical gardener who seeks to cultivate the unfamiliar "desert land" located between the prologue and epilogue of Job. Though many have written concerning various hermeneutical factors related to the Book of Job, there has been no comprehensive study compounding guidelines for understanding the book. Furthermore little has been written on the teaching or preaching of the Book of Job. Habel has contributed a small but helpful study for preaching the whole Book of Job. From the perspective of an African-American pastor, J. Alfred Smith has contributed practical insights for lessons and sermons on the Book of Job. Yet no more rare words and a richer vocabulary than any other biblical book (Gordis, The Book of God and Man: A Study of Job, v, 160-63). Furthermore the poetic body (Job 3:1-4:2:6) contains numerous images foreign to modern culture.

5 See Davis, "Preaching from Job," 65.
7 Habel, Job, 1.
8 Perhaps the most helpful introductory discussion of these issues is C. Hassell Bullock, An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetic Books, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody, 1988),83-88.
9 Habel, Job.
10 Smith. Making Sense of Suffering: A Message to Job's Children. Though writ-
resource is available that summarizes specific guidelines for preaching and teaching the book.

The purpose of the present study is to cultivate an interest in the study and use of the Book of Job by pastors, teachers, and laypersons in ministry. Specific guidelines for understanding and communicating this ancient wisdom book are proposed.

SUGGESTED HERMENEUTICAL GUIDELINES FOR JOB

INTERPRET INDIVIDUAL PASSAGES IN LIGHT OF THE OVERALL LITERARY STRUCTURE (AS A UNIT) AND MAIN PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

This fundamental rule of interpretation is more crucial for understanding the Book of Job than for any other Old Testament book except Ecclesiastes. Largely a dialogue between Job and his "friends," the Book of Job "contains all sorts of wrong advice and incorrect conclusions as they come from the lips of Job's well-meaning 'comforters.'" Thus much of the book is human wisdom, "seemingly logical but actually wrong." Furthermore it contains much that is theologically sound but with wrong applications to Job's situation. Consequently preachers who ignore the dialogue or try to pull out some principle without an awareness of the immediate and overall context are in danger not only of distorting the story of Job but also of misrepresenting (however unwittingly) the message for today.

Procedure. The first step (which will be obvious to many readers) must be emphasized since it is so foundational and crucial: read the book in its entirety (preferably at one sitting in a modern version) several times to observe the "big picture." The student of the Book of Job often "cannot see the forest for the trees" and needs a "photograph" taken, as it were, from an aircraft to understand how each individual "tree" fits the whole rugged landscape of the book.
frustrated by the intricate poetic "dialogue" (3:1-42:6). Ryken warns the reader not to expect "a fast-moving plot" but "to respect the leisurely pace of Hebrew poetry" with its skillful use of repetition and figurative language. One goal of this inductive approach is to find the natural boundaries (or major subsections) in the landscape of Job. Another objective is to formulate a suggested purpose for the writing of the book.

Proper view of structure as a literary unity. To understand its message one should assume the literary unity of Job. Though it has various contrasts and opposites, the book should be viewed as a harmonious whole.

Through one's own inductive reading and preliminary study, the following major landmarks in the rugged terrain of the Book of Job should be observed.

I. Prologue—In prose (chaps. 1-2)
II. Poetic Body (3:1-42:6)
   A. Job's initial monologue or lament (chap. 3)
   B. "Dialogue" in three cycles between Job and his

16 Rather than "looking for a sustained philosophic argument," one should expect "characters in conflict, oratorical outbursts," and "the leisurely poetic embellishment of virtually everything that is said" (Leland Ryken, Words of Delight: A Literary Introduction to the Bible [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987], 342-43). Contrary to David McKenna (Job, Communicator's Commentary [Waco, TX: Word, 1986], 19-20), the dialogue of the Book of Job has no simplistic plot that moves logically forward in a definable pattern. Though he acknowledges that he has oversimplified the data, he wrongly analyzes the plot of Job as a drama in the classical Greek and modern Western sense. Norman Habel uses biblical narrative as a more reliable model to understand the plot development of Job: "In biblical narrative the dialogue not only reports or foreshadows actions in the plot but may itself also be an action which retards, complicates, or resolves an episode in the plot. . . . This model has been modified with expansion of the dialogue into speeches which both retard and complicate the plot" (The Book of Job: A Commentary [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985], 26).

17 In this reading and inductive study, one must eschew commentaries and study helps. However, see Hans Finzel, Opening the Book: Key Methods of Applying Inductive Study to All of Scripture (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1987), 109-10, 120-25, for a helpful format in conducting an inductive study of Job.


19 For a summary of some of these contrasts, Habel argues cogently that these various "opposites" in Job need not reflect irreconcilable conflict but "points and I counterpoints" or necessary "polarities" (Job, 4-6).

20 This is not a dialogue in the modern sense but more like a "speech contest" in which one speech is not necessarily correlated to another (Francis I. Andersen, Job: An Introduction and Commentary [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1976], 96-98).
C. Poem on wisdom (chap. 28)
D. Job's concluding "monologues" (chaps. 29-31)
E. Elihu’s speeches (chaps. 32-37)
F. Yahweh's speeches and Job's replies (38:1-42:6)

III. Epilogue--in prose (42:7-17)

Two extremes must be avoided in examining the relationship of the prologue to Job's speeches in the main body. The first extreme is the tendency of critics to overemphasize the differences between the "patient Job" of the narrative framework (chaps. 1-2 and 42:7-17) and the "impatient Job" of the poetic body (3:1-42:6) so that the book is seen as without unity.21

Ironically some evangelicals also have unwittingly interpreted Job in a similar fashion. By assuming that a Christian should never ask God "why?" or candidly offer complaints to God, they seem to side with Job's friends in castigating Job for questioning the Lord.22 However, Westermann wisely concludes that this is not a biblical concept. The complaint, which was a necessary part of the sufferer's prayer in the Psalms, has been divorced from its original context.23 Thus the Book of Job demonstrates that Job was a real person (not an imaginary hero of a "folktale") who struggled with his emotions and feelings.

The second extreme is to obliterate the differences between the two portraits of Job so that Job's apparent statement of faith in 19:25-26 is made determinative for the whole dialogue and poetic body. For instance McKenna sees this as the turning point after which the resolution of the conflict is assured by faith.24 However, this is too simplistic. In reality Job's confidence of vindication developed into an overconfident and self-righteous attitude (see esp. 31:35-37 where he demanded that God answer and vindicate him).25 The real turning point in Job's faith was his final

21 Critics allege that this is a sign of "sloppy editing" by the author of Job who failed to reconcile the "folktale" with his own portrait of Job in the dialogue.
22 Because the modern perception of "complaint" is necessarily negative in connotation, people are urged to "suffer without complaining."
24 McKenna, Job, 19-20.
25 Longman rightly criticizes McKenna's emphasis on Job's development of faith as a distortion of the data which "shows Job moving away and not toward God in the dialogues" (Tremper Longman III, Old Testament Commentary Survey [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991], 98).
response to the Lord (42:1-6).  

Though each passage is important for a proper interpretation of the Book of Job, the roles of the prologue (chaps. 1-2) and Yahweh's speeches (38:1-42:6) are particularly crucial. The prologue is the indispensable backdrop for the story of Job as a whole. It tells the reader (like the narrator in a dramatic production) that Job was innocent. Since the reader is aware of the scene in heaven whereas Job and his friends (real-life "actors") were not the prologue sets the stage for irony. The basic problem of the book is articulated in 1:9. If the prologue serves as the vital platform for the story of Job, the climactic speeches of the Lord are "the most determinative part of the book." Since much of the Book of Job is the human speculation of Job and his friends, to interpret any part without the divine input from chapters 38-42 is to distort the meaning of the book.

**Purpose.** The expositor also needs to do an inductive study of Job to determine the possible major purpose for its writing. The key to unlocking the purpose of the book is the Lord's speeches. They do not give a direct answer to Job's question, "why?" Instead they challenge Job with an avalanche of questions to insinuate, "Who do you think you are?" (see esp. 38:2-5; 41:11) so that he may find the answer by faith in "who the Lord is." Until one becomes confident in stating his own understanding of the message of Job, the present author's conclusion concerning the purpose of the writing of the Book of Job may be used as a working hypothesis: "The purpose of the Book of Job is to show that the proper relationship between God and man is based solely upon the sovereign grace of God and man's response of faith and submissive trust."

Job's faith found no resolution until the Lord had confronted him for this attitude of pride he had developed after the coming of his three friends. Only then did he become willing to trust God as sovereign Lord without knowing all the answers to his questions.

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26 Terrien states, "Here is the starting point of the discussion, the nerve of the drama, the basic verse in the whole book. . . . Is not Job pious, as any other man, in exchange for his privileges?" (Samuel Terrien, "The Book of Job: Introduction and Exegesis," in *The Interpreter's Bible*, 12 vols. [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1954], 3:913).


28 There has been no consensus concerning a single purpose for the book. Some authors argue that it is not possible to state one single purpose (Smick, "Job," 858). Cf. Kidner, *The Wisdom of Proverbs, Job & Ecclesiastes*, 85. For tips on an inductive approach to Job, see Finzel, *Opening the Book*, 121-25.


30 Only the "basis of the proper relationship between God and man" as articulated in the prologue (1:9) is broad enough to encompass all the subthemes in the book.
RECOGNIZE THE VARIOUS LITERARY FORMS AND DEVICES UTILIZED BY THE AUTHOR TO COMMUNICATE HIS MESSAGE

**Literary forms.** It is generally agreed that the Book of Job is a mixed genre combining a variety of literary types to communicate its message.\(^{32}\) In his literary composition the inspired author utilizes various traditional literary forms (such as the lament or complaint--and the hymns familiar in the Psalms, the legal language of the lawsuit, and the disputation speech from wisdom literature) by transposing them to meet his specific needs. Though the book does "weep with complaint, argue with disputation, teach with didactic accuracy, excite with comedy, sting with irony, and relate human experience with epic majesty," it is a unique literary masterpiece that "must not be fit into any preconceived mold."\(^{33}\) Therefore it is imperative for the student of Job to become familiar with these various genres so that he may learn to identify them according to the normal structure and language of each.\(^{34}\) Based on this norm, the reader must then carefully look for the ways the author has adapted or combined them to convey the message of the book as a whole or to shape the precise meaning of a specific passage.\(^{35}\)

**Literary devices.** Though the Book of Job exhibits the basic types of poetic parallelism, the inspired poet created unique patterns and variations.\(^{36}\) Both antithetic--or contrasting--parallelism so common in Proverbs and strict synonymous parallelism (in which one line repeats the thought of the previous line) are infrequent in Job. Rather the poet prefers "ambiguous variation" from one line to the next, which is sometimes spiced with

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\(^{32}\) Andersen observes that the Book of Job is "an astonishing mixture of almost every kind of literature to be found in the Old Testament" (Job: An Introduction and Commentary, 33). For several examples of the dozens of literary forms sewn skillfully into the fabric of Job, see William S. LaSor, David A. Hubbard, and Frederic W. Bush, *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 578-82.

\(^{33}\) Ibid., 574-75.


\(^{36}\) See Smick, *Job," 849-50. Examples of the three traditional categories of parallelism are as follows: synonymous (13:12), antithetic (8:20), and synthetic (38:2).
implicit word plays.37 The Book of Job also abounds in verbal imagery, including metaphors, similes, and other graphic word pictures.38 For instance, chapter 14 combines three poignant similes of man's temporary life (vv. 1-6) with multiple nature analogies to emphasize the seeming finality of death for mankind: an extended metaphor contrasting man and a tree (vv. 7-10), and comparisons of man with dried-up bodies of water (vv. 11-12) as well as with an eroded mountain never to be restored {vv. 18-20}.39 Greenberg's summary captures some of the innovative imagery that permedates the poetic body of the book. These include the felled tree which renews itself from its roots (14:7-9) as a metaphoric foil for man's irrevocable death; humanity's kinship with maggots (17:14) and jackals (30:29) as an image of alienation and isolation; the congealing of milk (10:10) as a figure for the formation of the embryo; the movement of a weaver's shuttle (7:6), of a runner in flight, or of the swooping eagle (9:25-26) as similes for the speedy passage of a lifetime; God's hostility figured as an attacking army (19:12); God's absence represented in the image of a traveler's un found goal in every direction (23:8; a striking reversal of the expression of God's ubiquity in Ps. 139:7-10).40

The legal metaphors that (in tandem with legal terminology) saturate the poetic body are probably the most significant imagery occurring in Job.42 Through the legal metaphor Job dared to treat God as his equal by entering, as it were, a "lawsuit".43

37 An example of subtle variation and ambiguity is "Naked I came from my mother's womb/And naked I shall return there" (1:21). See Habel, The Book of Job, 47-48.
38 LaSor, Hubbard, and Bush, Old Testament Survey, 575-76.
39 See Andersen, Job: An Introduction and Commentary, 170-71,173.
40 Moshe Greenberg, "Job," in The Literary Guide to the Bible, ed. Robert Alter and Frank Kermode (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1987),302. The dating of the writing of Job is debatable, but a good case can be made for it after the writing of Psalm 8, which seems to be parodied in Job 7:17-18. See the introduction to the Book of Job in the present author's contribution to The New King James Study Bible (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, forthcoming).
41 However, the prologue may initiate the legal imagery with the mention of Satan, who brought the charges against Job and placed him on trial before God and the community. Strictly speaking the Hebrew 1---ïF, "the adversary," is not a proper name for Satan but designates "a prosecutor or accuser in a court of law" (see Ps. 109:6). See Kidner, The Wisdom of Proverbs, Job & Ecclesiastes, 58.
42 This phenomenon is consistent with Job's role in 29:7-17, 22-25 as an important city official or judge. Thus Job felt at home with the legal metaphor and jargon. See the present writer's brief analysis of legal metaphor in Job in "The Structure and Purpose of the Book of Job," in Sitting with Job, 28-33.
43 The Hebrew term בְּגַלְגַּל (whether as the verb "to contend or make a complaint or accusation" or the noun "complaint") is used metaphorically in Job of the "lawsuit" between Job and God except for two places where it denotes Job's previous judicial experience (29:16 and 31:13). See ibid., 29.
against God for malpractice as Creator and Judge of the universe.\textsuperscript{44} In 41:11 the Lord confronted Job for feeling that He owed him something for his righteousness and for insinuating that God ought to "pay" him (i.e., make restitution\textsuperscript{45} for the property, reputation, and posterity He allegedly had wrongfully seized from him; see 9:12 and 10:2-3).\textsuperscript{46} Thus the use of the legal metaphor illustrates the bankruptcy of viewing man's relationship to God as a business "contract" between equals that can be enforced through court proceedings.\textsuperscript{47}

The Book of Job (as part of ancient wisdom literature) also utilizes several key metaphors from creation theology that reflect the mythological milieu of the ancient Near East.\textsuperscript{48}

Another significant literary feature of the Book of Job is the use of irony saturating nearly every section. At least two types of irony are frequent in Job: dramatic irony and verbal irony.\textsuperscript{49} The former, similar to that found in Greek drama, is an irony of events whereby the reader (or "audience") has knowledge concerning the activities on the heavenly "stage" of which Job and his friends were not aware. Because the readers know that Job was innocent of wrongdoing and was being tested by the Lord, the vigorous debate between Job and his friends becomes almost comical at times as they frequently make dogmatic statements that are undermined by their ignorance of the events of the prologue.\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{44} The dilemma of Job, who portrayed God as both an unjust judge (9:15-20) and legal adversary (10:2), sets the stage for Job's cries for an impartial mediator to help him (9:32-33; 16:18-21). Then Job placed his confidence in his "redeemer" or legal advocate (19:25). Finally Job wished (or more likely demanded) that God hear him in court to vindicate him (31:35). However, the Lord ignored Job's plea for a day in court and rebuked him for seeking to bring a "lawsuit" against Him (40:2).

\textsuperscript{45} The Hebrew verb means to pay a debt or to make restitution for something lost or stolen (Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, \textit{A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament} [Oxford: Clarendon, 1955], 1022). See especially the NIV translation of 41:11 (Heb., v. 3): "Who has a claim against me that I must pay? Everything under heaven belongs to me."


\textsuperscript{47} The Lord contradicted Job's misconception (based fundamentally on the retribution dogma he shared with the pagan religions) that He is obligated (as though by a business contract or a judicial claim) to reward man if he is obedient.


\textsuperscript{50} Whedbee describes comedy as including a "perception of incongruity that moves in the realm of the ironic, the ludicrous, and the ridiculous" (William
Verbal irony (a literary relative of sarcasm) is employed repeatedly by Job and his friends as they trade remarks laced with the very words previously used by one another but with a modified or opposite meaning.

Job frequently used mythopoeic language (the poetic usage of mythological allusions without endorsing the pagan beliefs or practices). For example, he alluded to the pagan belief that an eclipse was caused by the chaos monster Leviathan which could be called up to swallow the sun or moon (3:8). Job's clear statement of monotheism (31:26-28) suggests that the numerous mythological allusions in the book should not be interpreted as belief in the existence of other deities or the validity of pagan practices but merely as borrowed imagery from the ancient Near Eastern cultural milieu.

Furthermore, the Book of Job sometimes neutralizes polytheistic allusions by demythologizing them or even reversing them in polemical fashion. For instance, 26:5-14 (which emphasizes Yahweh's sovereign control over all forces of nature) contains several mythological allusions to show that the Lord, not a nature deity, controls the chaotic sea.

INTERPRET THE BOOK OF JOB IN LIGHT OF THE LARGER CONTEXT OF ANCIENT WISDOM LITERATURE, BOTH BIBLICAL AND EXTRABIBLICAL

Two suggestions may be made in connection with understanding the Book of Job in its cultural milieu.


51 However, his clarifying words in 9:7, which states that the command of God is the real cause of an eclipse of the sun, demonstrate that Job was not endorsing pagan cult practices; rather he was employing the most vivid and forceful language at his disposal to express the intensity of despair and anguish. See Parsons, "Literary Features of the Book of Job," in Sitting with Job, 43-44.

52 Ibid., 43-45. For an in-depth look at various kinds of mythopoeic allusions in Job, see the two significant articles by Elmer Smick, "Mythology and the Book of Job" and "Another Look at the Mythological Elements in the Book of Job," reprinted in Sitting with Job, 221-44. (Also see the more recent summary by Smick, "Job," 863-71.)

53 The concept of polemic derives from the Greek εἰχόμενος ("war, battle"); thus it is an offensive war of words against a rival concept.

54 In 26:12 Job referred to "the sea" (C;iJ, with the definite article), which grammatically indicates this is not the proper name of the god Yamm. This is in contrast to 7:12 in which the context suggests that the same Hebrew word (without the article) may refer to this pagan deity. See Parsons, "Literary Features of the Book of Job," in Sitting with Job, 44-47; and Smick, "Job," 865-66, 868-70.

55 This teaching is reinforced by Yahweh Himself in 38:8-11, where He shows that (the) sea is not really a rival chaotic force or god, though it was considered such in that culture. The absence of the article with the Hebrew word מַיָּא in verse 8 is not necessarily significant since the article is infrequent in Hebrew poetry.
First, the expositor should note that the message of the Book of Job challenges some common assumptions of traditional wisdom literature. Traditional ancient wisdom, as illustrated in the Book of Proverbs, assumes a fundamental unity of the cosmos—a relationship between the natural and social-moral order. What one observes in the natural order has implications for the social or moral order. Job's friends operated under this assumption. For instance Bildad championed this traditional understanding what analogies from nature could be used to confirm principles in the social and moral sphere.

Furthermore the Book of Job includes various facts and analogies from nature to challenge this view of moral retribution. This is particularly true of Yahweh's speeches. On one hand there is no mechanical law or principle that determines how Yahweh must always act in either the natural order or the social-moral order, on the other hand the mysterious order observable in nature is an implicit testimony to an analogous order that (despite the protests of Job) exists in the social and moral spheres. The traditional wisdom belief in moral retribution, which lay at the core of ancient Near Eastern religions, had become a dogmatic assumption (with no exceptions) for Job's friends. Because the righteous were always blessed and the wicked always punished, Eliphaz and Bildad alleged that Job's suffering proved he was guilty of hidden sin (4:7-11; 8:11-20; 18:5-21).

57 Bildad argued that the principle of cause and effect, which is illustrated in nature (8:11-19), could be transferred to prove the dogma of divine retribution. Dramatic irony shows the foolishness of his conclusion (in 8:20-22) that from the effect (Job's loss of health and wealth) he could deduce the cause (Job is a sinner). See Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *The Book of Job: God's Answer to the Problem of Undeserved Suffering* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982), 56-57.
58 See Habel, The Book of Job, 57-58. Job frequently used an analogy from nature or compared his own situation to some animal or phenomenon of nature to argue his innocence despite the allegations of his friends.
59 He argued from the natural world that His universe includes chaotic elements such as the sea (38:8) and the desert (38:26-27) as well as the magnificent creatures Behemoth and Leviathan (40:15-41:34), which were symbols of chaos in the ancient Near East. Yet He restrains these chaotic forces so that order and balance in nature results according to His divine plan (38:39; 39:1-4).
62 Ironically because Job accused God of injustice in order to maintain his own
The Book of Job serves to refute this "retribution dogma," a simplistic understanding of the divine retribution principle maintaining that there is an automatic connection between one's material and physical prosperity and one's spirituality.\(^{63}\) Though divine retribution is a valid biblical principle (Deut. 28), the error is making it an unconditional dogma by which man can predetermine God's actions and judge a person's condition before Him. God is not bound to act according to this manmade retribution dogma, though He will normally bless the righteous and punish the wicked.

Perdue argues that the traditional metaphors of creation theology that Israelite wisdom literature shared with the ancient Near East have been "deconstructed" in the Book of Job. The man Job made a wholesale assault on each metaphor of creation faith in order to challenge the view of Yahweh as the righteous Ruler and Judge who maintains creation with retributive justice.\(^ {64}\) Second, along with noting how the Book of Job challenges traditional wisdom assumptions, the expositor should consider parallel literature (including the "innocent sufferer" texts). The expositor should utilize both primary and secondary resources to observe key parallels or contrasts to the Book of Job.\(^ {65}\) A general comparison of the Book of Job with the "righteous sufferer"\(^ {66}\) texts in the ancient Near East shows that the Book of Job contains the same basic solutions to the problem of "innocent suffering" as found in the extrabiblical texts.\(^ {67}\) The main difference between innocence (40:8)-assuming that God was punishing him, though unjustly-he subconsciously held to this dogma of retribution. See Parsons, "Structure and Purpose," in Sitting with Job, 24-25.\(^ {63}\) See ibid., 23; and Hartley, The Book of Job, 48.

Job radically revised traditional metaphors of God as a beneficent artisan or as the divine warrior who wins the combat with chaos monsters to establish order in the cosmos. Job portrayed Him as a capricious judge (9:14-24) and vicious warrior (16:6-17) who had turned against creation (Perdue, Wisdom in Revolt, 171, 269-71).\(^ {64}\) James B. Pritchard's classic work, Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, 3d ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), remains the most accessible primary source for the general reader. For a brief but beneficial survey of the main parallel literature from Egypt and Mesopotamia with valuable bibliography of primary sources, see Walton, Ancient Israelite Literature in Its Cultural Context, 169-89. Also note Kidner, The Wisdom of Proverbs, Job & Ecclesiastes, 132-40; Hartley, The Book of Job, 6-11; and LaSor, Hubbard and Bush, Old Testament Survey, 538-42.\(^ {65}\) See Parsons "A Biblical Theology of Job 38:1-42:6," chap. 1, where six of these texts are compared to Job.

These solutions are as follows: (a) man's congenital sinfulness (Job 5:6-7; 15:14-16); (b) accusation of God as unjust (9:22-24; 24:1-17); (c) incompleteness of human understanding (Job 28; chaps. 38-42; cf. Zophar in 11:7-9). See James L. Crenshaw, "Popular Questioning of the Justice of God in Ancient Israel," Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 82 (1970): 387-88; and Walton, Ancient Israelite
the Book of Job and these other texts is the direct theophonic intervention of God and His direct speeches (chaps. 38-41). Thus the Book of Job offers neither a definitive answer to Job's question "why?" nor a solution to the problem of innocent suffering; therefore the significant point of the book is not its approach to the problem of suffering, but the uniqueness of the God to whom man must properly relate (whether suffering or not).

Furthermore individual parallels or contrasts can sometimes shed light on specific passages in the Book of Job. For instance in contrast to the Egyptian "Dispute over Suicide" and the Babylonian-Assyrian work "The Dialogue of Pessimism," Job (though he "cursed" the day of his birth and longed for death, chap. 3) never considered suicide.

HAVE A PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF JOB TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

The expositor should not read the New Testament back into the Old Testament. One should heed Bullock's caution to avoid using "New Testament concepts as tools to hammer and chisel the book of Job into New Testament shape." Thus Job ought to be interpreted in light of its own cultural context before considering the impact of the New Testament on its message.


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68 Cf. LaSor, Hubbard, and Bush, Old Testament Survey, 540-41. The one and only true God Yahweh is both transcendent and personal in contrast to the immanent yet impersonal nature deities of the ancient Near East.
69 Yet the Book of Job is a unique work which stands "head and shoulders" above its nearest competitors in the coherence of its sustained treatment of the theme of human misery, in the scope of its many-sided examination of the problem, in the strength of its defiant moral monotheism. . . . Comparison only serves to enhance the solitary greatness of the book of Job" (Andersen, Job, 32).
70 This supports the conclusion that the purpose (or central issue) of the Book of Job focuses on the basis of the proper relationship between God and man.
73 Andersen, Job, 29-30,32, 109; Hartley, The Book of Job, 7-9. That Job merely desired that the Lord would allow him to die is supported by other passages such as 7:15-21 and 10:18-22.
First, Satan does not appear in Job as the chief adversary of God as he does in the New Testament. Therefore one must not presuppose all that is later revealed about him.\textsuperscript{75} Second, as tempting as it may be, one must not allow the New Testament doctrine of the Incarnation to shape the understanding of Job's "redeemer."\textsuperscript{76} In 9:33 Job longed for a mediator or neutral party to arbitrate a settlement between himself and God, and 16:18-21 continues the legal metaphor.\textsuperscript{77} That Job ardently wished for an intercessor in 19:25 is undeniable, but it is not likely that Job conceived of his "redeemer" as being God Himself or Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{78}

PRELIMINARY HOMILETICAL GUIDELINES FOR JOB
PREACH EACH PASSAGE AS PART OF THE WHOLE STORY OF THE BOOK

It is imperative to consider the entire Book of Job in preparation for preaching on a particular portion. Sermons on the prologue should take into account the "rest of the story," namely, the "impatient Job" of the poetic body.\textsuperscript{79} Also sermons utilizing a portion of Job or one of his friends' speeches must be preached in light of the total argument of these many speeches. Failure to do so may not only reinforce a distorted picture of Job as a "patient saint" but may also encourage the misuse of proof texts.\textsuperscript{80}

If the expositor realizes that the Book of Job presents a message in counterpoint (presenting opposing views in a delicate balance), he may carefully traverse the exegetical "tightrope" between opposing views about Job, about God Himself, and concerning such issues as the reason for human suffering.\textsuperscript{81} It would

\textsuperscript{75} See ibid., 86-88, for the cogent argument that the development of the doctrine of Satan (like the Old Testament doctrine of the Messiah) was not fully disclosed until the New Testament.

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 88.

\textsuperscript{77} See above, n. 44.

\textsuperscript{78} However, this does not negate the conclusion that the ultimate fulfillment of Job's need for a mediator and "kinsman-redeemer" was found in Jesus Christ. See Parsons, "Structure and Purpose of the Book of Job," in Sitting with Job, 31, esp. n. 74; and Bullock, \textit{An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetic Books}, 88.

\textsuperscript{79} Habel recommends reading portions of chapters 3, 7, 12, and 16 to provide a balance to the traditional portrait of Job in chapters 1-2 (see Habel, Job, 2-3).

\textsuperscript{80} As noted above, Job 19:25 is often ripped from its literary context, the intricate poetic body (3:1-42:6). Kaiser cites Job 36:11 as one of the proof texts wrongly used by advocates of the so-called "prosperity gospel." This interpretation ignores the overall context of Job's whole life and that Elihu is parroting a traditional idea of the three friends who were rebuked by the Lord in 42:7 (Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "The Old Testament Promise of Material Blessings and the Contemporary Believer," \textit{Trinity Journal} 9 [Fall 1988]: 151-52, 166-67).

\textsuperscript{81} Habel observes, "A passage from one speech in Job finds its counterpoint in another. Points and counterpoints are typical of the great debate. Opposing views
be unbalanced to assume that the friends spoke only error$^{82}$ or that Job was always right; therefore one must exercise care in making valid application today.$^{83}$

As already noted, a careful study of Job's life reveals two contrasting "faces." Each has important features for people today. The traditional portrait of Job as the patient "saint" who belongs on a stained glass window (with a halo) must be modified (in light of the poetic body) to portray Job as the persevering saint who struggled with his emotions. Thus he is a person with whom each believer may identify. Similarly the profile of the almost blasphemous Job which emerges from the poetic body reveals that believers may ask honest questions of God when confronted with the question "why?" To focus on only one "face" of Job for preaching without consideration for the other creates an imbalance that may cause one to misapply the text. Biblical faith is not a stoic acceptance of suffering.$^{84}$ Thus the next guideline addresses the need to make valid applications.

IN LIGHT OF ONE'S OWN CULTURE AND COMMUNITY, UTILIZE THE UNIVERSAL ASPECTS OF JOB (AS PART OF WISDOM LITERATURE) AS POTENTIAL CLUES FOR A TIMELESS MESSAGE

The Book of Job contains an extraordinary range of subjects of universal interest, including "emotions of serenity and terror, hope and despair; the contrasting characters of men; doubts about and affirmations of cosmic justice; the splendors and wonders of animate and inanimate nature."$^{85}$ Job's "questioning of the value of faith and his search for the reality of God" are points at which contemporary humankind "can most readily identify with him."$^{86}$ It bears repeating that Job's struggle supplies the preacher with a fertile source for sermons that engage basic issues of life. Why is there suffering, pain, and inequity in life? Is life really worth living? Why do good people suffer bad things? Modern humanity has still not resolved these fundamental issues of human existence.$^{87}$ These subjects are universal in appeal and should

about God, suffering, human nature, wisdom, and prayer recur throughout the book" (Job, 4).

$^{82}$ This is illustrated by the fact that Paul quoted Eliphaz (Job 5:13) with approval in 1 Corinthians 3:19.

$^{83}$ Ibid.

$^{84}$ Roland E. Murphy states that "the formalism which prohibits an honest confrontation with God is not part of biblical faith" (The Psalms, Job, Proclamation Commentaries [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977], 88).

$^{85}$ Greenberg, "Job," 302.

$^{86}$ See Davis, "Preaching from Job," 65.

$^{87}$ See the feeble attempt of Rabbi Harold Kushner, When Bad Things Happen to
yield timeless applications.  

Consequently with proper consideration of one's own culture and particular community, the expositor should seek applications that are both relevant and timeless (true to the context of Job's story and culture as well as for his own modern cultural setting). After having followed the proper hermeneutical guidelines already suggested, the expositor should prayerfully read and meditate on the passage (as well as the book as a whole). (1) He ought to reread continually the whole book in light of his knowledge of the general needs of his culture and the specific needs of his community. However, the focus must remain on how the Bible has the answer to every need of humanity. (2) By prayerfully meditating on the text, the expositor should discern the underlying theological principle that "bridges" the gap between the "then" of the text and the needs and issues of the "now." Sometimes he may perceive specific parallels between the biblical situation and various general or specific issues today as a clue to the timeless message.


Cf. McKenna, Job, 17. Habel states that Job's speeches touch "the quick of human suffering and the passion of real life" (Job, 1).

See Osborne, The Hermeneutical Spiral, 343; and John MacArthur, Jr., "A Study Method for Expository Preaching," in Rediscovering Expository Preaching, ed. John MacArthur, Jr. (Dallas, TX: Word, 1992), 216-18, who rightly states that this step is an important link between exegesis and timeless applications.

For some thought-provoking questions and insights relating to pastoral and theological considerations, see Daniel J. Simundson, The Message of Job: A Theological Commentary (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986). A pastor or missionary must not only have a thorough knowledge of the text of Job but must also get to know his flock. He should spend time with them so that he may know their interests and discern their needs. Then he can correlate this data with the issues addressed in the text. Proper contextualization occurs when there is specific application to the situation of the audience (Osborne, The Hermeneutical Spiral, 346-47).

Cf. Roy B. Zuck, "Application in Biblical Hermeneutics and Exposition," in Walvoord: A Tribute, ed. Donald K. Campbell (Chicago: Moody, 1982), 24. One must not become so concerned with contemporary relevance that he preaches what people want to hear rather than "thus saith the Lord." The message must not be lifted from its historical-cultural and biblical context to tickle the ears of the audience or to massage the hurts of the sheep. See Richard L. Mayhue, "Rediscovering Expository Preaching," in Rediscovering Expository Preaching, 1, 6, 14.


Osborne warns that these "parallels should be genuine rather than contrived" (The Hermeneutical Spiral, 343).
For example in chapter 24 Job questioned the inactivity of Almighty God, who seemingly ignores the cries of poor and helpless members of society who are exploited by the wicked (vv. 1-12). He complained about the high crime rate especially at night (vv. 13-17). These issues of social injustice and crime are certainly relevant today. In chapter 38 the Lord responded directly to Job's remarks (vv. 12-15). He reminded Job that because He controls the coming of the dawn, the chaotic darkness is dispelled and the activities of the wicked are restricted. Though crime and injustice are prevalent in the world, this does not mean that the Lord has abdicated his throne to Satan or to chaotic elements in the world. An underlying theological principle is that God is still in charge and in control even when things seem chaotic and senseless. The timeless message and application will relate to this. The Book of Job utilizes the subject of human suffering and social injustice to teach that God is trustworthy even when circumstances may shroud His sovereign plan and call His goodness into question.

Job 3 has contemporary relevance in particular for the issues of suicide and euthanasia (mercy killing). If anyone ever had good reason to consider suicide, Job did. However, as already noted, Job (in contrast to other writings from his time) did not consider suicide; rather he wished that he had never been born and he desired to die to escape suffering. Furthermore he never asked his wife (who had already suggested in 2:9 that he commit "indirect suicide" by cursing God or any of his friends to assist him in self-destruction.

The Book of Job also demonstrates that the believer should be able to pour out honestly all his emotions and feelings to God. Job 3 and many other passages in the poetic body document the venting of Job's bitterness and frustration to God in prayer. Thus individuals who are facing circumstances that cause them to feel angry toward God should not be told to suppress or to ignore their feelings. Rather they ought to be encouraged to get alone with God as they read Bible books such as Job. They ought to ventilate their intense hurts and needs to the One who alone understands the

94 This sounds almost like a letter to the editor in the newspaper protesting government failures to deal adequately with social problems. Perhaps a sermon on Job 24 could begin with the reading of such a letter (either real or imagined) as a catalyst for the message.

95 In the prologue Satan had to ask permission to torment Job (1:11-12; 2:5-6), and 38:8-11 emphasizes the Lord's control of the chaotic sea.

96 Andersen, Job: An Introduction and Commentary, 93.

depths of human pain and frustrations. The Book of Job (in the context of the Bible as a whole) provides answers to the human problem of depression. Job rode an emotional roller coaster that began with the height of patient trust in God (chaps. 1-2) but sharply dipped to despair (chap. 3) and then continued mainly on the downward side toward despondence, bitterness, and despair but with occasional glimmers of hope throughout the dialogue. Many today can identify with such emotions. Job eventually learned to have confidence and trust in God's sovereign plan even in the midst of mystery. This trust resulted in renewed stability to his emotions. Therefore the expositor should challenge those who are suffering inexplicable pain and emotional turmoil to dare to trust the Lord with their lives and circumstances even though they may never fully understand why. If Job could realize this even before the coming of Christ, how much more should believers today (in light of New Testament revelation) exhibit faith in the midst of suffering.

EXPLORE THE NEW TESTAMENT AS THE PRIMARY KEY TO ANSWER JOB'S QUESTIONS AND TO MAKE VALID APPLICATION FOR TODAY

Several writers have noted that without the New Testament the Book of Job remains incomplete. Many of Job's questions remain unanswered until the coming of Christ. However, the caution already issued about not reading the New Testament back into the Old Testament must be heeded. The preacher or teacher must balance the Old Testament context with the input from the New Testament.

98 See John Job, Job Speaks Today (Atlanta: Knox, 1980), 55-68.
99 “Throughout the story, Job plummets into the depths of despair just short of hell itself and vaults upward to the heights of revelation” in other passages (McKenna, Job, 24). Cf. Kidner, The Wisdom of Proverbs, Job & Ecclesiastes, 67-69. For example in chapter 14 Job alternated between despair over the futility of life (vv. 1-6) and the finality of death (vv. 7-12) and then had a glimmer of hope for life after death (vv. 13-17). But he returned to the reality of life's despair and pain (vv. 18-22). Chapter 19 begins in dark despair (vv. 1-22) but ends in a note of confidence of vindication (vv. 23-29).
100 Simundson observes that the sharp mood swings of Job are normal for sufferers; those swings are usually unpredictable and beyond control (Simundson, The Message of Job, 67-68.)
101 See John Job, Job Speaks Today, 12-13; and McKenna, Job, 24-25. For instance Job's longing for a mediator (9:33; 16:18-21) ultimately is fulfilled in Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5). However, as already noted, this does not mean that this was the thinking of Job. His question of whether man has more hope of life after death than a tree (Job 14) is answered in Jesus' teaching (John 11:25) and in His resurrection, which guarantees the believer's future resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20-23). See G. Campbell Morgan, The Answers of Jesus to Job (reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973).
Habel suggests expositors preach a series of sermons before Easter Sunday in which they view Job's major struggles in the context of Christ's suffering. One must not ignore the overall context of the Old Testament, however, as one moves to the New Testament.

The New Testament corroborates or clarifies one's understanding of certain key points in the story of Job. For instance the earlier conclusion that the Lord (in the prologue) did not abdicate His sovereign position to Satan is confirmed by the New Testament record that Satan was given permission to sift Peter as wheat (Luke 22:31-32). Like Job, the Book of James demonstrates that suffering may operate for higher purposes than humans may realize. In contrast to Job's friends who said "in effect: 'When you meet with various trials, repent.' James wrote, 'When you meet with various trials, rejoice.'"

EXPLORE THE USE OF DRAMA AS A VEHICLE FOR COMMUNICATING THE MESSAGE OF JOB

One goal of the expositor should be to find illustrations from parallel situations in one's own culture to reproduce the effect of the message so that it may be communicated as clearly as in ancient times. Drama may be a modern analogy that can be

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103 The relationship of Job to the so-called "Suffering Servant" songs of Isaiah might serve as an important transition to help one understand Christ's passion and how He identified with human pain (Hartley, *The Book of Job*, vii, 14-15; and Andersen, *Job: An Introduction and Commentary*, 72-73).

104 Christ's prayer for Peter illustrates that trials from Satan have a higher divine design (Kidner, *The Wisdom of Proverbs, Job & Ecclesiastes*, 59-60).

105 Hubbard "The Wisdom Movement and Israel's Covenant Faith," 23.

106 Ibid. (See James 1:2-3). Also James clarified that God was not tempting Job as Satan was, but was testing him to see if he would persevere (James 1:12-13).


108 Job has been compared to a cosmic drama on a double stage that allows the reader (as an audience) to observe it as the curtains of heaven above and then earth below open (Luis Alonso-Schokel, "Toward a Dramatic Reading of the Book of Job," *Semeia* 7 [1977]: 46-47). Edwin and Margaret Thiele also develop the book in analogies to a drama (Job and the Devil [Boise, ID: Pacific, 1988]). For a briefer comparison to a play with nine scenes, see Mildred Tengbom, *Sometimes I Hurt* (Nashville: Nelson, 1980), 14-15. However, van Selms notes that the ancient Near East, unlike ancient Greece did not know drama as an art form (A. van Selms, *Job: A Practical Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985], 4).
utilized to present the message of the book.\textsuperscript{109} Though Job is unlike drama in having virtually no plot,\textsuperscript{110} Ryken calls it a "closet drama," intended to be read rather than acted.\textsuperscript{111} The literary form of the Book of Job is "ideally suited to dramatic recitation or presentation."\textsuperscript{112} The role of irony in Job suggests audience participation (originally the reader).\textsuperscript{113}

However, another possibility may be to convert the "dialogue" occurring at the "ash heap" (or garbage dump) into a modern situation.\textsuperscript{114} Perhaps a trial with various witnesses\textsuperscript{115} or a debate format between actors who voice in modern idiom the concerns of Job in contrast to Job's friends and to the Lord Himself could approximate some of the intense feelings found in chapters 3-42.

**CONCLUSION**

This article has proposed four hermeneutical guidelines and four homiletical suggestions for understanding and proclaiming the Book of Job. However, to learn the lessons of Job and to seek to

\textsuperscript{109} In doing so the emphasis should be on using drama to enhance the biblical message rather than as a theatrical gimmick (John MacArthur, Jr., "Frequently Asked Questions about Expository Preaching," in *Rediscovering Expository Preaching*, 345). The present writer's former student Terry Tolleson has utilized the following format: (1) preaching a sermon emphasizing the story and message of Job on Sunday morning; (2) in a more informal setting such as Sunday evening dividing the congregation into small groups to study different character parts; and (3) preparing for the actual dramatization for the next Sunday.\textsuperscript{110} Gordis concludes that Job is "poles away from Elizabethan and from modern drama" (*The Book of God and Man*, 4). However, in the virtual absence of plot, Job parallels the modern "theater of the absurd." Other parallels to this type of drama include "a sense of loss, alienation, and metaphysical anguish which culminates in . . . the total absurdity of the human condition" (Renate Usmiani, "A New Look at the Drama of 'Job,'" *Modern Drama* 134 [1970]: 197, 199-200). Furthermore all the speakers "talk past each other" and they did not really know what the issue was in Job's trials (van Selms, *Job: A Practical Commentary*, 4).\textsuperscript{111} Ryken, *Words of Delight*, 343.\textsuperscript{112} J. H. Eaton, *Job* (Sheffield: Sheffield, 1985),39; and Alonso-Schokel, "Toward a Dramatic Reading of the Book of Job," 45-61.\textsuperscript{113} Ryken, *Words of Delight*, 343. In some churches (though certainly not all) an informal service or class might allow for actors who insert laughter or even cat-calls at appropriate junctures where Job's friends misjudge him as they place "their foot in their mouths" or holler to Job (who cannot hear) that Christ is the answer to his various questions.\textsuperscript{114} However, one should not go so far as in Archibald MacLeish's Pulitzer Prize play, *JB* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958).\textsuperscript{115} The present writer's student Jerry Payne used this format successfully for a seminary class with various classmates reading a prepared script. For clues on how to incorporate the legal metaphors into a drama, see Alonso-Schokel, "Toward a Dramatic Reading of the Book of Job," 46-50,52-59.
teach and apply them to one's own generation is a lifelong journey of faith one must "experience as an adventure on the growing edge of the human spirit." Job's example provides practical truths such as persevering in prayer during trials. But these truths must be applied by faith. A person may never fully appropriate them until he suffers.

Job probably never knew the reason he suffered and seldom do others. Therefore the question is, "Will we persevere in prayer and in life no matter what happens?" The proof of faith will be the way a person lives in the midst of fiery trials. Can the believer say with Job in 23:10, "When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold (cf. 1 Pet. 1.6-7).

Legal metaphors are extremely popular in the theological language of the Old Testament. In part this popularity of legal language merely reflects Israel's Near Eastern back-and, where the idea of the deity as judge was both ancient widespread. Partly it is a more uniquely Israelite phenomenon, stemming from early Israel's creative adaptation of the international treaty form to give institutional expression to her new relation with Yahweh. Much of the legal imagery of the Psalms comes out of the first background, while the legal terminology of the prophets, particularly in the prophetic *rib*, must often be traced back to covenantal theology. Nevertheless, the imagery from both backgrounds is often mixed, so one must be wary of pushing for pure forms.

This warning is especially appropriate in connection with the book of Job, where the legal imagery flourishes, but often in unconventional ways. It is to such an unconventional usage of legal metaphor that this study, presented in memory of my friend and respected teacher the late Dr. J. W. Roberts, is directed.

1 B. Gemser, "The rib—or controversy-pattern in Hebrew mentality," *SVT* 3 (1955), 120-137.
3 The vast literature on covenant is still expanding and cannot be listed here. For the sake of the novice, however, one should mention Delbert R. Hillers' *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1969), which is undoubtedly the best introduction to the subject. i
4 Gamper, op. Clt. I
5 Julien Harvey, *Le plaidoyer prophétique contre Israel après la rupture de l'alliance* (Studia travaux de recherche, 22; Bruges-Paris: Desclee de Brouwer/Montreal: Les Editions Bellarmin, 1967).
If I say, "I will forget my complaint, 
I will relax my face and smile,"
I become afraid of all my sufferings.
I know you will not acquit me.
I am already found guilty;
Why should I struggle in vain.
Were I to wash myself with soapwort,
Cleanse my hands with lye;
You would dunk me in filth,
And my clothes would abhor me.
For he is not a man, like me, whom I could challenge:
"Let us go to court together (nbw' yhdw bm'tpt)."
Would there were an umpire between us
That he might place his hand on us both.
Let him put aside his club,
And let his terror not dismay me.
Then I would speak and not fear him,
Though I am not just before him.6 (Job 9:27-35)

This passage is loaded with unconventional thoughts, but let us focus first on the expression Job uses in his hypothetical summons to God, "Let us go to court together (nbw' yhdw bm'spt)." This expression, while unexceptional when used of two humans, runs counter to normal usage when applied to God. Bw' bm'spt 'm/t', "to enter into litigation with," or hby' bm'spt, "to bring into litigation," when used with God as the subject, normally designates an experience to be avoided if possible. The Psalmist prays to be delivered from it: "Do not enter into judgment with your servant (w'l tbw' bm'spt t 'bdk), for no living being can be in the right before you;' (Ps. 143:2). Isaiah threatens the leaders of Israel with its imminence, "Yahweh is about to take the stand to prosecute, He is about to stand to judge his people, Yahweh is entering into litigation with the elders of his people and their princes (yhw h bm'spt ybw' m. . .)" (Isaiah 3:13, 14).

6 For the rendering of this last line see Anton C. M. Blommerde, *Northwest Semitic Grammar and Job* (Biblica et Orientalia, 22; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969), 57, 58. There are other difficulties in the text as well, but for the sake of economy I have limited my textual notes to those places where my rendering departs radically from any of the commonly accepted translations. For the rest the reader should consult the commentaries, especially Marvin Pope's in the chor Bible series.
And Qohelet uses it as a warning to temper any libertine misunderstanding of his philosophy of life:

Rejoice, young man, in your youth,
And let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth.
Walk in the ways of your heart and in the sight of your eyes,
But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment (yby' k h'lhym bmspt) (Ecclesiastes 11: 9).

The reason for this rather negative evaluation of such an experience is clearly expressed in Eliphaz's sharp rebuke to Job: "Is it because of your piety he reproves you (ykyhk)? That he enters into litigation with you (ybw' mk bmspt)" Job 22:4? Up to this point in the dialogue God has not deigned to speak with Job, so the reference cannot be to an oral rebuke. The only tangible expression of Yahweh's reproof or litigation lay in the sufferings Job was enduring. Such suffering was interpreted in traditional Israelite thought, as in Near Eastern thought in general, as God's judgment on a sinner. Thus the metaphor "to bring/enter into judgment," when used with God as the subject, meant, translated into literal prose, "to suffer some kind of pain or disaster." Naturally that is an experience to be avoided and one, which invites its use as a warning.

Job follows this normal usage of the metaphor when he complains that man is too ephemeral a creature, his life too brief, for God to waste time bringing him to court (14:1-3), but in the passage quoted earlier (9:32), the poet has Job express a quite different sentiment. Under certain circumstances he would actually initiate litigation with God! Obviously Job is using the expression with a different meaning here-he certainly does not want more suffering. And if one considers the circumstances in which this summons would be offered, one can see what Job has done to the metaphor. He has simply transferred it, untranslated, out of the realm of

7 The other occurrence of this expression in Ecclesiastes 12:14 probably has a somewhat different implication.
metaphor into that of literal prose. While traditional language spoke metaphorically of God entering into judgment with man, Job pleads that he literally do so in a tangible, equitable fashion.

This implies, among other things, that God make himself visible to his opponent at law. Part of Job's complaint is his inability to find God. He touches on this problem of God's invisibility earlier in the same chapter, "Lo, he passes by me, but I cannot see him; He moves on by, but I cannot perceive him" (9:11), but his clearest exposition of it is in Job 23:3-9:

Would that I knew where to find him
That I might come to his tribunal.
I would lay my case before him,
Would fill my mouth with arguments.
I want to know what words he would answer me.
I want to consider what he would say to me.
Would he contend with me in his great strength?
No, he would pay attention to me.
There the upright could reason with him,
And I could carry my case through successfully.
Lo, I go forward, but he is not there,
Backwards, but I cannot perceive him.
I turn left, but I cannot see him,
I turn right, but I do not spy him.8

It is not enough, however, for God to show himself to his opponent. He must restrain himself, forego the use of his awesome, intimidating power, in order that Job may reason with him unafraid, as an equal:

Only two things do not do to me,
Then I will not hide from your face:
Remove your hand from upon me,
And let your terror not dismay me.
Then call, and I will answer,
Or let me speak, and you reply. (13:20-22)

8 It would also be possible to translate the terms "forward," "backwards," "left," and "right," in accordance with their use in Hebrew to designate the cardinal points of the compass, as "east," "west," "north," and "south," respectively.
Otherwise justice cannot be achieved, for God would simply terrorize his opponent into accepting his verdict:

If he carries off, who can challenge him,  
Who can say to him, "What are you doing?"  
A god could not turn back his anger;  
The helpers of Rahab grovelled beneath him.  
How then could I challenge him?  
Choose my words with him?  
Though in the right I could not answer;  
I would have to entreat my judge.\(^9\)  
If I summoned, and he answered,  
I do not believe he would heed my voice.  
He would bruise me with a tempest  
And multiply my wounds without cause.  
He would not permit me to catch my breath.  
Yea, he would sate me with bitterness.  
Be it power, he is strongest;  
Or litigation, who could arraign him?  
Though I were innocent, his mouth would declare me guilty.  
Though I were blameless, he would pronounce me perverse.  
\((9:12-20)\)

In stressing this need for Yahweh to exercise self-control, the poet appears to have picked upon a logical weakness in legal imagery dear to the prophets. The whole presentation in Job 9 may, in fact, be read as a critical reflection on the famous passage in Isaiah 1:18-20:\(^{10}\)

Come and let us reason together, says Yahweh.  
If your sins be as scarlet, shall they become white

\(^9\) This translation follows the MT vocalization \textit{lm sop tl}, but takes the mem as the enclitic expansion of the preposition, i.e. \textit{lm s'}pty. Cf. the use of \textit{lmw} in 27:14; 29:21; 38:40; and 40:4.

\(^{10}\) Both have a summons to litigation (Isa. 1:18/Job 9:32), both stress the impossibility of man's cleansing himself before God (Isa. 1:18 [see next note]/Job 9:30-31), and both make it evident, though in radically different ways, that Yahweh's will cannot be thwarted (Isa. 1:19-20/ for Job, see below).
as snow?  
If they are red like crimson, shall they become as wool?  
If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good of the land,  
But if you refuse and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword,  
For the mouth of Yahweh has spoken.

The late President Johnson once quoted the first line of this text in an appeal for national unity only to have a querulous critic point to its conclusion. The appeal to sweet reasonableness ends in a threat! Agree with me or be damned!

Actually the word translated "reason together" (nwkhh) properly means "to dispute together in court," but that only gives more point to the critic's cynicism. Yahweh is both an interested party in the lawsuit and the judge! This is hardly a fair arrangement for Yahweh's opponents at law, yet this rather bizarre pattern constantly appears in the prophetic ribs. It can only be explained, I think, by the covenantal background to these prophetic lawsuits. In the international treaties the gods who served as witnesses also acted as judges, in the event the treaty was broken, either by deciding the outcome of the battle which was almost sure to follow, or by afflicting the guilty side with natural disaster. But Israel,

11 For this rendering of this and the following line see Hans Wildberger, Jesaja (BK XII; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1972), 52-53, especially the following:  
Since Yahweh summons to a clarification before the judgment, he must say why that is necessary. Against the prophet's preaching one will have raised the objection that the possibility of reparation for the guilt of sin exists, and indeed through cultic rites, be they sacrifice or ritual washings. It is not the forgiveness of sins, but the possibility of expiation that stands under discussion. Now it is fully in line with [vss.] 10-17 if here also Isaiah opposes the sharpest "No!" to a confidence rooted in the performance of cultic rites and thus destroys the certainty of salvation, so understood, as an illusion. One cannot be finished with the guilt of sin so easily, and man should not attempt to play so sacrilegious a game with God's patience (p. 53).

12 For the first note the appeal to Shamash in the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic and in Yarim-Lim's letter to Yashub-Yahad (both conveniently included in the appendix to Harvey's work, op. cit., 170-173), and for the latter see Mursilis's plague prayers (ANET, p. 395, para. 4-10).
when it adapted this political form to express its religious commitment to Yahweh, obviously could not assimilate these pagan gods-one finds only attenuated accommodations to the pressure of the form. Thus Yahweh, one party to the treaty, also had to assume the responsibility of the gods to see that it was observed. As a result, the lawsuits based on this covenant model place Yahweh in this same invidious dual role. This is sometimes obscured by the appeal to various parties as witnesses, but ultimately it is always Yahweh, the litigant, who pronounces judgment on the guilty.

One can see that the flaw lies at the metaphor's roots, in imperfect analogy between the original political form and the religious use to which it was put. Other metaphors for God’s relation to man such as the language of father and son do not harbor this particular weakness. Job, however, who appears to have read the Isaiah passage with the same cynical eye as Johnson's critic, is interested in exploiting the metaphor, not in explaining its flaw. How can he hope for a fair trial, if God is to be both his opponent and his judge? Thus Job presses for a third party to adjudicate his dispute with God.

This third party, variously referred to as an "umpire" (mwkyh), "witness" (‘d and shd), "interpreter" (mlys), and "redeemer" (g'l), has been the source of endless discussion, and the passages where this figure occurs are some of the most difficult in the book of Job. One cannot deal with them here except to say that all these terms take on more than ordinary significance when applied to this third party.

That is entirely in keeping with our poet's method. He has produced Job's summons to Yahweh with its concomitant features by exploiting ambiguities and logical weaknesses in the traditional legal metaphors. It is not surprising that these terms suffer the same creative fate.

13 The prophetic appeal to heaven and earth as witnesses must be regarded as such.
14 Job 9:33.
15 Job 16:19.
16 Job 16:19; 33:23.
17 Job 19:25.
ANOTHER LOOK AT THE MYTHOLOGICAL
ELEMENTS IN THE BOOK OF JOB

ELMER SMICK

THE book of Job, like a microcosm of the Old Testament
bears witness to the will and purpose of the God who created
and rules over nature and all creatures, especially his crowning
creature man. In Genesis 3 as a result of the work of the Tem-
pter God must put in effect the death penalty of Genesis 2:17.
But only the Tempter, the Serpent, is cursed. Man gets a some-
what suspended sentence as far as the death penalty goes but
with immediate punitive effects. The book of Job brings us a
step closer to the mystery of godliness by adding a new dimen-
sion to the concept of punitive suffering. The ancient Near
Eastern documents from Babylonia and Egypt agree with the
punitive aspect of suffering but are shallow in the way they deal
with the problem.¹ Man as a sinner must humble himself before
the gods who are often perverse or not interested or they are
incapacitated. But attention to both the continuities and discon-
tinuities between the worship of Yahweh and the paganisms of
the Old Testament world is an important feature of O.T.
hermeneneutics.

H. W. Wolff in his chapter entitled "The Hermeneutics of
the Old Testament" in the series of essays on that subject edited
by Claus Westermann says:

The more distinctly the old Oriental religions are recon-
structed before our eyes, the more clearly we see that the O. T.
actively resists the attempt to understand it in analogy to the
cults of its environment. This is all the more surprising since
the connection of Israel with its environment in matters of a
general world view, of profane and sacral usage, of Cultic
institutions, yes even of prophetic phenomena, is constantly
becoming clearer" (p. 167).

¹ Marvin H. Pope in the Anchor Bible 15 (LVI-LXXIII) has a good
summary of the parallel literature.

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To this may be added the observation that the mythological elements in Job conform remarkably well with the religious expressions from contemporary sources. But careful attention to certain features in context will show that any special problem these allusions may appear to pose for the monotheistic outlook of the author of this book is superficial. Our present purpose is to defend this last statement. Here we use the term myth in its traditional sense—not as another way of expressing the truth but as the way a polytheistic people understood deity. In this sense, to see wide mythological commitment, as some have been prone to do, results in as much misinterpretation as does the attempt to ignore mythological expression to protect the scriptures from such "contamination." Reading primitive meaning into a piece of monotheistic literature because the language is infused with the idiom of a primitive substratum is poor methodology. It is true that sometimes it is impossible to tell when the terms are mere figures and when they represent the view of the speaker. We must be guided by the thrust of the context.

The language of mythology is inherent in every language from every age and is often used in religious contexts that are strongly monotheistic. The Jews in Babylonia borrowed pagan festival names for their religious calendar. Fanatically monotheistic Jews embellished their synagogues with zodiacal mosaics borrowed from Roman art depicting the sun god riding his chariot. Matthew 12:24 uses the pagan deity name Baalzebub (2 Kings 1:3) for Satan simply as an idiom without a thought given to its origin. Isaiah and Ezekiel, both monotheists, were prone to using mythological allusion as a vehicle through which they communicated their messages.

Nature is a theme which frequently evoked mythological language: the storm, fire, the sea, the heavens and the earth and

2 John L. McKenzie in his article "Myth and the Old Testament" (CBQ XXI, 265-282) following Cassirer defines myth in this way but it assumes a unique set of presuppositions.

3 Pope seems to take this position. He takes issue with R. Gordis's statement that Job takes monotheism for granted (AB 15, XXXIX).

4 See the quotation from T. H. Gaster below.

5 John Milton drew heavily on Greek mythology to enrich his poetic imagery even in his picture of creation.

6 BASOR 228, 61 fl. i

7 Isaiah 14 and 27, Ezekiel 28.
creatures in both spheres. Job 3:8 begins with a reference to an occult practice involving the celebrated Leviathan. Regarding the day of his birth Job says:

May those who curse days curse that day, those who are ready to arouse Leviathan (NIV).

Dhorme says "those who curse days" may refer to other sufferers like Job who also cursed the day of their birth. But in light of the parallelism the expression more likely refers to professional cursers like Balaam. Job appears to be making a play on the similar sound of the words yam, "sea," and yom, "day," and the parallel between Leviathan, the sea monster and the Yamm as a deity in Canaanite mythology.

Job, in a cursing mood, employs the most vivid and forceful proverbial language available to call for the obliteration of that day. The figure then is of an awakened monster of chaos who could swallow that day. According to some mythological notions such swallowing of the sun and moon brought about an eclipse! There is no way of knowing how valid Job considered the work of such cursers but in his negative confession Job presents himself as a monotheist who rejected current mythological conceptions of the sun (31:26-28). Job's error, for which he can scarcely be excused, was in damning the day of his birth, questioning the sovereign purpose of God. Job in his attempt to understand his theology in the light of his immediate experience, while constrained to speak only the truth before God, came perilously close to cursing God to his face as the Satan had predicted. His friends on the other hand uttered many perceptive truths. Paul could quote Eliphaz in I Corinthians 3:19. What they said, however, did not necessarily apply to Job. It becomes increasingly clear that they had no concern for Job and as he said were only mouthing words to curry God's favor. Their original conciliatory attitudes quickly become harsh and vindictive. The words of the dialogue then are not normative and so we must consider the mythological allusions in that light.

8 Although NEB renders 8b. "those whose magic binds even the monster..." the same stem of the verb 'ur means "to awaken" the dead in Sheol in Isaiah 14:9.
9 Job 5:13.
Even so, it is difficult to tell when a speaker uses mythic terms metaphorically. Demythologizing was a process that was practiced in Israel. But there are continuities as well as discontinuities between the normative theology of Israel and the surrounding nations. Our procedure will be to examine some passages in which mythological expression uniquely serves the purpose of the book. In some cases this reverses the effect of polytheism and shows Job's God is Sovereign Lord over all creation. Also mythopoeic language may provide a "sensus plenior" to the Divine speeches which implies Yahweh's victory over the Satan. This is more tenuous but if valid it helps us understand better the enigmatic words of Yahweh which are so important as a key to understanding the book.

Perhaps a distinction should be made between conscious demythologizing and simple metaphor. For example, Psalm 121 appears to be a conscious demythologizing, a polemic against the cosmic mountain motif and the notion of many patron deities. Since the pagan deities are no-gods (Ps. 5:4) where can one turn for help? The psalmist says:

When I lift up my eyes to the mountains
   where does my help come from?
My help comes from Yahweh,
   the Maker of heaven and earth.

The psalmist conceives of Yahweh as the patron deity:
   He will not let your foot slip.
   Yahweh watches over you.
   Yahweh will keep you from all harm.

We think immediately of Eliphaz's taunt of Job in 5:1

"Call now, is there any who will answer you, and to which of the Holy Ones will you turn?"

These "holy ones" are the bene ha 'elohim of the prologue. The divine council motif may be considered an ideological continuity but the authors of Job and Psalms 82 and 89 have introduced a discontinuity in the way they handle the concept. The dis-

10 See Albright's development of this idea in Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan.
continuity can be appreciated in terms of the Hebrew hierarchy of 'elohim. There is only one creator— all the q'hal q'dosim fear him and none can be compared with him (89:7, 8). Men are 'elohim to the animals, rulers and judges are 'elohim to ordinary men and the heavenly beings to men. In the mythology there were lesser divine beings created by the cosmic gods to serve them. They are sometimes available at patron deities or personal intercessors and were general lackeys in the divine assembly. In Job 33 Eliphaz speaks of such an intercessor calling him a mal'ak11 (messenger) and a melis (interpreter). Both Job and his friends believe that among such "holy ones" a man might find a defender. Three times Job mentions such a one, feeling the need for an arbiter (9:33), a witness (16:19-21) and a vindicator (19:25-27). This is certainly evocative and part of the ideological preparation for the mediatorial work of the Christ who could stand between God and man, sharing the nature of each, as Job says in 9:33 "that he might lay his hand upon the two of us."

The book of Job is replete with vivid imagery based on the mythic literature deeply engrained in the language and passed on through generations. There are too many examples to do more than sample a few themes. A widely used theme is the quelling of Chaos known in west Semitic literature as Yamm (Sea) and in Babylonia as Tiamat (the Deep). The sea monsters variously called Rahab (the boisterous), Tannin (the dragon) and Leviathan (the serpent) also play a part.

In 7:12 Job speaks out in anguish over his imagined harassment by God and says:

Am I Yamm (Sea) or Tannin that you set a guard over me?

The tales of the conquest of Yamm, Tannin, and Lotan by Baal and Anat are well known. The Babylonian Tiamat is killed by hero gods who then proceed to create the land and sea from the pieces. The west Semitic literature provides no creation account but stresses the control of the sea by the weather God, Baal

11 The same term is used in Ugaritic for the lackey gods. Cf. A. Herdner, Corpus des tablettes en Cuneiformes alphabetiques, 1.3.17-21; 3.4.76-80, etc.
(Ugaritic texts 68, 129, 137). Job and his friends knew well the west Semitic myths. But were they committed to them as part of their view of deity? The only way we can know is from the total thrust of their words.

A look at the chaos terminology in the first part of chapter 9 will help us capture the thrust of Job's concept of deity. According to Job, El is indeed a God of profound wisdom and cosmic force and as such is too much for mere man. In verses 5-13 he moves mountains and shakes the earth off its foundations--the earthquake. He speaks and the sun doesn't rise -the eclipse. He seals up the stars from sight--movement of the stars and planets. He stretched out the heavens and trampled on the back of Yamm (bomote yam)--creation and overcoming of Chaos. He made the Bear, Orion, Pleiades, and the southern chambers and when angry even the cohorts of Rahab cower at his feet. Job here describes a deity who is unique when compared with what we know of any single contemporary god. The Ugaritic El is a character variously represented. Sometimes he is a forceful lone patriarch living in a tent, at other times a frightened deity who is forced to give up the young Baal to the messengers of Yamm. Baal can take things in his own hands and destroy Yamm with the weapons supplied by Kothar wa-Hasis. But then Baal is killed by Mot. The issue is always sovereignty. E1 and the divine assembly are faced with the question of ascribing kingship to Yamm. Baal asserts kingship not only by eliminating Yamm but by demonstrating his power in the storm. This west semitic story was imported to the east where Marduk, chosen as king by the gods, asserts kingship by slaying Tiamat.

The point is that Job's God assumes all the functions of the gods whether Baal, El, or Yamm. Job's El is never subordinated to any of the bene ha'elohim. In 9:8 he exercises his creative power all by himself (lebaddo). The line is the same as in Isaiah 44:24. He is not only a deity who does not share his power and

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13 Yahweh's lordship over Chaos is the theme of Psalm 29. There the bene 'elim are called to honor and worship the one who controls and sits enthroned forever over the flood (29:10).
authority but he performs his numberless wonders while being invisible (verse 11).

When he passes me I can't see him.
When he goes by I can't perceive him.

The psalmist expresses a similar discontinuity in Psalm 89:5-8.

The heavens praise your wonders, O Yahweh,
your faithfulness also, in the assembly of the holy ones.
For who in the skies above can compare with Yahweh?
Who is like Yahweh among the heavenly beings?
In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared;
he is more awesome than all who surround him.
O Yahweh, God of hosts, who is like you?
You are mighty, O Yahweh, and your faithfulness surrounds you.

As in Job and Isaiah this theme is linked to God as Creator for it is precisely at this point the psalmist describes Yahweh as Creator of the heavens and earth and the One who rules over the surging sea, crushing Rahab and all his enemies. In his creating and saving power he is unique and incomparable. The psalmist's God also had that mysterious quality of invisibility. Was it not this quality that disturbed his idolatrous contemporaries when they chided. "Where is your God?" (42:3, 10; 79. 10). Psalm 115.2 reads.

Why do the nations say,
'Where is their God?'
Our God is in heaven;
he does whatever pleases him
But their idols are silver and gold,
made by the hands of men.

B.D.B. notes that when 'ayyeh is so used, the answer nowhere is expected. Even though ineffectiveness may be the point of Psalm terminology invisibility is in mind in Job. Job is asserting that his God is both invisible and all-powerful.

Turning now to another theme in Job 5:7 where the KJV and RSV read:

But man is born to trouble
as the sparks fly upward,
it is better to translate:
Man is born to trouble
as sure as Resheph's sons soar aloft.

Who are "Resheph's sons"? Is this a metaphor for flames, sparks or lightning? Resheph is equated with Nergal, the Mesopotamian god of pestilence and the netherworld. In Deut 32:24 the word is parallel with qeteb (destruction) and in Hab 3:5 with deber (pestilence), and the plural is used of lightning in Ps 78:48. In Ps 76:4, however, "the reshephs" (arrows) of the bow are in apposition to the shield, the sword and the battle. In Ugaritic Resheph is called "Lord of the arrow," either referring to his skillful use of lightning or his attendance upon arrows in flight. Just as Death's firstborn (Job 18:13) devours the bodies of wicked men, so here the sons of Resheph are active trouble makers. On Resheph T. M. Gaster observes:

When Resheph is said (Hab 3:5) to attend upon Yahweh, or when the pangs of love are described as "fiery reshephs" (Song of Songs 8:6), do the writers really have in mind the figures of the Canaanite plague-god of that name, or is this simply a case of metonymy? This is a problem which I will not even attempt to resolve, but it must at least be mentioned.14

From my point of view Gaster is asking the wrong question. It makes little difference whether the figure of the plague god is in mind or not. Habakkuk is using a highly anthropomorphic figure of Yahweh. The real question is, did Habakkuk believe Yahweh existed in the form of a warrior and did Job and Habakkuk believe Resheph or Resheph's sons really existed as gods? That must be answered in the light of other things these writers say.

Job 26 is replete with mythological allusions--the denizens of Sheol, Zaphon the cosmic mountain: Yamm and Rahab, all in a cosmography with some rather sophisticated observations.

Verses 5-14 may be rendered:
The spirits of the dead writhe,
the Waters below and their denizens.
Sheol is naked in God’s presence,
Abaddon is uncovered.

He spreads out Zaphon over emptiness;
   he hangs the earth on nothing.
He wraps up the waters in his clouds;
   yet the clouds do not burst under the weight.
He covers the face of the full moon
   spreading his clouds over it.
He marks out the horizon on the face of the waters
   for a boundary between light and darkness.
The pillars of the heavens quake
   stunned at his rebuke
By his power he churns up the sea,
   by his skill he pierces Rahab.
By his breath the heavens become fair;
   his hand pierces the gliding serpent.
And these are only the outer fringes of his power;
   how faint the whisper we hear of him!
Who then can understand the thunder of his might?

Buttenweiser in his famous comment on verse 7 said: "Our
author, though naturally ignorant of the law of gravitation, had
outgrown the naive view of his age about the universe, and con-
ceived of the earth as a heavenly body floating in space, like the
sun, moon, and stars. It is not surprising to meet with such a
view in the book of Job when one considers the advance astron-
(omy in Babylonia, Egypt, and Greece. As early as 540-510 B.C.
Pythagoras of Samos, in his travels in Egypt and the East,
acquired the knowledge of the obliquity of the ecliptic and of
the earth's being a sphere freely poised in space. . . Job 38:6
bears out rat he; than contradicts the conclusion tha: the writer
of Job had attained a more advanced view of the universe, since
the question, 'Whereon were its foundations set?' shows that
he no longer shared the primitive notion that the earth was
resting on pillars erected In the sea.15

Both Buttenweiser and Dhorme contend "the north" (saphon)
is the celestial pole formed by the seven stars of Ursa Minor
from which the movement of the universe was believed to pro-
ceed. Two observations are needed. First--the cosmography is
not in itself the purpose of the passage. Again God's power is in
focus. Secondly--we cannot ignore what Ugaritic literature
tells about Mount Zaphon as the Canaanite Olympus.16

15 M. Buttenweiser, _The Book of Job_, 1922, in loco
16 Actually _Mons Casius_ due north of Israel where Baal-Hadad had
The cosmic mountain concept is related to Sinai as the place from which God reveals himself and Zion as God's dwelling place.¹⁷

Psalm 48: 1 & 2 says:

Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise,
in the city of our God, his holy mountain.
It is beautiful in elevation,
the joy of the whole earth.
Like the utmost heights of Zaphon is Mount Zion,
the city of the Great King.

Eschatological Zion in Isaiah 2:2-4 is the place where the LORD's house is established at the head of the mountains with all the nations flowing to it, where the LORD is enthroned and rules over a world of universal peace (cf. Isaiah 24:23).

The passage which most closely approximates Job 26:7 is Isaiah 14:13, 14. Here the King of Babylon desires to place himself where the Most High dwells.

You said in your heart,
"I will ascend to heaven:
above the stars of God
I will set my throne on high;
I will sit on the mount of assembly.
On the slopes of Zaphon
I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High."

There is a difference in the way the two passages use Zaphon. In the mouth of the pagan king it is used quite literally to mean the mount of assembly which, indeed, reaches into the heavens and is the divine abode. But in Job the choice of words points to metonymy. I came to this conclusion before I noticed that Clif- ford makes a similar observation in a footnote. Clifford states:

Zaphon's meaning seems to be practically "heavens." N6tek elsewhere is used of "heavens" in the Old Testament and it forms a reasonable merism with ‘eres in the passage from Job. It is easy to imagine the development of the meaning of

his marvelous dwelling built. This explains why the Hebrew word sapon means north. Compare Negev for south, Yam for west.

¹⁷ See The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament, Richard Clifford.
Zaphon, under Israelite impulse, from "mountain (dwelling of God)" to "heavens (dwelling of God)."\(^{18}\)

It may also be that the heaven being like a dome-shaped canopy which may be stretched out was associated with the similarly shaped mountains as represented in the glyptic art.\(^{19}\) So the mountain of all mountains is the mountain which God stretched out like a canopy which is his dwelling place - the heavens.

Even though mythopoeic language is used there is a hint that the author is demythologizing. In contrast to 7:12 where he said "Am I Yamm. that you set a guard over me" here in 26:12 the definite article is used with \textit{yam} which shows the writer did not consider it a proper name.

So I would not agree with Fohrer who over-literalizes the cosmic picture and suggests pillars must be supporting the heavens nor would I agree with Buttenweiser who moves in the opposite direction. Buttenweiser may not be wrong in 38:5, where Yahweh uses the figure of the earth as a building with foundations and a cornerstone and asks Job "On what were its footings set?"--an indication that this was considered a mystery. The purpose of the writer is not to tell us how much he knew of the cosmos but to tell how powerful God is. Job is saying El is the God of the heavens and the God of the earth--the God of nature. Stretching out the heavens over emptiness and hanging up the earth on nothing are bold figures both derived from actions common to man. The marvel is that he can do these things with nothing for support. Other marvels of nature are also attributed to his vast power and dominion. He fills the clouds with water and they do not burst. He uses the clouds as a drape over the face of the full moon.\(^{20}\) He marks out the circle of the horizon as with cosmic calipers. By a mere word he makes the mountains shake and by his power he controls the raging sea and its monstrous creatures. And all this is only a whisper of his power, only the fringe of his dominion.\(^{21}\)

\(^{18}\)Ibid., 162, fn. 85.  
\(^{19}\) Ibid., 96, top.  
\(^{20}\) In verse 9 \textit{kisse'} (throne) should be read \textit{kese'} (full moon) on the basis of Psalm 81: 4 and Proverbs 7:20.  
\(^{21}\) As early as 1957 Dahood suggested \textit{derek} sometimes means "power"
Understanding the mythological background sometimes accomplishes just the opposite of what is assumed. Rather than show ideological commitment to the pagan way of handling the mysteries of nature it throws the discontinuity into relief and helps us appreciate how monotheistic the writer was. For example: Sheol, the realm of Mot in Ugaritic where Baal enters and is powerless, is open before God so that its denizens tremble --a uniquely biblical concept that fits only monotheism. Generally the mythology allots to the gods their separate domains. There are the gods of the heavens and the gods of the earth. With Baal dead Ashtar, the Rebel god, is permitted by El to attempt to sit on Baal's throne but not having the stature he does not succeed and must be content to reign on the earth.22 Each god is powerful in his own domain. As personifications of nature they are often in conflict with each other. The hero Baal faces a losing battle with Mot and has victory over Yamm. Unlike the Ugaritic El who sires deities but cannot control them, Job's "El" is the sovereign Lord over all natural forces -especially the domains of Mot. Yamm, and Baal.

This is what prompts Hans Wolff to write:

Following the signposts of the OT itself, we must seek to understand it on the basis of the peculiar nature of Yahweh, the God of Israel. In his essence, Yahweh is not a figure of mythology in the sense that one could speak of him in the manner of the myths of the neighboring lands, which chatter so much of the "private life" of their gods and of their life together in the pantheon. Yahweh is the one beside whom no other is god, and before whom all others are shown to be no gods.23

Our final thesis is that mythopoeic language provides a sensus plenior in the Yahweh speeches which serves well the purpose of the book. But what is the purpose of the book? Is it not to show that the righteous may suffer for no other reason than to accomplish God's higher will? I summarize some of the thoughts

or "dominion" (*Biblica* 38, 306-320). In this he since has been generally supported (AB 15, 186).


of G. B. Gray\textsuperscript{24} on the relationship of the Yahweh speeches to that purpose. He has noted that what the divine speeches do not contain is as important as what they do. The speeches do not reverse Yahweh's judgment in the Prologue about Job. The Satan was wrong in impugning Job's inner reasons for being righteous and the friends were wrong about Job's outward conduct as the reason for his suffering. God's rebuke of Job (38: 2, 40:2) was for what he said after the calamity happened not for earlier sins which would have proved the penal theory of suffering was correct. The friends by their theory implied they knew completely God's way. One of the purposes of the Yahweh speeches is to show that neither they nor Job possessed such complete knowledge. Indeed, the speeches show how very limited man's knowledge is. On the surface it would appear that speeches concentrate only on the natural world. But careful reading reveals something else. In the first speech (chapters 38 and 39) God's works in the natural creation are in view. God introduces this with the words (38:2):

\begin{quote}
Who is this that darkens my counsel
by words without knowledge?
\end{quote}

Then follow two chapters of proof that Job knew very little about God's world. Something modern man has learned much more of only to discover how much more lies beyond him. Job is humbled. He agrees that his words were based on ignorance: "I put my hand to my mouth. ..I will say no more" (40:4, 5). The second speech begins on an entirely different note:

\begin{quote}
Would you discredit my justice?
Would you condemn me to justify yourself?
Do you have an arm like God's,
and can your voice thunder like his?
Then adorn yourself with glory and splendor,
and clothe yourself in honor and majesty.
Unleash the fury of your wrath;
look on every proud one and bring him low;
look on every proud one and humble him;
crush the wicked wherever they stand.
Bury them all in the dust together;
shroud their faces in the grave.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{24} I.C.C. \textit{Job}, Introduction.
In keeping with this introduction the descriptions of Behemoth and Leviathan follow. The purpose this time is not only to humble Job by showing him that Yahweh is Creator and Sustainer of the natural world but to convince him that Yahweh is Lord of the moral order. And appropriately Job's response this time is repentance (42:1-6). The concentration on these two awesome creatures, placed as they are after this assertion of Yahweh's justice and moral order, lends weight to the contention that they are symbolic. The figures may draw from the features of the hippopotamus and crocodile. Both terms are used in other O. T. contexts without symbolic significance (Pss. 8:8, 50:10, 78:22, 104:26; Joel 1:20, 2:22; Hab. 2:17). But they also symbolize evil political powers. The many headed Leviathan of Psalm 74:12, 13 is a poetic handling of Israel's crossing the Red Sea and Isaiah 27:1 describes Yahweh's destruction of the Evil One in the eschaton.

The word behemoth is an intensive plural of behemah (beast) hence the beast par excellence: Behemoth in 40:19a is "the first of the ways of God." Pope translates this "a primordial production of God," but Dahood renders it "the finest manifestation of God's power" (AB 15. p. 272). In Ugaritic the goddess Anat conquered the seven-headed Leviathan along with a bovine creature called "the ferocious bullock." Leviathan has power over which no human strength can prevail. For some reason the Hebrew text begins a new chapter in the middle of this description (41:9 = 41:1 Heb.). We translate beginning in 41:18:

His sneezings flash forth lightning
His eyes are like the glow of dawn.
Flames stream from his mouth;
sparks of fire leap forth.
From his nostrils pours smoke,
as from a pot heated by burning brushwood.
His breath sets coals ablaze:
a flame pours from his mouth.

And verse 25:
When he rises the heavenly beings are afraid;
they are beside themselves because of the crashing.

25 It is impossible to tell where the description of Behemoth ends and Leviathan begins. Some take 40:23 as the division. But it is possible they are left this way because both figures describe one being.
Swords, javelins, arrows, clubs, slingstones are no good against him according to verses 26-29. And in 33 we read:

Then even I will admit to you
    that your own right hand can save you (40:8-14).
Upon earth there is not his equal;
    he was made without fear.
He looks down on all that is lofty;
    he is king over all proud beings.
Is this merely a crocodile or should it be understood in light of Isaiah 27:1, etc. (d. the dragon symbol of Revelation 12).

By telling of his dominion over Behemoth and Leviathan, (perhaps by means of a subtle double entendre, Yahweh is celebrating his triumph in the moral sphere. The Satan, the Accuser, has been proved wrong though Job does not know it. The author and the reader see the entire picture which Job and his friends never knew. No totally rational theory of suffering is substituted for the faulty one the friends proffered. The only answer given is the same as in Genesis. God permits the Satan to touch Job as part of the cosmic contest.

On this general subject Albright has said some cogent things in his History, Archaeology and Christian Humanism. Remark- ing how the Old Testament is a "masterpiece of empirical logic not expressed in formal categories," Albright claims the Old Testament has demythologized the poems on which some Hebrew literature is based. "Old words are kept but with new meanings divested of mythological connotations."

There may be partial demythologizing in some cases. On 38:7 F. I. Andersen says:

It is noteworthy that 11Qtg. Job has completed the demythologizing, making the stars shine instead of sing, and calling the sons “angels.”

Is use of the plural in ‘elohim and “adonay demythologizing? In Hebrew this appears to mean the totality of all the manifestations and attributes of deity which polytheism broke down into single elements. In some Canaanite documents a single high god is referred to with the plural ending, the so-called plural of majesty (Amarna and Ugaritic). Nothing sounds more poly-

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26 Tyndale O. T. Commentaries, Job p. 274.
theistic to some ears than the words used by that monotheist the Chronicler: "for great is our God above all gods" (I Chron. 2:5).

Albright observes "much of the onslaught on early Israelite monotheism comes from scholars who represents certain theological points of view with reference to monotheism, i.e. who deny that orthodox trinitarian Christianity . . . or orthodox Judaism or orthodox Islam are monotheistic. I do not need to stress the fact that neither of the last two religions can be called monotheistic by a theologian who insists that this term applies only to unitarian Christianity or liberal Judaism. But no dictionary definition of monotheism was ever intended to exclude orthodox Christianity." (ibid, p. 155).

In conclusion let me say that the distinguishing mark of mythology is not references to gods or the use of anthropomorphism and various metaphors which describe deity in concrete terminology but rather the narration of the interactions of numerous gods including such characteristics as their pettiness, their wild acts of violence and sexual exploits. The OT authors do not show such concrete mythological commitment.

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SEMEIOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE BOOK OF JOB*

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Modern redaction theory assumes that some parts of the book of job are less genuine than others. The job of the Prolog is not the job of the Dialog. Bruce Vawter says in his Job and Jonah, "It is the poetic job and the poetic job alone who is of interest to the sensitive observer of religious experience." Then after quoting John L. McKenzie to the effect that the Prolog is so unrealistic that it becomes revolting Vawter demurs somewhat. For though the story is untrue to life it is "not unfortunately untrue to what is perceived as life by the majority of our fellow beings."¹ In other words the author is using the prose story that he might parody that conventional wisdom in order to make a more profound theological statement. Unfortunately that conventional wisdom includes Psalm 1, which is not false though it has only one side of the truth when it affirms that everything a righteous man does prospers. Vawter at least considers job a literary unit and not the work of a mindless redactor. Terrien's commentary in Interpreter's Bible is typical old-school historicism. On historico-critical grounds he determines what is genuine and then interprets the rest in terms of genre, setting, and intention. To Terrien the book is a "festal tragedy" for celebration during a hypothetical "New Year Festival." For such historicism the date and source are usually tied closely to the interpretation. Some see the book as a product of the Exile, even viewing it as a parable of the suffering nation. But J. J. M. Roberts maintains one cannot use the date of the book "to provide a ready-made background for its inter-

¹Job and Jonah: Questioning the Hidden God (New York: Paulist Press, 1983) 43, 44.

pretation, and lacking this an historical framework is hard to establish, since Job simply ignores Israel's epic and prophetic traditions."2

Many critics have lost interest in source criticism and other aspects of historical criticism. They find other types of literary criticism more rewarding. Although most accept a redaction view of the book's origin they prefer to deal with it in its final literary context in terms of rhetoric and structure, and various new hermeneutical approaches including sociological, psychological, and semeiological emphases. Comparative linguistic research continues but with a chastened methodology.3 Structural studies have resulted in a tendency to look on the book as a unified literary work rather than a conglomeration of vaguely related and sometimes unrelated or even contradictory material. As the quotation from Bruce Vawter above shows, the incongruities are now looked upon as purposive and integral to the book's meaning. In 1977 R. M. Polzin devoted Part II of his book on biblical structuralism to an attempt at structural analysis of the book. His synchronic analysis stands in contrast to the diachronic interpretations of earlier literary-and form-critical scholars.4

This article will examine some recent semeiological approaches as presented in issues 7 and 19 of the experimental journal Semeia. In keeping with the purpose of Semeia the approach is exploratory, probing new and emerging areas and methods of criticism and the application of new hermeneutical principles. There are eight contributors to Semeia 7 and eleven to Semeia 19, each with his own viewpoint. Our purpose is not to deal with every view and every critique but to present those aspects of these studies which reflect .


3 A. R. Ceresko's Job 29-31 in the Light of North-West Semitic (BibOr 36, Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1980) is a prime example of the welcome change.

most clearly a hermeneutic which tends to reverse the traditional approach to the book. Because the traditional approach may not always be the correct approach we will also try to remain open to any perspective that does not violate the principle of the analogy of Scripture.

In *Semeia* 7 (pp. 1-39) William Whedbee interprets the book of Job as comedy. Comic staples are said to be there-incongruity, repetition, U-shaped plot and the presence of archetypal characters. For example Elihu, a comic character who speaks banal words, appears with precise timing. God is expected following Job's challenge at the end of his peroration (31:35-37) but Elihu appears instead, a Johnny-come-lately, from nowhere. The author creates a brilliant caricature of the friends as wise counselors. As for Job, his discursive rambling has no orderly progression but he is a master of parodies. In chapters 3, 9, and 14 he is said to parody the complaint formula and 9:2-10 is thought to be an ironic parody of Eliphaz's doxological hymn in 5:9-16 which Job uses to twist Eliphaz's intention and convey the opposite meaning. As Whedbee puts it on page 16, Job quotes Eliphaz verbatim in 9:10 (cf. 5:9) "as a fitting climax to his sardonic song to a God of chaos."

Whedbee's idea is provocative but is Job sarcastic about God's power and wisdom so that the statement, "His wisdom is profound, his power is vast" is irony? There is no contextual signal that the meaning should be reversed in 9:4-13. To Job the question is not whether God is all powerful but how he uses his power, God's justice not his power is Job's problem. Job is not using irony when he asks, "Who can say to him, 'What are you doing?'" (9:12). Job would have had no dilemma had he only believed God was less than sovereign. Believing in God's sovereignty his imagination constructed a phantom god who was unjust (9:16-24). There was no other logical way out of the dilemma. As he says in 9:24, "If it is not he, then who is it?" But Job inconsistently still believes God is just by whom he can swear (27:2) and by whom he will be vindicated (13:18). Our main explanation of this is that Job is a sufferer whose reason and experience conflict and as a result so do his words. He argues God against God. Refusal to accept this incongruity at face value led the tidy minds of earlier critics to rearrange the text.

This irony approach which reverses the meaning of a text has merit but must be contextually controlled. Whedbee's view is a considerable improvement over David Robertson's extreme and un con-
Robertson believes the irony in the book is pervasive. Whenever Job speaks positively of God it is tongue-in-cheek. As in chapter 9 Job says in 12:13, "To God belong wisdom and power; counsel and understanding are his." Instead of extolling God's wisdom and power Robertson also sees this as a criticism of God for not being very wise or powerful. A wise man destroys in order to rebuild, but when God does, it is impossible to rebuild. "What he tears down cannot be rebuilt" (12:14). A wise man would use the weather for good but God "holds back the waters and there is drought and when he lets them loose they devastate the land" (12:15). In other words God mismanages the universe; he uses his power unwisely. Again, if this is the correct interpretation then Job has no basis for his theodicy dilemma. A more restrained view sees here a parody not of God but of the counselor's lopsided and simplistic understanding of God's relationship to the world. Job is attempting to answer Zophar's question, "Can you fathom the mysteries of God?" (11:70). He is saying that God's actions are indeed mysterious and strange. The mystery is profound but he knows as much about it as they do. In an often overlooked use of irony in 12:12 Job expresses amazement that they who are sages are so shallow: "Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding?" That sarcastic question leads into the poem on God's wisdom and power in 12:13-25 which is a powerful statement of the sovereign freedom of God. He cannot be made to act in ways suitable to man. God's mysterious acts in the history of man only serve to prove the case (12:16-25).

A major issue is the meaning and function of the Yahweh speeches. How one resolves these speeches and Job's response to them is an important key to a comprehensive interpretation of the book. Von Rad's view is traditional: The purpose of the speeches is to glorify God's justice towards his creatures, to show that he is good but that his justice cannot be comprehended by man, it can only be adored. But to David Robertson the author's purpose in the speeches is to prove that Yahweh is a charlatan god. What Job suggested God would do in 9:14-20 he actually does in the speeches. But does he? (Cf. 9:17.) Is the author putting on the lips of Job irony as a parody of Yahweh who is presented as one who has the power and skill of a )

5 Soundings 56 (1973) 446-69.
god but who cannot govern with justice? Is Job's repentance tongue-in-cheek? Is Job mocking God when he predicted he would knuckle under—"my mouth would declare me guilty" (9:20a, 13-15)? As additional proof of the parody on Yahweh Robertson offers the thought that, in the EpIlog, God approves of Job's sorry words. So the poet like a medicine man has developed a strategy for curing man's fear by ridiculing the object feared.

In contrast, Whedbee hears in the Yahweh speeches a playful festive note. The irony is best interpreted as elements in a comic vision. E. M. Good was correct in noting that Yahweh shuts the issue from "justice" (Job's question) to "order" when he says to Job, "Would you annul my mispat?" Whedbee thinks Robertson's tongue-in-cheek repentance of Job might be compatible with his comedy view of the book but surmises it is too simple. Job's repentance is an authentic response of the hero because he has now been given, through the vision, a double view, that is, a divine and human view of himself and the world. He now sees the world through God's eyes. Also, the genuineness of Job's confession following his repentance becomes important to Whedbee for it is equivalent to the recognition scene in a comic plot: "I talked of things I did not know" (42:3). Many modern interpreters discount the Epilog but Whedbee emphasizes it since such a happy ending confirms his comic perspective. Though too constrictive this approach is nearer the nerve center of the book than Robertson's unbridled views. Certainly in the first Yahweh speech there is a twinkle in the LORD'S eye as he walks with Job through his creation, contemplating with him by means of ironic questions the marvels of nature. This he does not to humiliate Job but to prove to him that he, the Almighty Creator, is still his friend: The whimsical note comes through clearly in the ostnch passage m 39:13-18. Imagine a blrd wIth legs that can tear open a lion, that has wings but can't fly yet can run faster than a horse. God's pointing out how his creatures appear ridiculous has a serious purpose. He is teaching Job something of his sovereign freedom.

L. Alonso Schokel proposes a dramatic reading of Job in four acts. Among the groups of actors Elihu represents the audience who eventually intrudes upon the stage. After the Prolog, God as spec-

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tator, who overhears but cannot be seen, is addressed but does not respond. One purpose is to transform the audience into the cast, for only by participating can the meaning be understood. But to do so puts one under the gaze of God. Like Job we all discover the chasm between us and God. We see ourselves in Job as both villain and hero. After such suspense in the drama, at long last God, the director of the strange play, leaves the spectator role and assumes the part of an actor. Job has complained that he cannot see God, but now out of the whirlwind God's mask vanishes and Job sees him for who he is.

James G. Williams correctly warns that the Scriptures as a whole will not fit easily into types or genres derived from outside the biblical tradition. For example, historically personages of the comic type are of inferior classes or of the nouveaux riches. There is also the matter of defining comedy. Is being funny or amusing a necessary ingredient? Williams thinks so. Is the inevitability of "natural law" beyond good and evil basic to comic perspective? If so that excludes the Bible, according to Williams. Alonso Schokel ignores the Epilog probably because it was difficult to work into his dramatic interpretation. The happy ending through Job's newly won twofold vision fits the comic perspective better, though Whedbee fails to mention Job's daughters with their whimsical names and the implied marriage festivities.

The information theories of language on which this semeiological approach is based call for signs and signals in the text in order to detect a subtlety such as irony, but as Williams says, "The ironic manner of speaking is adverse to signals." The hermeneutical test of irony is whether it makes sense of the text; in Williams' words, "a sense that is faithful to the context and to that for which the text is the pretext." Williams sees the whole book dominated by the image of Job as intercessor in the Epilog. Hints throughout the book point to this. In the Prolog God puts great stakes in Job as his servant. He is intercessor for his sons in the Prolog. And in the Epilog this is expanded to the "friends" themselves, of whom God says, "You have not spoken the truth about me." Eliphaz unwittingly speaks of Job's happy ending when he says Job's repentance would be followed by an ideal life (5:22-27) and by Job's ability to deliver the guilty (22:29-30), which ironically becomes the "friends" themselves in the Epilog. The purpose of God's ironic rhetorical questions to Job is not to belittle him but to prove Job is important to God. How
could a mere mortal establish justice on earth? "Or could he?" asks Williams. "The irony of an ironic reading is that God's questions may conceal the 'literal' truth." So Williams sees the structure of the book outlining Job's spiritual journey.' This comes close to the traditional view that sees God accomplishing a higher purpose through Job's suffering though one might seriously question Williams' use of the divine irony, as we shall see later.

Issue 19 (1981) of *Semeia* is entitled "The Book of Job and Ricoeur's Hermeneutics." It consists of a general essay by Loretta Dornisch on that subject followed by four essays on Paul Ricoeur and Job 38. Part III is made up of six discussions of the preceding essays. According to Ricoeur the historico-critical and semeiological methods are not in conflict. Ricoeur holds that writing detaches the meaning from dependence on the writer, freeing it for other times and places. Because the original time and place no longer exist the writing is freed from the author's meaning. Since we interpret out of different traditions there are many possible meanings but not an infinite number. Different approaches should aim for a logic of probable interpretation, a convergence rather than a conflict of interpretations. Historical and sociological tools are valid so long as one avoids the illusions of source, author, audience, etc., as end goals. "A text accomplishes its meaning only in personal appropriation. The moment of exegesis is not that of existential decision (Bultmann) but that of meaning." But this moment of meaning must be distinguished from the moment when the reader grasps the meaning, when it is actualized for the reader. This he calls the moment of signification." The semantic must precede the existential.

Ricoeur criticizes the standard interpretations of the Book of Job for systematization, which precludes the play of symbolic meaning on multiple levels. We let "histicnism, the genetic problem, awareness of internal inconsistencies in the text to interfere with our understanding of the many levels of meaning, the intended symbolic or paradoxical incongruities, and even the resistance to systematization, all of which are precisely ways the author uses to communicate the complexity and ambiguity of the human condition."9

There are troublesome notions here. First of all, how do we keep the text from becoming absolute, totally divorced from the author's

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7 *Semeia* 7.140-41.
8 *Semeia* 19.12
9 Dornisch quoting Ricoeur (Semeia 19.14).
intended meaning? M. W. Fox criticizes Ricoeur on this very point. Though Ricoeur rejects "the fallacy of the absolute text" Fox doesn't see how he can do this along with his acceptance of "semantic autonomy." Inscription (writing) entails, according to Ricoeur, "disconnection of the mental intention of the author from the verbal meaning of the text, of what the author meant and what the text means.

On this Fox observes: "The author's meaning is reduced to a mere historical datum with no more relevance to the text's meaning than does the interpretation of each and every reader." 10 If this criticism is valid, which it appears to be, it fatally damages the foundation of Ricoeur's hermeneutic. But its superstructure is also shaky. Ricoeur thinks there can be a convergence of methodologies. The historico-critical and the semeiotic approaches can be joined since to him the history of the text remains a part of the text. So there are many valid methods for interpreting Job and many meanings are the result. If this sounds confusing it is because it is. The only limitation on the number of meanings a text can have is based on the continuing history of the text, the ongoing dialectic of tradition and interpretation. However, there still remain some lessons to be learned from Ricoeur's developing theory of interpretation. Dornisch lists five key themes which when applied to the book of Job clearly reveal Ricoeur's theory as of 1981.

The first of these is "symbol." Interpretation of symbols is not the whole of hermeneutics but is the condensation point. In symbol, language is revealed in its strongest force and with its greatest fullness. "The symbol is the privileged place of the experience of the surplus of meaning." 11 Is it ever valid to use this principle of extended meaning? All literary tropes are symbols but can they convey an extended message? I think this is possible only when we can show from the context that the author intended the symbol to be used in that way. Later I will attempt to show that the second divine speech in Job fits the context and the purpose of the book when viewed from this perspective. In contrast historico-critical opinion considers the speech an irrelevant addition.

A second Ricoeurian theme is what he has called "Explanation-Understanding." "Explanation calls on any human discipline that

10 Semeia 19.60.
11 Domisch quoting Ricoeur (Semeia 19.17).
can legitimately research the text. Here the goal of interpretation is governed by the relationship of explanation and understanding. Understanding begins as a guess, moves through a complex set of procedures involving a dialectic of explanation-and-continually-developing-understanding, and reaches a state of conclusion at the level of appropriatio. Such a process moves from a guess to validation using the logic of probability along the lines developed by E. D. Hirsch. Every exegete must ask, "What are my presuppositions and, what is my hermeneutical theory?" Without accepting all of Ricoeur's philosophical baggage I find it very difficult to find fault with this procedure.

The rule of metaphor is Ricoeur's next theme. Metaphor is more than ornamental figure, it is "the place of the creation of new language, new meaning, new being." To Ricoeur metaphor permeates the prose and poetry of Job and this is different than merely seeing many metaphors. Metaphor provides not an analogical model but a theoretical model which by means of "a language of extravagance" describes a new vision of reality. The metaphorical twist in Job moves through "complex processes of describing and redescribing reality, reaching a climax in Job 38, where the rhetorical shift is so dramatic as to bring about a new vision of reality." The importance of metaphor can hardly be overemphasized but Ricoeur may be doing just that when, on the basis of his rule of metaphor, he asserts that all interpretations partly miss the mark because the text is irreducible. Ricoeur thinks philology, history, etc., can help us better understand the metaphor but they can't translate the metaphor or substitute for it.

This leads us to the philosophical basis of Ricoeur's interpretation theory, which is rooted in German idealism with its suspicion of propositional truth. This idealist tradition has been criticized by Buber and other philosophers for failing to recognize the reality of encounter and dialogue. For example, A. Lacocque views the Job text as a grand metaphor where Yahweh is a controlling symbol and qualifier and the inexplicable suffering of man is a limit-experience: He makes a Ricoeurian case for claiming Job is about "the impotence of religion and philosophy." Religion (the counselors) and philos-

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12 Semeia 19.18.
14 See his article in Semeia 19, Part II, entitled "Job or the Impotence of Religion and Philosophy."
ophy (job) give way to an existential I-Thou relationship exhibited in the divine speeches, where both parties are affected by events lived in common. What the text means goes beyond what the author meant. The surplus of meaning in the symbolic Job speaks of a powerless God who is nevertheless still God and not a God of retribution but one who suffers with us. This view raises the question: "What God?" It is a view which many modern interpreters think dominates the book. The answer is given in various forms. To Lacocque the Tetragram is the key. The main point is Job in process from "religion" to intimate relationship (covenant) with that God whose name is YHWH. Lacocque sees a new ontology of God arising with the divine discourses beginning in chapter 38. In this new relationship and understanding Job moves to being "the suffering servant" as in Isaiah 53. There are concepts here that deserve more study. It is far superior to the view that answers the question, "What God?" with the reply that Job's appeal to a go'el is to a sympathetic personal or patron God while rejecting the high god YHWH with his retributive justice.¹⁵

Another aspect of Ricoeur's hermeneutic centers on his view of narrative. The key here is to understand the relationship between history and fiction which requires that one separate historical "truth claims" from fictional "truth claims." This is not surprising bearing in mind that Ricoeur, as a French Protestant during the 1930s, was strongly influenced by Barth and Kierkegaard. For him the biblical text must communicate a kerygma that calls for personal response and must never become a dead letter. A theory of metaphor and a theory of narrative raises the problem of imagination for Ricoeur. That is the power of forming images of things that are absent. Imagination frees itself from the confines of reality. It frees us from the symbols history has created for us and gives us power to recreate that history to a new reality. Ricoeur thinks the author of Job is using bold imagination to teach a new theological reality. The story projects a world with a narrow ideology which because of his suffering Job questions. He pushes his questioning to a boundary, a limit, a new horizon where the questions cannot be denied even though there is no answer. To see is not to see. It is such paradoxical incongruity that leads to new levels of symbolic meaning in the book. There are elements of truth in this approach but with Ricoeur's presuppositions

¹⁵ See footnote 17.
the new meaning comes at the expense of the analogy of Scripture. The God whom Job sees is "the inscrutable God of terror" and the book of Job is a dramatic refutation of the theory of retribution and the ethical view of the world, a view both Job and the counselors were afflicted with. Since the publication in English of Ricoeur's *The Symbolism of Evil* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967) a number of similar hermeneutical treatments of the book of Job have appeared.

A. Lacocque's "Job and the Symbolism of Evil" represents a faithful application of Ricoeur's hermeneutic while D. Robertson's approach uses only some of the pinnacles. Some, like Robertson, see God caricatured as a god of power and skill but one who can't govern with justice; others see in the book a god so transcendent, so far (removed from man, and so concerned with all the earth that he has no time to care or understand if one righteous person suffers. The latter is the view of J. B. Curtis, who believes the book contains a positive assertion of a personal god who thinks like a human being and can therefore be Job's advocate, witness, and intercessor before the unconcerned high god. Such a view flies in the face of Job's clear monotheistic assertion in chapter 31 where Job denies allegiance to other gods (the sun or the moon) under oath. He concludes, "... for I would have been unfaithful to God on high" (v 28).

Unfortunately the methods and the presuppositions of such critics stand in the way of an interpretation based on the context and on the analogy of Scripture. But a discriminating use of those insights that are valid judged from a right set of presuppositions can add to our understanding of the book of Job.

The Theophany is the key to the book but we must accept the entire Theophany. Unlike Semeia 19 which deals only with chapter 38 both divine speeches are important for a full appreciation of that message which fits the purpose of the book. The author is not presenting a parody of a high god who is indifferent to Job's suffering nor is he using irony to humiliate Job. The irony is meant to instruct not to humiliate. Job now has the privilege of sitting at the feet of the same God whom the Hebrew author, under Israel's covenant,

16 On page 314 of *The Symbolism of Evil* Ricoeur states, "The book of job is the upsetting document that records this shattering of the moral vision of the world." See Biblical Research 24-25 (1979-80) 7-19 for Lacocque's article and others, and footnote 5 above for Robertson. See Semeia 4 (1975) for additional material on Ricoeur's interpretation of Scripture.
knew as YHWH. He is the One Job so desperately wanted to see (9:11; 23:3-4). Far from being crushed Job is being made wonderfully aware of who God is in a universe full of paradoxes and yet filled with wonder. Job learns to take God at his word without understanding the mysteries of his universe much less the reason why he is suffering. F. I. Andersen has stated it well, though with a somewhat hyperbolic conclusion:

Job is vindicated in a faith in God's goodness that has survived a terrible deprivation and, indeed, grown in scope, unsupported by Israel's historical creed of the mighty acts of God, unsupported by life in the covenant community, unsupported by cult institutions, unsupported by revealed knowledge from the prophets, unsupported by tradition and contradicted by experience. Next to Jesus, Job must surely be the greatest believer in the whole Bible.¹⁸

G. B. Gray in speaking about the relationship of the Yahweh speeches to the purpose of the book of Job notes that what these speeches do not contain is almost as important as what they do.¹⁹ The speeches do not reverse God's judgment in the Prolog about Job. The Accuser was wrong in impugning Job's inner reasons for being righteous and the friends were wrong about Job's outward conduct as a reason for his suffering. God's rebuke of Job in 38:2 was only for what he said during his intense suffering, not for earlier sins. The latter would have proved that the purely penal theory of suffering was correct. The friends by their theory implied they knew completely God's ways. One of the purposes of the Yahweh speeches is to show that neither they nor Job possessed such knowledge. God shows Job how limited man's knowledge is. He begins with the words, "Who is this that darkens my counsel ['esah = purpose] by words without knowledge?" (38:2). He then proceeds to turn Job's attention away from the legal aspect of mispat to its ruling aspect and thereby Job comes to see the larger dimension of God's relationship with his creatures. On the surface it would appear that the speeches concentrate only on the natural world but careful reading reveals something more. In the first speech (chapters 38 and 39) God's creative works are in view and Job learns of the wonder of natural paradoxes and of the sovereign freedom of the Creator and Sus-

tainer. Job is humbled and agrees that his words about God's mispat were based on ignorance. "I put my hand to my mouth. I spoke once, but I have no answer-twice, but I will say no more" (40:4, 4 5). The second speech begins on an entirely different note. The introduction in 40:8-14 tells about God's power and ability to crush the wicked and to look on every proud one and bring him low. The purpose here goes beyond showing Job that God is Creator and Sustainer of the natural world. It is to convince Job that God is Lord also of the moral order which includes the justice aspect of mispat. Appropriately Job's response this time is repentance, for this is what he questioned (42:1-6). Far from its being a meaningless appendage, in this second speech Yahweh as his own defense attorney moves to the very heart of his case. From his limited perspective Job has misunderstood God's attitude toward wickedness. Those who contend either that Yahweh is amoral or that one purpose of the book is to set aside the biblical doctrine of justice and retribution must ignore 40:8-14. Job's preoccupation with his own vindication had obscured the real issue-that God alone has the power and majesty to destroy evil and save the righteous. The message is that Job's right hand can't save but God's can (40:14). Job must now acknowledge God not only as Creator but as Saviour. It is precisely these two attributes of God that stand behind the Yahweh speeches (his power and his justice). Seeing 40:8-14 as prolog to the descriptions of Behemoth and Leviathan reveals how they serve the purpose of the book in a subtle and yet forceful way. Here is where I believe a semeiological hermeneutic is called for. Both terms (Behemoth and Leviathan) are used literally and metaphorically in other OT passages. Metaphorically Leviathan represents forces that oppose Yahweh, whether at the Red Sea in Ps 74:14 or at the End Time in Isa 27:1. The intensive ending on Behemoth turns the ordinary word for a bovine into a monster (cf. Ps 73:22). Those who insist these creatures are literal must face two questions. Why are they not mentioned in the first speech where they would belong? And why the hyperbolic language and the stress on their invincibility? But if they are graphic symbols of cosmic powers such as the Satan in the Prolog then the speech is a fitting climax. The Accuser cannot be openly mentioned without revealing to Job information he must not know.

20 The Canaanite goddess Anat conquered the seven-headed Leviathan along with a bovine creature called "the ferocious bullock" (ANET 137, line 41).
if he is to continue as a model to his readers who must suffer in ignorance of God's explicit purpose. So Job never learns about the events in the divine council. But his repentance shows he has gotten the message of the second speech— that God is also omnipotent in the moral sphere. He alone will put down all evil and bring to pass all his holy will. There is nothing else Job needs to know, except that this Sovereign Lord of the Universe is his friend (42:7, 8).

G. K. Chesterton, in a chapter entitled "Man is Most Comforted by Paradoxes," enlightens us considerably on why he believes God appears to Job with a battery of questions rather than answers. Chesterton is convinced that a trivial poet would have had God appear and give answers. By these questions God himself takes up the role of a skeptic and turns Job's rationalism (e.g. his doubts about God's justice) against itself. God ironically accepts a kind of equality with Job as he calls on Job to gird up his loins for a fair intellectual duel. Job had asked God for a bill of indictment (31:35). But God has no indictment, he merely asks the right to cross-examine this one who has been plying him with questions. Though called the Socratic method Jesus used this questioning technique masterfully. He questioned those who came with their questions (Luke 1:1-5; 20:1-8, 27-44). The method sometimes plies the doubter with questions until he doubts his doubts. Job is simply overwhelmed with mysteries and paradoxes for which he has no answers but in the midst of it all he comes to understand what is too good to be told, that God knows what he is doing in his universe. Job had many questions to put to God but instead of God's trying to prove that it is an explainable world he insists that it is stranger than Job had ever imagined and yet in all the strangeness there is brightness and joy and divine opposition to evil and wrong. Thus the reader comes to understand that in a world of such paradoxes Job was suffering not because he was the worst of men but because he was one of the best, a man who suffered only to prove that God was true and the Accuser a liar.

Indeed, he is a grand type. In all his wounds he prefigured the wounds of that One, who as the antitypical innocent sufferer, the

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only truly holy man and God in the flesh, provided for us the ultimate solution to the problem of evil.

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IS THERE A PLACE FOR JOB'S WISDOM IN OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY?

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The famous poem on wisdom in Job 28 asks a crucial question: "Where can wisdom be found, where is the place of understanding?" (28:12). Although this question was quite appropriate in Job's situation of suffering and confusion, it should not be necessary to ask "this question any longer. OT theologians know where wisdom can be found. Wisdom is from God and it is found in his revelation, particularly in biblical wisdom literature. But this response may be nothing more than a cliche, for few biblical theologians have given wisdom ideas equal status with salvation history in their theological understanding of the OT wisdom theology is often simply ignored or purposely excluded; thus, the place of wisdom in OT theology is still a live debate.

This problem would be easier to face if wisdom literature was not included in the canon of Scripture or if it was condemned as knowledge that contradicted divine insight. Since this is not the case, why does wisdom literature appear to be a stranger in many OT theologies? In order to address this problem, several key questions need to be raised: 1) Why do some theologians exclude wisdom literature from OT theology? 2) What solutions have been offered to give wisdom literature a firm position within OT theology? 3) What are the central themes in the wisdom theology of the book of Job? and, 4) What are some distinctive and common elements between wisdom theology and salvation history?

I. WHY DO SOME SCHOLARS EXCLUDE WISDOM FROM OT THEOLOGY?

Although few would argue that wisdom literature is unbiblical, its true status is in question because so many biblical theologies fail to give it an authoritative place within their overall understanding of biblical revelation. In some cases there is

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1 L. Koehler, Old Testament Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1957) has only three references to wisdom in the scripture index and no discussion of the theology of wisdom.
no rationale to explain this omission—wisdom is simply omitted. By making only a few references to the wisdom books, OT theologians shove to the side the concepts of wisdom literature and do not treat them as integral parts of the biblical worldview. This repeated omission of one section of the canon is symptomatic of a fundamental problem, a weakness in the modern understanding of the nature and breadth of Israel's theology.²

C. Westermann faces the issue head on and reveals why wisdom is not a part of his theology. He excludes wisdom literature because "wisdom has no place within the basic framework of an OT theology, since it originally and in reality does not have as its object an occurrence between God and man; in its earlier stages wisdom is overwhelmingly secular."³ Westermann's exclusion of wisdom literature is based on his "historical" definition of biblical theology and his "secular" description of wisdom. Biblical theology is a "history of God and man whose nucleus is the experience of saving,"⁴ thus "an OT theology must be based on events rather than concepts."⁵ Since wisdom literature does not describe God's great acts of election, covenant giving, or redemption from Egypt, it does not fit Westermann's definition of biblical theology. G. E. Wright, following von Rad's emphasis on salvation history, concludes that "Biblical theology is the confessional recital of the redemptive acts of God in a particular history."⁶ Because of this definition, Wright admits that "in any attempt to outline a discussion of Biblical faith, it is the wisdom literature which offers the chief difficulty, because it does not fit into type of faith exhibited in the historical and prophetic literature."⁷ Is it legitimate to call one "type of faith" normative and exclude the other? Are these two expressions of beliefs exclusive of one another and contradictory? Are these modern evaluative statements representative of the broad perspective of biblical faith? Can a narrow limitation of beliefs to only one stream of tradition be justified?

Although the salvation history movement has properly focused attention on God's unique acts of grace toward Israel, it has overstressed Israel's unique view of history and unnecessarily

² C. H. H. Scobie ("The Place of Wisdom in Biblical Theology," BTB 14 [1984] 43) calculates the small amount of space given to wisdom in recent OT theologies.
⁴ Westermann, Theology, 11.
⁵ Ibid., 9.
⁶ C. E. Wright, God Who Acts: Biblical Theology as Recital (SBT 8; London: SCM, 1952) 13, 38, 57.
⁷ Ibid., 103.
limited revelation to God's salvific acts on behalf of his covenant people. B. Albrecktson has shown that the ancient Near Eastern religions also described their gods as acting in history. This was not a cultural or theological distinctive which was uniquely Israelite.\(^8\) J. Barr rejected the view that God only reveals himself through historical acts.\(^9\) The a priori inclusion of only certain approved theological concepts or literary genres and the exclusion of wisdom theology is unwarranted and prejudicial.\(^10\) It would be more appropriate to derive OT theology from all sources of divine revelation.

Although wisdom literature has been a part of the canonical text for centuries, von Rad classified the wisdom writings as "Israel's Response" rather than God's revelation.\(^11\) Other factors which raise questions about the revelatory quality of wisdom are the absence of the prophetic "thus says the Lord," the emphasis on learning from the observation of nature, the derivation of principles from the experience of older wise men, and the discovery of somewhat similar wisdom texts in Egypt and Mesopotamia. These factors caused some to conclude that wisdom literature was anthropocentric, secular, universalistic, and rationalistic, not divine revelation that was Israelite in theology. H. Gese observes that "it is well known that wisdom literature constitutes an alien body in the world of the Old Testament."\(^12\) Those who hold this view frequently believe that references to the "fear of God" in wisdom texts are later additions by post-exilic scribes who were attempting to make wisdom more Yahwistic in flavor.\(^13\)

The ramifications of ignoring wisdom literature or denying its revelatory character have devastating implications for the authority and character of canonical writings and on any attempt to integrate the diverse theological material within the OT. Preuss's recommendation that one "must refuse to give Old Testament

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\(^8\) B. Albrecktson, *History and the Gods* (ConBOT 1; Lund: Gleerup, 1967).

\(^12\) H. Gese, *Lehre una Wirklichkeit in der alten Weisheit* (Tiibingen: Mohr [Po Siebeck], 1958) 2.
\(^13\) G. von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972) 9, 61-64) refutes the idea that the fear of the Lord sayings were added at a later time because God was always understood as having an important part in all behavioral consequences. This is not a late enlightened idea, as he had maintained earlier in his theology.
wisdom a place” in OT theology needs to be corrected, and so must the trend to ignore wisdom literature. To alleviate this problem, several authors have suggested possible ways of giving wisdom a significant place within OT theology.

II. HOW DO SOME SCHOLARs INCLUDE WISDOM IDEAS WITHIN OT THEOLOGY?

Wisdom theology has been included in OT theology by: 1) connecting the "fear of the Lord" concept in wisdom writings to its usage in cultic, legal, and prophetic texts; 2) drawing on the similarities between the instructions within wisdom literature and the laws in the Pentateuch; and 3) making wisdom theology a part of creation theology. Each of these approaches offers suggestive correlation which must be evaluated carefully.

No one doubts that the "fear of the Lord" is a key idea within wisdom literature. D. Kidner calls it the motto of Proverbs, while B. Gemser says it is the "keyword of Israel's wisdom, re'sit in its twofold sense of basic principle as well as the best fruit of Wisdom." The choice of this concept is based on the use of "the fear of the Lord" at strategic locations at the beginning and end of Proverbs (1:7; 31:30), the frequency of the root קמר in Proverbs (22 times in verbal and noun clauses), and the fundamental connection between the fear of the Lord and wisdom. Although this root is less frequent in Job (16 times) and Ecclesiastes (9 times), it is placed at the climax of a section (Job 28.28. Eccl. 12.13).

J. Becker's study of the fear of the Lord defined three primary semantic meanings for the phrase: 1) in a moral context it describes a human relationship to God that results in upright behavior; 2) in a cultic context this relationship to God produces acceptable worship and honoring of God; and 3) in a legal context a God-fearer obeys God's instructions. In each case fear includes a reverence and unconditional submission to the sovereign majesty of God. With the fear of God comes a deep faith commitment to the power, holiness, and wisdom of God. These points of continuity are present in the

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15 Some have attempted other methods, but these are the three main approaches. E.g., L. E. Toombs ("O. T. Theology and the Wisdom Literature," JBR 23 [1955] 193-96) sees wisdom and law as mighty acts of God in response to human needs, but this has not gained wide support.
usages of the phrase "fear of the Lord," but this common thread
does not remove the distinctive meanings of this phrase in its
different contexts.

Although the theme of fearing God is found in Genesis (22:12),
frequently in Deuteronomy (4:10; 10:12), and in prophetic texts (Jer
2:19; 5:22; 10:7), the wisdom idea of fearing God is not brought into
the theology of the OT simply by showing that the phrase is found
throughout Scripture. B. Waltke rejects W. Kaiser's "proposal to
relate wisdom to the rest of the OT by the concept of 'the fear of
God/Lord' . . . because he [Kaiser] relates this theme to 'promise'
which he seems to define in terms of Israel's organic covenantal
history. Wisdom writers do not mention Israel's covenantal or
national promises. . . ."18 If the fear of the Lord in wisdom literature
was related to Israel's promise or covenant then a valid integration
might be possible. A second problem with using the "fear of the
Lord" to integrate the wisdom literature into biblical theology is
that the phrase is too narrow. It focuses on the ultimate source of
wisdom (its beginning point) and the proper response of people who
wish to attain wisdom. But this phrase does not delineate the
principles or internal structure of wisdom thinking. Job knew the
importance of fearing God, but that did not seem to help him
understand very much about God's wise way of dealing with him.
As M. L. Barre indicates: "The basic premise on which wisdom
operates is that the world is an orderly universe. Each person
must master the art of how to integrate his or her life into the pre-
established order of the world. Whoever does this is 'wise';
whoever does not is 'foolish'."19 Fearing God is the key to beginning
this process, but one must move on from submission and humility
before the all wise God to learning about his wise governing of his
created world.

A second way of giving wisdom literature an integral part in
the theology of the OT is to emphasize the connection between law
and wisdom. This point is explicitly made in Deut 4:5-6:

Behold, I have taught you statutes and ordinances. . . .Keep them
and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding
in the sight of the nations, who. . . .will say, "Surely this great nation
is a wise and understanding people."

D. Kidner claims that the "relation of Proverbs to Deuteronomy is
similarly straightforward by Scripture's own account of itself. . . .
The harmony between these two parts of Scripture is expressed most

18 B. K. Waltke, "Te Book of Proverbs and Old Testament Theology," BSac 136
(1979) 303. Scobie ("Wisdom," 43-44) feels that the slender thread which Kaiser
finds is not successful in integrating promise and wisdom.

clearly in Deuteronomy 6:24 (see also 1:13, 15; 16:19; 32:6, 29). . . . Here is the union of right and good, of obligation and satisfaction. Centered upon God's will, wisdom unites with law. This connection is strengthened by reference to the הָדָרָם ("law") (1:8; 3:1; 13:14; 28:4, 7) and the תּוֹרַתָּם ("commandments") (2:1; 3:1; 4:4; 6:23) in Proverbs. G. von Rad believes that the motive clause in Deut 16:19--"for bribery blinds the eyes of the wise men and subverts the cause of the innocent"-can be classified as a wisdom saying. E. Gerstenberger finds many similarities between apodictic laws in the Pentateuch and prohibitions in Proverbs and hypothesizes that they both developed out of a common source. M. Weinfeld sees a wisdom influence in Deuteronomy because both are written by scribes, use an admonishing style characteristic of the father/son relationship, rely heavily on the motive clause to persuade, are infiltrated with a strong sense of rewards or retribution for behavior, claim that obedience to their instructions will lead to life, require that one must fear God, contain common themes (i.e., both are against moving landmarks [Deut 19:14 and Prov 22:28]; both reject the use of false weights [Deut 25:13-16 and Prov 11:1]), and use overlapping vocabulary. The total association of torah and wisdom was most clearly made in the non-canonical Wisdom of Ben Sirach around 180 BC: "If you delight in wisdom, then keep his [God's] commandments" (Sir 1:26; see also 17:11; 24:23; Deut33:4 and Bar 3:37-4:1) For Ben Sirach, torah is wisdom. This same connection is made in haggadic passages in the Mishnah.

This attempt to associate wisdom literature with law goes much deeper than the mere association of one key phrase. Nevertheless, Weinfeld's suggestion that Deuteronomy was written or revised by scribes from the wisdom school seems unlikely in light of the non-covenental nature of wisdom and the total immersion of Deuteronomy in covenantal thinking. Although it...

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would seem to be inappropriate to classify Deuteronomy as a wisdom text and minimize its distinctive contribution to OT theology, at least wisdom theology seems less foreign to the rest of the OT when it is compared with the theology of Deuteronomy. What is needed to complete the connection between these related theological streams of tradition is a broad overarching conceptual framework that will include both wisdom and other ideas as legitimate yet distinctive parts within a single whole.

A third suggestion makes wisdom theology a part of creation theology. W. Zimmerli has proposed this solution because of the universal character of wisdom. It refers to people in general, not Israelites specifically. Wisdom teaches all people how to master the realities within human life. To live properly one must understand that people were created by God, that God supplies an order that gives meaning to nature, and that God granted people responsibility to rule and enjoy the world. Wise admonitions counsel people, so that they will know what is good and what to do to receive God's reward.25 The great speeches of God at the end of the book of Job (33-41) and the hymn in praise of wisdom in Proverbs 8 demonstrate that creation was accomplished through God's great wisdom and that creation played an important part in wisdom thinking: Von Rad suggests that wisdom is "the meaning planted by God in creation," while H.-J. Hermission claims that "creation is the basis not only of regularity, but of the meaningful and satisfactory order of events in the world."26 Although creation may provide a basis for some wisdom ideas, it does not spell out what one is to do to be wise. L. Bostrom concludes that creation was a secondary motif in Proverbs and not "the theology of OT wisdom."27 W. H. Schmidt decides that "wisdom thought cannot without qualification be assigned to a 'theology of creation' unless the concept is so enlarged that it embraces the whole of man's experience of reality."28 God's creation demonstrates his wisdom in beginning and ordering the physical world, but this is quite different from his wise and just regulation of a rebellious world of sinful people.


A variation of Zimmerli's approach to creation theology is H. H. Schmid's emphasis on wisdom's attempt to establish cosmic and social order in the world.  

He sees creation theology as the framework for wisdom, for in creation, order was established by God. Creation provides the setting within which historical events take place and also the basis for the just order for human behavior. J. L. Crenshaw supports Schmid's emphasis on creation and conceives of it as the basis, the defense, or the undergirding of divine justice, which is the central theme of wisdom. This approach makes creation a support for order and justice in human affairs.

The value of each of these three proposals may be compared by noting the emphasis they receive in wisdom and non-wisdom texts. The fear of the Lord is one of several responses a person can have to God in the Pentateuch and in wisdom texts (love, service, obedience, worship, wise behavior, ethical action, and enjoyment of life are other responses), but is the response of fearing God broad enough to cover all of these or more central than obedience or service? Fearing God is the starting point, but it does not adequately encompass the variety of responses that God desires of people after that initial step.

The second suggestion draws on the similarities between the laws and admonitions in Deuteronomy and wisdom, but certainly God's covenant is broader and more central than the laws, and the divine desire for righteousness and wisdom is broader and more central to wisdom than the style or content of individual proverbial admonitions. Although similarities of form, topic, and hortatory style may exist, these external comparisons do not get at the heart of what wisdom and Deuteronomy are all about.

Making creation the center of wisdom thinking is also an inadequate means of integrating wisdom into biblical theology. Although creation is the basis for and starting point of salvation history, salvation history is not primarily about creation. Likewise creation may be the basis of wisdom's order, but wisdom thinking is not primarily about creation. The basis for wisdom, the response of

the wise person, and the content of wisdom may be discussed with
great gain if they are all included and put in their proper place.

Finally, it is necessary to refer to the outstanding contributions
of S. Terrien. He sees the divine presence rather than covenant as
the homogeneous element in Israel's religion. The divine presence
is associated with worship at the temple, God's giving the law,
the final events of history, and wisdom at the creation of the
world. Terrien's analysis demonstrates that the presence of God is a
common element in many literary pieces, although he focuses more
on the aesthetic and experiential side of wisdom and does not
adequately deal with the structure of wisdom theology.

Although none of these suggestions is entirely satisfactory,
they do point to a possible approach to the problem of the place of
wisdom in OT theology: finding a broad theme that is distinctively
developed in wisdom and non-wisdom texts but constructively tied
to the central theological teachings of both.

III. WHAT ARE SOME CENTRAL THEMES IN THE WISDOM
THEOLOGY OF JOB?

Although most theologies begin with the great concepts of
salvation history and try to squeeze wisdom in somewhere, there is
no reason why one could not begin with a wisdom text. Both
streams of tradition are a legitimate part of the canon and both are
a normative and necessary part of Israel's theology. An analysis of
the wisdom theology of Job may reveal a theological framework
that is uniquely expressed in terms of wisdom, but equally relevant
to the history of God's deeds for his covenant people. This
procedure is not meant to reject the importance of salvation history
or to claim wisdom's superiority, but to give both traditions value
in OT theology. If wisdom and salvation history do not stand
together, all that has been created is a deceptive illusion based on
human imagination.

The book of Job can be divided into several sections based on the
different speakers that provide wisdom instruction. Although the
theology of each speaker is somewhat unique and at times
contradictory, there are common understandings of reality that

33 R. Murphy, "Wisdom and Yahwism," in *No Famine in the Land* (ed. J.
Flanagan and A. Robinson; Missoula: Scholars, 1975) 118-20. He argues that it is
improper to integrate wisdom into a "Hebrew theology" which has been formulated
without the input of wisdom, for such an approach assumes that wisdom has a
subordinate position.
34 W. Brueggemann (In Man We Trust [Richmond: John Knox, 1972]) seems to
assert the superiority of wisdom, but J. Goldingay ("The 'Salvation History'
Perspective and the 'Wisdom Perspective' within the Context of Biblical
serve as underpinnings for wisdom thinking. If these common threads are parallel to the essential underpinnings of salvation history, then a broader perspective on OT theology can be developed.

A. THE THREE FRIENDS

Although the three friends who come to comfort Job do not give identical advice, they all come from a similar wisdom perspective. They differ in their emphases and in their sympathy toward Job, but the three friends are essentially in theological agreement. Their theology is found in: 1) their words of praise about God; 2) their arguments about the fate of the wicked and the righteous; and 3) their personal exhortations or accusations of Job. Words of praise about God form the foundation for the friends' theology (5:9-16; 11:7-11; 22:12-14; 25:2-3). God's greatness is extolled because he controls the great forces of nature that produce rain. He establishes social justice for the helpless and frustrates the plans of the wicked (5:9-16). God's wisdom has no limits, and people have no way to discover the extent of his wisdom (11:7-11). Although God is in heaven, he knows what people do (2:2:12-14). Indeed, God is awesome and all powerful, having dominion over everything (25:2-3). The theology within these hymns seems fairly clear: God has all power and wisdom, he controls everything that happens.

These theological beliefs are basic to the friends' statements about God's punishment of the wicked (4:7-11; 5:2-7; 8:8-19; 15:17-35; 18:5-21; 20:4-29) and his care for the righteous (4:6-7; 5:17-27; 8:5-7, 20-21; 11:13-19; 22:21-30). Although fools or wicked persons may flourish for a while, soon God will see their oppression and destroy them. Although the righteous or innocent may suffer pain for a while, they will quickly seek God's help and be restored to health.


37 Habel *Job*, 133-34) sees 5:9-14 as a hymnic doxology which celebrates El as the "wonderworker, champion of social justice, rainmaker, and master mind controlling all wisdom and strategies on earth"
happiness. This theological position assumes that God knows and controls everything—therefore he can rule the earth in justice.

The third group of passages includes personal exhortations to Job and several accusations of iniquity. Westermann has noted that the exhortations are found mainly in the first cycle of speeches. They apply the theological assumptions about God and his justice to Job's specific situation. They encourage Job to endure in hope (4:5-16), to seek God's help, to confess his sins (5:8; 8:5-6; 11:13-14; 22:21-22), to accept God's discipline (5:17), and to rely on the wisdom of the wise men (8:8-10).

The personal accusations usually begin with a rejection of Job's words (8:1-2; 11:1-4; 15:1-16; 18:1-4; 20:1-4) and particularly the claim that he received a secret message from God in a night vision (4:12-21; 6:10; 7:14; 15:8, 11-16). In the midst of these attacks, the friends accuse Job of sin (15:5-6; 22:5-11). These personal responses to Job are consistent with the principle that God blesses the righteous and curses the wicked. The friends do not base their thinking on Israel's covenant but adopt a theological understanding of God's relationship to mankind that is similar to covenant thinking. This suggests that both systems of thinking may be based on a broader conception of God's sovereign and just rule of the earth.

B. THE JOB SPEECHES

Job's speeches can be divided into three basic parts: 1) hymnic descriptions of God; 2) disputations concerning justice; and 3) personal lamentations about his situation.

Job's hymnic descriptions of God (9:5-13; 12:13-25; 26:5-14) refer to God's great and marvelous power in creating (26:7-10) but also to his angry power to upset, rebuke, or set limits on what he has created (26:10-15). This great God is also elusive and people are not able to question or control him (9:11-12). Job rejects the wisdom of the wise men (12:12); instead he believes that all wisdom and power belong to God (12:13-25). Through his wisdom and might God controls the rain, kings, judges, priests, nobles, and nations. Instead

39 Westermann, Structure, 19.
41 Westermann (Structure, 25-28,31-66,71-75) calls these sections praises of God, disputations, and laments.
of wisdom and prosperity, foolishness and destruction come on them. Job, like the three comforters, believes that God is all powerful and all wise, but his emphasis is on God's judgment, his hiddenness, and the injustices present in human relationships. Job's disputations (chaps. 9-10; 19; 21; 23-24; 26-27; 29; 31) are motivated by his desire to see justice, his desire to correct the false assumptions of his friends (about the way God rules), and his desire to understand God. He recognizes the futility of bringing a lawsuit against God, for God is all wise, all powerful, and cannot be forced into court (9:3-4, 13-20, 32-35; 13:3, 15; 23:1-7). Yet it appears that both the guilty and the wicked are treated the same way and that God does not judge the wicked for their evil (9:22-24; 10:2-3; 12:6; 21:7-26; 24:1-25). Job maintains that justice has failed, that he is not guilty of a sin equivalent to the judgment that he has received (10:6-7; 12:4; 19:7; 23:7, 12; 27:4-6). He was a respected man in society who cared for the poor, opposed the wicked, and avoided falsehood, immorality, and pride in his riches (29; 31). In these speeches Job begins with the same theological base as the three friends: God is all powerful and wise. Unlike the three friends, Job questions God's administration of justice. in light of his own circumstance and rejects his comforters' application of the theory of divine retribution to his situation.

C. THE ELIHU SPEECHES

After a lengthy introduction (32:6-22) Elihu's speeches in Job 32-37 include a rebuttal of Job and a defense of God. First Elihu rejects Job's statement that God is far away and does not speak. God speaks to people through dreams or visions, through pain and suffering, and through a gracious mediator who can bring redemption (33:13-28). Elihu rejects Job's claim that God has been unjust (34:1-9). Elihu also believes that God has all power (34:13) and controls the life of every human being (34:14-15). Job speaks wickedly in ignorance of God's ways (34:33-37). God is righteous, he judges the wicked who refuse to turn from evil, and cares for the righteous (36:1-16). He is the exalted one, his marvels in nature are unsearchable. Since his knowledge is perfect and his power is unlimited, he is just (36:24-37:24). Elihu rejects Job's claims of injustice and constructs a justification for God's rule on the basis of his power.

D. THE SPEECHES OF GOD

The two speeches by God (38:1-42:6) question Job's wisdom about the creation and ordering of the heavens and the earth. God has the power and wisdom to measure and lay the foundations of the
earth (38:2-7), set limits on the sea (38:1-11), arrange the days, planets, clouds, snow, wind, lightning, and inner parts of the earth (38:16-38). God's wisdom also controls the behavior of domestic and wild animals (38:39-39:30). Since Job understands none of these things, can he understand the basis for God's justice? Job does not have the wisdom or power to judge the proud or the wicked, and certainly he has no power over God's creatures, Behemoth and Leviathan (40-41). The God speeches do not explain the full details of God's plans on earth, but develop God's means of governing by arguing from the structural, the functional, and the celebrative aspects of God's design of the universe. "The structural motifs emphasize the wise order and depth of the design, the functional motifs focus on the containment of evil and providential care, while the celebrative motifs reach...to the festive and incongruous dimensions of this design." There is no further doubt in Job's mind concerning the wisdom of God's rule of the world.

E. THE PROLOGUE AND EPILOGUE

The beginning and final sections of the book (1:1-2:13; 42:7-17) are key theological components which give something of the author's understanding of Job's trial. Here the curtains of heaven are drawn back so that a brief glimpse of God's mysterious ways are revealed. Job is recognized by the narrator and God himself as "blameless, upright, fearing God and turning from evil" (2:3). Job's denial that he was receiving just punishment for some great sin is shown to be correct, and the theology of the friends is proven inadequate to deal with the mysterious heavenly arrangements between God and the Accuser (42:7-8). The narrative prologue reveals that the divine justice of God is not destroyed by the intrusion of the Accuser's destructive work against Job, for at this point justice is placed within the broader wisdom of God's sovereign plan. God maintains his sovereignty over the Accuser by granting him only limited authority for his destructive work. Dhorme concludes, "Yahweh is in sovereign control. He it is who holds in His hands all the threads, and moves the actors."46

44 Habel, Job, 532-33.
45 Schmidt (Faith, 248) believes that "God's answer (ch. 38ff teaches Job about God's government of the world, and makes him aware of the limitations of man.
46 Dhorme, Job, XXXII.
IV. DISTINCTIVE AND COMMON ELEMENTS IN THE
ITHEOLOGY OF THE OT

Is the wisdom theology of Job foreign to the theology of the rest
of the OT? Should wisdom literature be excluded from biblical
theology? If it is an integral part of the canonical texts of the OT
should be an integral part of its theology. If basic elements Common
to wisdom theology and other theological traditions can furnish
solid connections within a single framework, wisdom's distinctive
contributions can enrich and broaden the perspective of the whole
without destroying its unity. Although wisdom literature speaks in
a unique voice, the connections demonstrate the continuity between
wisdom and non-wisdom texts. Both deal with the theology of
God's relationship to humankind and the world, but each type of
literature arises from a different contextual setting.

The various theologies represented in Job agree on the
fundamental theological principle that God sovereignly rules over
individuals, nations, and nature. Job, the friends, Elihu, the God
speech, and the prologue witness to God's power and ability to rule.
He rules over his creation through his power and his wisdom, over
the nations through wars and famines, and over the final events of
human history, including death itself. All animals, all people, and
all nations are controlled by his almighty rule. His creation of the
world and his providential ordering and care for it are evidences of
his wisdom and power. His amazing power and control are praised,
and his sovereign rule makes him ultimately responsible for
bringing suffering or blessing on mankind. Although Clines is correct
when he claims that the chief issue of Job is "the problem of the
moral order of the world, the principles on which it is governed,"47
that problem exists only because there is no doubt in anyone's mind
that God sovereignly rules the world.48 If he were not sovereignly
ruling, the issues of his justice and his mysterious ways would not be
raised.

Two subordinate themes explain how God rules in the context of
the wisdom theology of Job. One relates to God's just treatment of
people and the other deals with God's mysterious freedom and
wisdom. On these points there is controversy and partial resolution.
The friends defend God's justice by claiming that it brings
predictable results for both the wicked and the righteous. Because

47 D. J. A. Clines, Job 1-20 (WBC 17; Dallas: Word, 1989) xxxvii; cf. also A. van
48 L. Bostrom (God of the Sages, 177) concludes that the discussion in Job "never
departs from the assumption of God's sovereignty even though the question of
whether or not God's activity is limited by ethical considerations is brought into the
picture."
Job did not experience God's justice as he expected it, he began to see that God's ways of treating people in the real world were not bound by the simple theological formulas of the friends. On these points the theology of Job probes the deeper issue of the relationship between God's sovereignty and his justice. The limits of deuteronomic theology are expanded by wisdom's search for fuller explanations of seeming inconsistencies than are given in incomplete covenant formulations. But wisdom's own limitations are only too evident as it confronts the power and presence of God in this world.49

The prologue, the God speeches, and the epilogue uncover the mysterious and marvelous ways in which God works. In his wisdom he is free to allow sin, suffering, and the Accuser to exist; yet still fulfill his purposes. In the midst of negative circumstances justice exists, but it is mysteriously tempered with divine wisdom and freedom. This perspective is a unique contribution that wisdom theology makes to OT theology, and it is an essential part of a wholistic understanding of God's rule. It forces every person to step out in faith, humbly fearing God, knowing that God has the freedom to use his power and wisdom in ways that go beyond human understanding.50 Joseph must have wondered about these issues (Genesis 37-45) and David struggled with them in some of his laments (Psalm 13), but neither was able to see beyond his traditional understanding. Without an understanding of his mysterious wisdom and freedom, God would be almost a puppet, bound to respond automatically in predetermined ways to all behavior, never free to rule in dimensions beyond human comprehension (cf Job 40:1-5; 42:1-3). The revelations about divine government derived from the theology of Job are distinctive, yet not unrelated to other key theological emphases in texts that focus on the covenant and God's great acts of grace for his chosen people in salvation history.

The Pentateuch, historical books, and prophets describe God's relationship to human beings, and particularly his people. Salvation history is rich with its own distinctive themes of God electing a people, delivering them from Egypt, giving them the torah, entering into a covenant relationship with them, giving them the land, and guiding them through their history. Each of these acts is based on a fundamental theological belief that God sovereignly rules over Israel, the nations, and nature. He rules over his people as the covenant Lord who is with them and keeps his covenant promises, as the lawgiver who provides instructions on

49 vonRad, Wisdom in Israel, 97-110.
50 Several emphasize God's freedom from a mechanistic theology of retribution. See Terrien, Elusive Presence, 369-71; and Crenshaw, Ancient Israelite Wisdom, 25.
how to live as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exod 19:5-6). He is the Lord of history who delivers them from slavery and defeats other nations and the judge who controls nature to give rain and blessing or drought and curse. He is the great king of the theocracy who rules with power.

Several subordinate themes play a role in God's rule over his people in salvation history. Because God rules over Israel and has revealed principles of conduct which influence future relationships, issues of justice are basic to the relationship between the covenant partners. If Israel is not righteous and does not follow God's covenant stipulations, God in justice will send other nations to destroy the people and send a curse on nature. But if they love God and follow his instructions, God will bless the land where they live and give them peace with other nations (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 27-28).

In spite of this clear teaching, the relationship between God and Israel goes beyond justice. God's mysterious election of Abram, his love for Israel (Deut 7:1-12), and his deliverance of Israel from Egypt were free acts of grace and mercy. Justice cannot explain the mysterious freedom that moves God to choose one people and not another. His mercy and deeds of salvation are praised, but they are beyond human understanding. These themes are uniquely developed in God's positive dealings with Israel, but they are not foreign to Israel's wisdom theology.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Both wisdom and non-wisdom traditions have a distinctive place in OT theology. They are different, but they do not contradict each other. Both point to the same fundamental relationship between God and the world. God rules over everyone and everything. This agrees with Bostrom's study of the theology of Proverbs and its relationship to other OT teaching. He concludes that "it is probably correct to say that a belief in God's sovereignty more or less characterizes the OT as a whole and that the belief in the Lord as supreme ruler constitutes a basic shared assumption of the biblical authors."51 Although the theological setting of the book of Proverbs stands in bold contrast to the context of Job, Bostrom's conclusion is supported by the proverbial statements that describe how God created the world through wisdom (3:19-20; 8:22-31) and freely controls the plans and lives of every person according to his purposes (16:1-9, 33; 19:21; 20:24); he is the ultimate source of life and death. He justly rules over those who are wise and

51 Bostrom, God of the Sages, 179.
righteous as well as those who are foolish and wicked (3:3-12; 5:21-23, 8:34-35, 14.31).

The central themes in Job are also fundamental to Qohelet's theological substructures, for in spite of all his feeling of frustration, ignorance and powerlessness, there is the overriding belief that God has made everything, that no one can change what he has planned, and that God is somehow observant of good and evil (Eccl 3:10-14). Although everything (food, work, satisfaction, wealth, and money) is a gift from God, it is impossible to understand the mystery of God's blessings or his just ways (2:24-26; 4.14, 5.18 6.2, 8.16 17).

This central theme-God rules over Israel, the nations and nature—is superior to Goldingay's dual emphases on creation and redemption because it encompasses and stands behind both.52 God's rule is a broader and more adequate unifying theme for four reasons. 1) It does not focus just on the two powerful events of creation and redemption, but on all God's powerful deeds and words. 2) It encompasses not only God's great positive deeds (creation and redemption) but his just judgment of nature and nations and his daily providential control of history and nature as well. 3) It is not focused on a few historical points, but on the many ways his wisdom instructions, laws, and prophetic warning bring about his rule over individuals, nations, and parts of nature. 4) It does not depend on the chronological relationship of creation and redemption, which makes one more prominent at one time and the other at another time, but applies to all times and in many ways.

God's rule in the perspectives of the wisdom writings and the covenant history of Israel conforms to his principles of justice and wisdom. His wisdom is revealed in his covenant instructions, proverbs, visions, and theophanies (Deut 4:5-6; Job 33:13-18; 39-41), through the creation of the world and his continual control of it (Proverbs 8; Deuteronomy 27-28), and through his dealings with the wicked and the righteous. These wise dealings reveal his justice and bring the fulfillment of his plans. But his justice is tempered with mercy and forgiveness, with marvelous miracles of salvation, and with wise decisions that overshadow the covenantal and proverbial concepts of retribution in significant ways. Life with God cannot be neatly systematized, but it is not a blind alley with no light. There is a way that seems right, but it is filled with divine surprises. The fool fails to see the divine ways as God's rule, the wicked reject his rule, but there are many like Job who fear God and strive to know the truth so that they may be free. Job's friends failed to understand the full beauty of God's ways because they limited God's rule to an inadequate conception of his

justice and freedom. Theologies which ignore the wisdom and mysterious freedom of God's sovereign rule remove any need for faith in God and run the danger of being just as inadequate as the narrow ideological reconstructions of Job's friends.
THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE ELIHU SPEECHES IN JOB 32-37

Larry J. Waters

A unique perspective on the dilemma and suffering of Job is presented in Job 32-37 by a man named Elihu. These six chapters, covering five separate speeches attributed to this young "wise man," seem to hold an exceptionally important position in the overall argument of the book, specifically in understanding Job's struggle with undeserved suffering. If the speeches in these six chapters are not deemed authentic, their contribution to the subject of Job's suffering and the overall argument of the book is in question.

However, if it can be demonstrated that Elihu's speeches are genuine and that their place in the Book of Job is integral, then the reader may confidently conclude that the message Elihu offered is applicable to the purpose and argument of the book. It is important to deal with the question of the genuineness of Elihu's speeches because of (a) the extent of the textual material that is...
allotted to Elihu (in comparison to the four chapters assigned to Eliphaz, the three to Bildad, and the two to Zophar), (b) the placement of the Elihu speeches in the book, and (c) the reaction the speeches have drawn from critical circles on the question of authenticity.

OPPONENTS OF ELIHU'S AUTHENTICITY

Before the nineteenth century both Jewish and Christian scholars held a number of differing opinions on the Elihu speeches. The negative opinions suggested that Elihu was a figure inspired by Satan, or that he was a false prophet like Balaam. By the end of the eighteenth century the structure and authenticity of the Elihu speeches were still the focus of diverse opinions. Elihu, his speeches, and his importance suffered severely at the hands of critics. In the nineteenth century Stuhlmann, whose evaluation was based on the sudden appearance and subsequent disappearance of Elihu in the book, was the first to suggest that the speeches of Elihu were a later addition. He was followed by Ewald in 1836 and a considerable number of scholars after him. Stuhlmann, however, set the stage for research that culminated with a thorough and influential critical analysis by Nichols in 1911.

Nichols approached the Elihu speeches largely from the standpoint of authenticity. She cited over forty authors from Stuhlmann to Peake, who considered them secondary additions, and twenty-seven others from Jahn to Posselt, who defended the

3 Although a full examination of this question cannot be presented beyond the needs of the topic here, three thorough investigations have been made: Robert V. McCabe Jr., "The Significance of the Elihu Speeches in the Context of the Book of Job" (Th.D. diss., Grace Theological Seminary, 1985), 1-36; David Arvid Johns, "The Literary and Theological Function of the Elihu Speeches in the Book of Job" (Ph.D. diss., Saint Louis University, 1983), 1-9; and Diewert, "The Composition of the Elihu Speeches: A Poetic and Structural Analysis," 1-23). Also see Helen Hawley Nichols, "The Composition of the Elihu Speeches (Job Chaps. 32-37)," American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures 27 (January 1911): 97-186.


6 For example J. G. Eichhorn, Einleitung in das Alte Testament (Gottingen: Rosenbusch, 1780-1783), 3:630.

7 Matthias H. Stuhlmann, Hiob, ein religiöses Gedicht aus dem Hebräischen neu übersetzt, geprüft und erläutert (Hamburg: Friedrich Perthes, 1804), 14-24, 40-44.

speeches as part of the original work. Even Nichols, who did not accept the Elihu speeches as original to the poem, admitted that "those who have defended Elihu in the critical debate have usually found in his words the positive solution of the problem [of Job's suffering], which the poem without them fails to give, and a preparation for the Theophany." In regard to recent investigations "it would be fair to say that the studies of Job 32-37 since Nichols have also been chiefly dominated by this issue of their relationship to the rest of the book."

Janzen lists four objections to the authenticity of the speeches. "(1) Elihu is mentioned nowhere else, not even in the epilogue, his long speeches interrupt the continuity between chapters 31 and 38, and he contributes little if anything to the content or dramatic movement of the book; (2) the literary style is diffuse and pretentious, inferior to that of the rest of the book; (3) the linguistic usage differs from that in the rest of the poetry; and (4) the speeches offer an alternative resolution to Job's problem from that of the (baffling) divine speeches." Although Janzen views the speeches of Elihu as taxing on the reader, he states that "the Elihu speeches present no critical problem," and he sees "no cogent reason to view them as other than integral to the book." In addition to the objections summarized

10 Nichols, "The Composition of the Elihu Speeches (Job Chaps. 32-37)," 101.
13 Janzen, Job, 218.
by Janzen, other scholars maintain an intermediate position by holding to one original author who made an addition to his book in later life. Others do not reject the authenticity of the Elihu speeches but simply maintain either that they are a later addition by an unknown author, or that they are a compilation by a later author, editor, or series of editors.

Once the authenticity or position of the speeches of Elihu was doubted, it seemed only logical that the next critical step was to dissect them, rearrange their position, or reject all or portions of them. This intermediate position has been recently advocated by Norman H. Snaith (The Book of Job: Its Origin and Purpose, Studies in Biblical Theology [London: SCM, 1968], 72-91) and Gordis ("Elihu the Intruder," 60-78). Gordis suggests that the original author/poet added Elihu and his insight on moral discipline as one solution to the problem of suffering (The Book of God and Man: A Study of Job [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965], 110-16; cf. idem, The Book of Job [New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1978], 548-53).


Rowley sees the Book of Job as canonical without the Elihu speeches (H. H. Rowley, The Book of Job, New Century Bible Commentary [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976], 13:206). Nichols says two authors were involved in the Elihu speeches ("The Composition of the Elihu Speeches [Job Chaps. 32-37]," 116-22). Nichols's inquiry into the "composition" of the Elihu speeches is primarily a source-critical analysis, and in this she stands in the tradition of Julius Wellhausen. According to Diewert, Nichols's main theory is that the speeches, as they presently exist, are two different works, each constituting reactions to Job and his theology. Nichols's faith in the testimony of the Septuagint is the basis for her theory (Diewert, "The Composition of the Elihu Speeches: A Poetic and Structural Analysis," 19). Jastrow and Irwin see four authors at work in the Book of Job (Morris Jastrow, The Book of Job: Its Origin, Growth and Interpretation [Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1920], 77-82); William A. Irwin, "The Elihu Speeches in the Criticism of the Book of Job," Journal of Religion 17 [January 1937]; 37-47). Samuel Terrien holds that the Elihu section was written by a different author. But unlike those above, Terrien says Elihu is essential to the book and is beneficial as a contribution to an understanding of Job's suffering; he says it is an "educational and revelatory process." He also sees Elihu as preparatory to the Yahweh speeches (Job: Poet of Existence [New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957], 189-90). See also Westermann, The Structure of the Book of Job: A Form-Critical Analysis (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 139.


David Noel Freedman suggests that Elihu's speeches were added to "refute or counterbalance a speech or assertion of Job, and to be placed in juxaposition with it" ("The Elihu Speeches in the Book of Job: A Hypothetical Episode in the Literary History of the Work," Harvard Theological Review 61 [January 1968]: 52-59). In other words Freedman proposes that the speeches of Elihu were originally intended to be inserted at various points in the earlier dialogue to refute a specific discourse or assertion of Job, but somehow failed to be inserted. Gary W. Martin, who accepts Freedman's basic thesis, gives a "Table of Proposed Reconstruction of Elihu's Responses to the Three Cycles of Discourse" and says the speeches need to...
of the speeches outright.\textsuperscript{19} Form-critical studies often involve a
reorganization of the text to conform to a particular subjective and
reasonably consistent structural pattern. The result is that insuf-
ficient attention is given to the uniqueness of Elihu's individual
speeches and their importance to the theological argument of the
book especially in regard to suffering. In fact, the critical ap-
proach seems to neglect the positive contributions of stylistic and
poetic analysis in marking structural patterns within Elihu's
speeches.\textsuperscript{20} For instance Buttenwieser,\textsuperscript{21} Pope,\textsuperscript{22} Stier,\textsuperscript{23} and
Nairme\textsuperscript{24} hold that the speeches are identical or similar to the
views of the three antagonists, adding little or nothing to the ar-
ument regarding Job's suffering. Nichols and Rowley suggest
that Elihu offered a solution for suffering that is irrelevant to
Job's relationship with God and that does not address the initial
cause for Job's suffering.\textsuperscript{25}

be rearranged ("Elihu and the Third Cycle in the Book of Job" [Ph.D. diss., Prince-
ton University, 1972], 108). Pages 248-60 of Martin's dissertation are filled with
various proposals for dissecting and rearranging the first thirty-one chapters of
the Book of Job. Most of his efforts focus on placing thirteen "fragments" from
chapters 24-27 into chapters 32-37 and seeking to determine the original order of
the speeches. Smick points out that Pope holds to a theory that the author deliber-
ately scrambled the material to confuse the picture (Elmer B. Smick, "Job," in The
Expositor's Bible Commentary [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988], 4:845; and Marvin
\textsuperscript{19} Some writers simply regard Job 32-37 as insignificant and counterfeit and do
not accept them as part of the original text. Examples include Archibald MacLeish,-
York: Harper Perennial, 1992); and Luis Alonso Schokel, "Toward a Dramatic Read-
completely.

\textsuperscript{20} Diewert observes that "inevitably the monologue is reduced to or at least lim-
ited to those passages where Elihu seems to be saying something novel, while the
majority of the discourse is passed over as a virtual restatement of the position of
the friends. There have been very few serious students of these speeches which
treat them as a whole and deal with their content evenly throughout, paying atten-
tion to the argument in its entirety. Judgments concerning the contribution of ES
[Elihu's Speeches] to the Joban poem can only carry weight when they take into ac-
count every element of Elihu's monologue and the function of each part in the ar-
ument as a whole" (Diewert, "The Composition of the Elihu Speeches: A Poetic and
Structural Analysis," 18).

\textsuperscript{21} Buttenwieser, The Book of Job, 85.
\textsuperscript{22} Pope, Job, xxvi.
\textsuperscript{23} Fridolin Stier, Das Buch [job hebräisch und deutsch (Munich: Kosel, 1954),
240--41.
\textsuperscript{24} Alexander Nairne, The Book of Job, Edited with an Introduction (Cambridge:
\textsuperscript{25} See Nichols, "The Composition of the Elihu Speeches (Job Chaps. 32-37)," 108;
ADVOCATES OF ELIHU’S AUTHENTICITY

A number of scholars defend the speeches of Elihu as an original part of the composition of the Book of Job. Early positive opinions considered Elihu as exalted above Job and his friends, or the representative of the authentic Jewish view of providence, or as an antitype of Christ. Early church historians and the Reformers generally accepted the authenticity of Elihu's speeches. John Calvin was extremely complimentary toward Elihu for "there are few people in the Bible Calvin admires more." In reaction to the early nineteenth century opposition, Rosenmüller and Umbreit, as well as other early conservatives like Stickel and Deutsch, were among the first to maintain Elihu's authenticity. Cornill refers to the Elihu speeches as "the summit and crown of the Book of Job, and says they provide the only solution to the problem of suffering." Godet calls the speeches "an indispensable feature"


27 Diewert simply states this as one view ("The Composition of the Elihu Speeches: A Poetic and Structural Analysis," 3).

28 Although they accepted his authenticity, they were not always complimentary to Elihu. Gregory, for instance, argued that Elihu was orthodox in his teaching but guilty of pride. Thomas Aquinas believed that Elihu's knowledge was superior to the opinion of the other friends but that he was moved by "vainglory" so that he misinterpreted Job's words and did not express the whole truth. Calvin, on the other hand, would not accept this criticism (Susan E. Schreiner, Where Shall Wisdom Be Found? Calvin's Exegesis of Job from Medieval and Modern Perspectives [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994], 131-34).

29 Ibid., 131. For Calvin, Elihu's teaching was essentially the same truth declared in God's whirlwind speeches.


31 Cited in Nichols, "The Composition of the Elihu Speeches (Job Chaps. 32-37)," 54, 99.


of the book, and Marshall puts them "on an immeasurably higher plane than the dialogue." More recent conservative advocates of the authenticity of the Elihu speeches include Young, Harrison, Bullock, Archer, and Zuck. These are joined by other scholars who defend Elihu's authenticity, viewing his speeches as primary to the Book of Job and to a proper understanding of the problem of suffering. These scholars also include

40 luck offers four answers to the major critical objections stated above. (1) Elihu need not have been mentioned earlier in the book since he was a silent onlooker not yet involved in the disputation. And Elihu was not condemned by God in 42:7-8 along with Eliphaz and his two companions probably because Elihu was closer to the truth than were the three. (2) Admittedly Elihu's style differed from that of the other four debaters. He used 'el for God more than did the others (his 19 uses of 'el compare with Job's 17, Eliphaz's 8, Bildad's 6, and Zophar's 2). . . . Elihu also used a number of Aramaic words more than the three counselors did. . . . These differences, however, simply point to his distinctive character. (3) Elihu's view of suffering differed from that of the three. They had claimed that Job was suffering because he was sinning (in an attitude of pride) but Elihu said Job was sinning because he was suffering. Elihu pointed out that God can use suffering to benefit people (33:17, 28, 30; 36:16). Elihu put his finger on Job's wrong attitude of complaining against God (33:13; 34:17) and suggested that Job humble himself before God (33:27; 36:21; 37:24). (4) True, Job did not answer Elihu. But this may be because Elihu silenced him. . . . Elihu's orations provided a bridge from Job's insistence for vindication (chap. 31) to God's speeches. If the Elihu portion is not original, then God responded immediately to Job's demand, an action which is inconsistent with God. Also the Elihu speeches create an added element of suspense, as the reader awaits God's answer" (Roy B. Zuck, "Job," in The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. luck [Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1985], 754-55).
Zuck points to Dhorme in support of his second point (Edouard Dhorme, A Commentary on the Book of Job [Nashville: Nelson, 1984], ciii). The number of Aramaic words used by Elihu in relation to the three counselors originates from a study done by Samuel Rolles Driver and George Buchanan Gray (A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job, International Critical Commentary [Edinburgh: Clark, 1921], xlii-iii, xlii-vii). These numbers regarding Aramaic words were contested by Snaith, who concludes that the numbers are not convincing enough to warrant two authors.
41 For instance see Dhonne, A Commentary on the Book of Job, liv-lvii; ciii, who treats the Elihu speeches as genuine, but sees a later hand in the writing. This is also the basic stance of Tate, who argues that the normal critical objections are not
McKay who sees the Elihu speeches as pivotal to the other chapters of the Book of Job, providing a bridge between Job's conversations and God's speeches. As noted earlier, both Diewert and Bakon hold to the importance and integrity of the speeches. Beeby argues for authenticity and sees Elihu as a mediator whose main function was prophetic, much like that of Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Jeremiah, and Isaiah. Carstensen also argues that Elihu is important in that he exercised a mediatorial function in his approach to Job (33:23; cf. 33:7, 31-33, 36:2). Johns has made convincing (Marvin Tate, "The Speeches of Elihu," Review and Expositor [Fall 1971]: 487-95). Also see Robert L. Alden, who simply assumes the genuineness of the Elihu chapters (Job, 23-24, 314-15). Budde, Snaith, and Gordis consider the speeches to be from a later author or period, but argue for their authenticity (Karl Budde, Das Buch Hiob, Handbuch zum Alten Testament [Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1896]; Snaith, The Book of Job: Its Origin and Purpose, 72-91; and Gordis, The Book of God and Man, 104-16). Snaith carefully compared the alleged differences in vocabulary between the Elihu speeches and the other major sections of the book. He did not find the variations significant and he concluded that it is not necessary to postulate that another author wrote the section (The Book of Job: Its Origin and Purpose, 77). Zuck argues for the authenticity, originality, and placement in the text ("Job," 140-42), as does Hartley (John E. Hartley, The Book of Job, New International Commentary on the Old Testament [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988], 28-30). Answers to the four objections summarized by Janzen are argued by Hartley, who concludes that "the Elihu speeches are an integral part of the final edition of the work. It is improper to judge them as a clumsy later addition or a sanctification of the heretical ideas that Job has entertained" (ibid., 29). Still, Hartley struggles with the speeches being a part of the original composition and speculates that the author of Job could have added them later to the final edition or that one of his students, possibly a redactor, inserted them where his teacher might have suggested they belonged.

42 John W. McKay, "Elihu: A Proto-Charismatic?" Expository Times 90 (March 1979): 167-71. 43 Diewert, "The Composition of the Elihu Speeches: A Poetic and Structural Analysis," 1-23. 44 Bakon says Elihu offered a unique contribution to the problem of suffering ("The Enigma of Elihu," 217-28). 45 H. D. Beeby, "Elihu-Job's Mediator?" Southeast Asian Journal of Theology 7 (October 1969): 33-54. Beeby mentions five objections to the authenticity of Elihu's speeches and answers each one satisfactorily (ibid., 48-50). He concludes that "there is a unity throughout the book as we have it now, no matter when the various parts originated or when they were assembled. Second, that within this unity the figure of Elihu plays a necessary part, justifying Job's earlier faith in an 'umpire' and being the instrument of Job's eventual justification by heralding the 'theophany.' Finally, that after an examination of Elihu's contribution and in the light of the similarities with earlier covenantal formulations, we conclude that Elihu was a man with divine gifts, who can only be described as a covenant mediator, transformed to accord with the Wisdom literature and the book's dominant question of 'how the good non-Israelite can stand before Israel's God’" (ibid., 50). Hans Ehrenberg presents his arguments in the form of a dramatic play and identifies Elihu as an "advocate" ("Elihu the Theologian," in The Dimensions of Job: A Study and Selected Readings, ed. Nahum N. Glatzer [New York: Schocken, 1969], 99). 46 Roger N. Carstensen, "The Persistence of the 'Elihu' Tradition in Later Jewish Writings," Lexington Theological Quarterly 2 (1967): 41.
a well-supported investigation, concluding that "Elihu does play significant literary and theological roles" in the Book of Job. Also Hofman demonstrates that in the "present text of Job two artistic features are so clearly and persistently manifested, that there can be no doubt as to their immanency and authenticity. Miller insists that Elihu "does indeed carry the insights of the book above that of the dialogue." Interestingly a counselor and an educator both accept the authenticity of the Elihu speeches and find great value in their pastoral significance and guidelines for theological teaching. Steinmann inadvertently makes a case for chapters 32-37 being authentic and an original part of the text by comparing the four numerical sayings in the Book of Job, two of which are found in the Elihu speeches (33:14, 29).

Posselt, Gray, and Staples made independent studies of the language especially in vocabulary, names of God, and Aramaism in Job. Snaith answers these with his own investigation. His study criticized Gray's conclusions concerning the five areas Gray suggested are noticeable differences between the Elihu speeches and the rest of the book: (a) unusual prepositions and suffixes, (b) the use of the divine names, (c) first-person pro-

47 Johns, The Literary and Theological Function of the Elihu Speeches in the Book of Job, 1,2-12.
48 The two features Hofman incorporates to answer the critical activity surrounding Job are (a) a very difficult and obscure language and (b) a strong artistic sense of form, structure, and symmetry. The vague language is for the purpose of obscuring the possible misunderstanding of the "heretical potential of the theological implications of his work." Hofman's summary includes five statements that support the authenticity and integral nature of the Book of Job. He also gives five guidelines for handling criticism, which include reasons for not rearranging the speeches in order to make them more coherent (Yair Hofman, "Ancient Near Eastern Literary Conventions and the Restoration of the Book of Job," Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 103 [1991]: 399-411).
51 Andrew E. Steinmann, "The Graded Numerical Sayings in Job," in Fortunate the Eyes That See, ed. Astrid B. Beck et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 288-97. Two of the four numerical sayings are found in the Elihu speeches. This would tend to argue for agreement with the two other sayings found in different sections of the book, and therefore could be construed as support for one author. The four numerical sayings are (1) Job 5:17-27 (v. 19); (2) and (3) 33:13-30 (vv. 14,29); and (4) 40:3-5 (v. 5).
52 Posselt, Gray, and Staples all concluded that the Elihu speeches were from a different author (Posselt, "Der Verfasser der Elihu-Reden," 1-111; Driver and Gray, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job, xli-xlvi; and William E. Staples, The Speeches of Elihu, University of Toronto Studies, Philosophical Series no. 8 [Toronto: University of Toronto, 1924], 13).
nouns, (d) Aramaisms, and (e) unique expressions.\textsuperscript{53} Regarding
Aramaisms, which are often a major focus of opposition to the au-
thenticity of Job 32-37, Snaith concludes that the book contains
virtually no true Aramaism. Furthermore he sees no signifi-
cant degree of variation in prepositions and suffixes, the use of
divine names, first-person pronouns, or unique expressions in
the Elihu speeches to support the theory of a separate author for
those chapters.\textsuperscript{54}

Also Gordis is an advocate of the unity of the book.\textsuperscript{55} He ac-
cepts a single author for the book, although he says the original
author wrote the Elihu section "at a later period in his life."\textsuperscript{56}
Gordis asserts that the Elihu speeches are similar in style to the
dialogue and that the different names of God, the pronouns, the
grammatical forms, and other elements in the speeches are not
out of proportion with the rest of the book. He agrees with Snaith
that they do not contain an excessive number of Aramaism or
rare words.\textsuperscript{57} He finds fewer here than in other sections of the
book. He also views the citation by Elihu of arguments already
expressed by Job's friends as further support for the authenticity of
this section, since the use of quotations is common practice in
wisdom literature. Gordis concludes that the Elihu speeches
make a significant contribution to the essence of the book,\textsuperscript{58} and
he provides support for the view that the speeches were composed by
the book's original author.

Several authors also maintain that the Elihu speeches add to
the argument of the book in regard to Job's suffering. Budde,
Cornill, and Dubarle see Elihu's view of suffering as central to
the book, pointing out that suffering warns a person of the hidden 
sin of pride.\textsuperscript{59} Posselt suggests that Elihu offers a theological

\textsuperscript{53} Snaith, The Book of Job: Its Origin and Purpose, 75-85.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid. Harris provides a convincing study on the language of Job (R. Laird
Harris, "The Doctrine of God in the Book of Job," in Sitting with Job: Selected
\textsuperscript{55} Gordis is considered by many as making the most succinct and beneficial con-
tribution to the Elihu speeches' authenticity in recent years ("Elihu the Intruder,"
69-72).
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 72.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 681.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 74-75. Also see comments on Gordis's article in Gerber, Job on Trial: A
Book for Our Time, 161-62.
\textsuperscript{59} See Budde, Das Buch Hiob, xlv-xlvi; Cornill, Introduction to the Canonical
Books of the Old Testament, 425-31; and Andre M. Dubarle, Les Sages d'Israel
solution to suffering, namely, purification. Snaith says Elihu's concept of a gracious, compassionate intercessor is a contribution to the problem of suffering. Peters and Dennefeld both recognize Elihu's observation that Job was guilty of presumptuous speech and lack of humility, while Dubarle and Staples both say Elihu pointed to Job's wrong attitude, but did not condemn him for any specific acts of evil, as did the three antagonists.

ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS TO THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE ELUHU SPEECHES

Regarding the criticisms that Elihu is mentioned nowhere else in the Book of Job, not even in the epilogue, that his long speeches seem to interrupt the continuity between chapters 31 and 38, and that he seems to have contributed little if anything to the content or dramatic movement of the book, this investigation counters with the following observations.

First, it would seem unlikely that Elihu would be mentioned in the prologue (chaps. 1-2) since Yahweh, Satan, and Job are the major focus of those chapters. Neither the wife nor the three counselors are mentioned until chapter 2.

Second, it would also seem unlikely that a young bystander would interrupt the serious discussions found in the dialogue (chaps. 3-31) between three elderly "wise men" and a prominent Near Eastern sovereign. Elihu was led into the conversation by his frustration with the inadequate answers offered by the three spokesmen to Job's dilemma and was constrained to speak, as the text suggests, by the Spirit (33:4).

Third, neither the three friends, the wife, Satan, nor Elihu is mentioned in chapters 38-41 since God and Job are the focus. Fourth, the epilogue is reserved primarily for Job's response to the speeches of Yahweh and to Yahweh's response to Job's repentance. The epilogue also voices a condemnation of the false repre-

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60 Posselt, "Der Verfasser der Elihu-Reden," 49-50.
61 Snaith says the Septuagint of 33:23 refers to the "death angel" who intercedes on behalf of the sufferer, and that Elihu was teaching the necessity and role of an intercessor (The Book of Job: Its Origin and Purpose, 88-90).
62 See Norbert Peters, Das Buch Job übersetzt und erklärt, Exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament (Munster: AschendorfT, 1928), 26; Louis Dennefeld, "Les discours d'Elihu (Job xxxii-xxxvii)," Revue biblique 48 (1939): 163-80; Dubarle, Les Sages d'Israel, 87-88; and Staples, who sees Job's sin as ignorance of the true reason for his suffering (The Speeches of Elihu, 14-16).
63 Objections to the originality and authenticity of chapters 38-41 essentially follow the same pattern as those suggested for chapters 32-37.
The Authenticity of the Elihu Speeches in Job 32-37

sentation of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. Elihu's absence from the condemnation can be explained by Yahweh's own words, "After the LORD had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, 'I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has' " (42:7, NIV). Yahweh's anger was not extended to Elihu, and although it is an argument from silence, the implication is that if Elihu had been in full agreement with the three, then he would have been equally condemned. Elihu claimed to give a different message from that of the three and either he did or he did not (32:14). The implication from God's silence concerning Elihu is that he did. Therefore there is no need for Job to have offered sacrifices on Elihu's behalf as he did for the three, for Elihu had not misrepresented Yahweh.

Furthermore it was not necessary for Yahweh to praise Elihu, because the speeches of Yahweh, the response of Job, and the correction of the three suggest strongly that Elihu was correct and that his speeches were compatible with those of Yahweh. It is therefore not surprising that God was silent with regard to Elihu. It might also be noted that Job's wife and Satan are absent from the epilogue. Since the wife's statement was countered originally and finally by Job's faith, and since Satan's accusation was proved invalid by Job's response in 42:1-6, there seems to be no reason for further mention of either Job's wife or Satan.

Concerning the second criticism—that the literary style is diffuse and pretentious, inferior to that of the rest of the book—it can be demonstrated that the basis for this criticism sometimes rests in the presuppositions the reader brings to the text. For instance a modern reading of Job 32-33 is that these are the preten-

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64 Dhorme asks, "If it is Elihu who expounds the author's thesis, why is it that Job, who is constantly rebuked by Elihu, should receive the praises of the Epilogue" (Dhorme, *A Commentary on Job*, cviii). However, it should be remembered that Job was rebuked by Yahweh in chapter 38 and that Job expressed initial repentance in chapter 40 and final repentance in 42, which preceded any praises on the part of Yahweh. That is, Job was rebuked, he repented, and then he was praised. It would seem logical to conclude that Elihu had no need to repent because he was not rebuked by the Lord.

65 Janzen admits that "the argument from style is difficult to control" (Janzen, *Job*, 218). Andersen observes that the author may be deliberately portraying Elihu in a light best suited to his argument (Francis I. Andersen, *Job: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1976], 51-52).

66 Nichols is very critical of the composition ("The Composition of the Elihu Speeches [Job Chaps. 32-37]," 97-99). John Briggs Curtis, who is not necessarily complimentary to Elihu, does not accept his speeches as part of the original text of Job; yet he refutes the allegation of artistic inferiority in the Elihu material ("Word Play in the Speeches of Elihu [Job 32-37]," *Proceedings* 12 [1992]: 23-30).
tious words of an arrogant young fool. Yet Elihu approached Job and the three antagonists in the manner required by ancient Near Eastern custom. As to the literary style of the Elihu speeches, Budde, Gordis, Snaith, Zuck, and others present adequate explanations. Basically they conclude that a change in authors is not a definitive answer to Elihu's vocabulary and other literary differences in his speeches. Furthermore, if Elihu is a new character with a youthful personality, different vocabulary would naturally be expected. The wide and varied critical theories mentioned above seem subjective; they are not a convincing argument for a change of authorship nor for the manipulation or mutilation of the existing text.

With regard to the observation that linguistic usage seems to differ greatly from that of the rest of the poetry of the book, recent studies have demonstrated that these differences are not as extensive as previously thought. Diewert, Gordis, Johns, McCabe, Snaith, and others have suggested equally compelling arguments that support strong similarities in form throughout the existing text. In addition, Elihu's speeches contain interaction with and deductions from the quotations of Job's statements (33:8-11, 13; 34:5-6, 9; 35:2-3). Elihu used summaries and quotations to refute several of Job's claims; therefore a new methodology is introduced: quotation, refutation, and defense. This means that much of what Elihu said corresponds to the words of Job in the preceding chapters. Elihu also dealt with the same subjects and addressed the same issues as Job and the three counselors, but he stressed God's majesty and justice more than any of them. This could explain Elihu's frequent use of ἄνευ.

The charge that the speeches seem "to offer an alternative resolution to Job's problem from that of the (baffling) divine speeches" begs the question. This statement assumes that there

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67 Habel, "The Role of Elihu in the Design of the Book of Job," 87. Although Habel regards Elihu as an arrogant fool, he states that "Elihu's speeches are . . . both logical and significant in the sequence of the Joban story." Donald E. Gowan refers to Elihu as a "buffoon," and "a brilliant young fool," but he contends that it was "normal to expect Elihu to come on the scene and give the ultimate answer to the dilemma and problem of suffering" ("Reading Job as a 'Wisdom Script,' "Journal for the Study of the Old Testament 55 [1992]: 94-95). Skehan argues that "the long-winded introduction of Elihu is a deliberate and a formal rhetorical device for emphasis" (Patrick William Skehan, "I Will Speak Up! Job 32," Catholic Biblical Quarterly 31 [July 1969]: 380-82).

68 Andersen states that "style is also a quality whose assessment can be highly subjective" (Job: An Introduction and Commentary, 51).


70 Janzen, Job, 218.
is a wide difference between the resolution offered by Elihu and that offered by Yahweh. Actually several similarities exist between the speeches by Elihu and those by God.\textsuperscript{71}

Possibly the most judicious of the arguments in favor of the authenticity of the Elihu speeches is suggested by Carson, who posits that breaking the book up, as "such source theories [suggest], even if right, [does] not solve the theological problem: the book as we have it stands or falls as a literary whole, for that is the only form in which it has come down to us."\textsuperscript{72} This is supported by Michel, who states that "the tradition has never known a book of Job without the Elihu speeches."\textsuperscript{73} Also Smick concludes that "it is just as satisfactory to work with the text as it is" for "there is as much reason to believe that the book, substantially as we have it, was the work of a single literary and theological genius as it is to assume it is the product of numerous hands often with contrary purposes."\textsuperscript{74}

CONCLUSION

Having demonstrated that the major objections to the Elihu speeches' authenticity can be positively answered, confidence in his contribution to the argument of the book can be established. Therefore one can assume not only that chapters 32-37 of the Book of Job are structurally, theologically, stylistically, and linguistically an original, genuine part of the text, but also that they play a significant interpretive, explanatory, and theological role in understanding Job's suffering and his relationship with Yahweh.

\textsuperscript{71} For example see (a) 36:25-26; 37:5, 23 and 38:4, 33; (b) 33:8-11; 34:5-6, 9; 35:2-3 and 38:2; 40:2; 4:1:11; (c) 32:14, 34:10-12; 35:4-8, 36:31 and 41:10b-11; (d) 37:1-13 and 38:26-27; (e) 34:10-12; 36:5; 37:23 and 40:2; (f) 37:6, 9-10, 15-16 and 38:25--30.
\textsuperscript{72} D. A. Carson, How Long, 0 Lord? Reflections on Suffering and Evil (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 156.
\textsuperscript{74} Smick, "Job," 846-47.
ELIHU'S THEOLOGY
AND HIS VIEW OF SUFFERING

Larry J. Waters

The Book of Job is essentially about God's relationship with humankind, specifically with a man named Job, and it revolves around two questions. The first question is introduced through the accusations of Satan (1:9-11; 2:4-5): Why do people worship God? Satan suggested that the motivation for Job's worship and righteousness was "self-focused aggrandizement (Job 1:9-11)." Elihu sought to show that Satan's thesis-that "all religious interest is ultimately grounded in self-interest, or worse, in mercenary commitment"--is false.

The second question asks, How should people respond or react to God when He is silent and seemingly unconcerned about their problems? Therefore Elihu's theology is primarily related to Job's reaction to God, and the misunderstanding of the three antagonists and Job regarding their relationship to Him. Specifically Job questioned the operation of God's justice and ultimately God's own integrity, whereas the three questioned Job's claim of innocence and asserted God's right to exercise His freedom in the use of retributive justice. These two attributes, God's justice and sovereignty, were emphatically defended by Elihu.

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1 See Roy B. Zuck, "A Theology of the Wisdom Books and the Song of Songs," in A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament, ed. Roy B. Zuck (Chicago: Moody. 1991), 219-32. Many observations in this article are drawn from this study, but will not be noted hereafter unless directly quoted.
2 Ibid., 219.
ELIHU'S VIEW OF SUFFERING RELATIVE TO THE THEOLOGY OF GOD

In response to these two questions Elihu spoke first of God's sovereignty. God is greater than man (33:12); He is sovereign in His decisions and actions (34:14-15, 29), in His rule over individuals, nations, and the earth (33:14-18, 29-30; 34:13-15, 21-25; 37:13), and in His greatness (36:22, 26). His sovereignty is demonstrated in His creative work (32:22; 33:4, 6; 34:14) and His control of nature, including the cycles of evaporation (36:27-33), rain (36:28; 37:6), the clouds, lightning, and thunder (36:29-33; 37:2-5, 11-12, 15-16), the cold, snow, and ice (37:6-10), extreme heat (37:16-18), and animals (37:8).

Elihu explained the relationship between the sovereignty of God and suffering by emphasizing that Job's life was under the control of the sovereign Creator God, who sustains life (34:13-15). Since God's decisions, actions, and dominion are autonomous, neither Job nor the three had the right to question God or presume on Him. However, Job and the three assumed that everything in God's universe ought to be explained to them (30:20) or known by them (15:8-10; 20:4). As a result Elihu declared, in essence, "There are some things you [Job and the three] will not understand, for you are not God." There will always remain some mysteries to suffering; therefore when believers suffer, they must maintain faith in the Lord.

A second attribute Elihu defended is God's "infinity, for He cannot be understood (36:26; 37:5, 15-16), seen by man (34:29)," or limited by space. A third attribute is God's eternality (36:26, 29), for He cannot be dated or limited by time. Elihu's purpose in emphasizing these three attributes was to move Job and the three from a focus on themselves and the problems surrounding underserved suffering to the infinite God whose purposes are eternal and who knows exactly what He is doing. Before Elihu's intervention the debate had been anthropocentric and not theocentric. Elihu rectified that situation and injected a recognition of the divine into the discussion. Another purpose Elihu had in mind was to get Job and the three to understand that God is not limited in the way He deals with the suffering of humankind. God acts when, where, and how He has sovereignly decreed. This is not to discourage prayer or a humble, submissive, and righteous lifestyle, but rather to encourage a life of faith and trust.

The fourth and fifth attributes defended by Elihu are God's

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5 Ibid., 173-74.
justice (34:12, 17; 36:3, 23; 37:23) and holiness (34:10; 36:23). He is perfectly just and holy when He judges sin (34:11), punishes sinners (v. 26), destroys the powerful (v. 24), acts impartially (v. 19), summons death (v. 20; 36:6), disciplines oppressive rulers (36:7), judges godless kings (34:30), and censures flattery (32:22). Elihu spent the greater part of his defense in affirming God's justice. The three antagonists' faulty theology and Job's insistence that God was neither exercising justice in the lives of others or in his own life (10:3; 12:6; 19:6-7; 21:7-15, 17-28; 24:12; 27:2) called into question God's justice and holiness. If Job's suffering were unjustly allowed by God, or if God's work could be reduced to a quid pro quo system, then God is no different from the false gods of the ancient Near East. Elihu maintained that God does not punish or reward on the basis of human terms (34:33). Therefore the proposition that God acts unjustly or that He is controlled by human logic is unacceptable. According to Elihu suffering has many purposes, all of which fall under the governance of the justice and holiness of God. To think otherwise diminishes God to "a god" and exaggerates suffering beyond its importance and promotes it to the prime factor of life, with all things revolving around its existence or absence (i.e., compensation theology).  

God's omniscience was also cited by Elihu. This sixth attribute affirms that God is aware of every movement of a person (34:21) and knows all that is in one's heart (v. 23). God sees the deeds of sinners and they cannot hide from Him (vv. 22, 25; 35:15). He is also cognizant of the righteous and their needs (36:7), for He is "perfect in knowledge" (36:4; 37:16). The silence of God was a major obstacle for Job, because it implied that God was unaware of his suffering or that He was distant and detached (13:24). Elihu demonstrated that God is actively involved in every area of a person's life and is aware of even inner motivations. Even in suffering, God does not detach Himself from His creation but is at work in that suffering to attract the sufferer to Himself (36:15-16). Since God is omniscient and aware of Job's suffering, He is also aware that it is undeserved. Therefore any apparent inaction or silence on God's part did not imply Job's isolation or God's ignorance and hostility.

The seventh attribute emphasized by Elihu was omnipotence. God is referred to as the omnipotent Creator (34:19; 35:10; 36:3), the Almighty Gods (32:8; 33:4; 34:10, 12; 35:13; 37:23), and the 

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7 The terms "compensation" and "compensation theology" are defined later. a luck points out that דָּבָר is used thirty-one times in Job (including six times by Elihu) and only seventeen times in the rest of the Old Testament (ibid., 221-22). Also see R. Laird Harris, "The Book of Job and Its Doctrine of God," in Sitting with
"mighty" One (34:17; 36:5). Twice, Elihu declared that God is "exalted in power" (36:22; 37:23). Rabbi Kushner insists that God is unable to prevent human suffering.9 This idea, however, was unacceptable to Elihu, Job, and the three, because "God's power was not questioned; only His fairness."10 Though Job did not doubt the power of God, he did deny God's willingness to use it on Job's behalf, and he even accused God of using His power against him (9:22, 30-31; 13:3; 16:7-12; 19:21; 23:2; 31:35a). Job, "God's essence is 'power' and not 'justice;' he bends justice and rules with raw power (19:6f)."11 For Elihu, to imply that God's allowance of Job's suffering was an action independent of His nature was an attack on God's justice. Elihu insisted that God's power was working for Job, not against him, even in his suffering and losses. Elihu wanted Job to put aside his preoccupation with his own vindication and righteousness and to realize that God alone had the power to deliver him (36:22-24; cf. 40:8-14).12

The eighth attribute Elihu noted is God's love and mercy. His provision for His creation, Elihu pointed out, shows that He is gracious and merciful (37:13). He gives life to humanity (34:14-15), He forgives and restores (33:26-30; 36:10), He delivers sufferers in their suffering, speaks during oppression, and seeks intimacy with sufferers during their distress (36:15-16). Elihu also invited Job to consider God's merciful love, as seen in the actions of nature. When Job's wife suggested that he "curse God and die," Job replied, "Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" (2:9-10). Elihu assumed that suffering was as much a gift from God as prosperity. Elihu also recognized that Job's occupation with his former blessings had clouded his mind to the lessons and intimacies related to hardship and adversity (33:24, 26; 36:15; 37:13b-14). The "fellowship of God is enriching, and...that fellowship may be found in adversity no less than in prosperity."13 Suffering is therefore the channel through which


9 Kushner says, "God would like people to get what they deserve in life, but He cannot always arrange it. Forced to choose between a good God who is not totally powerful, or a powerful God who is not totally good, the author of the book of Job chooses to believe in God's goodness" (Harold S. Kushner, When Bad Things Happen to Good People [New York: Avon, 1983], 82-83).


God dispenses His grace and love in a remarkable way and where His attributes are more clearly manifest to the sufferer.

**ELIHU'S VIEW OF SUFFERING RELATIVE TO THE THEOLOGY OF HUMANITY**

Job held traditional views regarding the origin and nature of humans. He acknowledged God as the Creator and Sustainer of life (12:10; 27:3, 8), particularly his own (10:8-11). Job noted that people are by nature frail (6:11-12), impure (14:4), wicked (3:17; 9:22, 24; 10:2; 16:11; 21:7, 16, 28; 24:6; 27:7, 13; 29:17; 31:3), godless (13:16; 27:8), and without hope (6:11; 7:6; 14:19; 17:15; 27:8). Job admitted that sin could occur in one's heart (1:5; 31:7, 9) or thoughts (31:1). Chapters 29-31 reveal that Job had a healthy respect for the consequences of sin and attempted to live righteously. Generally he agreed with his three verbal opponents that suffering is evidence of sinful behavior, but he also observed that contrary to the claim of compensation theology not all sinners suffer and not all righteous people are exempt from affliction (21:7-15, 17-18; 24:1-17).

Elihu described God's relationship to people in several ways. First, he depicted this relationship generally. Elihu spoke of God as the Creator of humankind (32:22; 33:4, 6; 34:19; 35:10), and the Authority over and Owner of human beings (33:6). Elihu maintained that human life is sustained by God (33:4; 34:20). He regarded people as formed from clay (33:6), made of flesh and bones (33:21; 34:15), lower than God (33:12; 36:23, 26), and destined to return to dust (34:10). People cannot condemn God (34:17, 29), see God (34:29; 35:14), or understand Him (36:26) or His ways in nature (36:29; 37:15-16).14 Elihu also said that human beings are spiritual creatures (32:8, 18; 33:3; 34:14; 37:1, 24). Concerning wisdom and spiritual knowledge, Elihu affirmed that wisdom does not come from age (32:4-5, 9) or human nature (32:5, 12-13; 36:29; 37:19), but from God alone (32:8, 19-20; 33:3-4, 15-16, 29-30; 36:10-13; 37:7, 14-15). True wisdom cannot be attained through tradition or effort, but is a gift from God. Therefore Job should entrust his situation to the authority of his Creator.

Second, Elihu said God is intimately involved in the lives of human beings. God did not abandon humans when He created them (34:14-15). He is actively involved in the conduct of His people, and their ways are not hidden from Him (34:21-22). God communicates with people through dreams, visions, pain, and

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mediators (33:15-22, 26-29; 36:9-10, 15). God opens the ears of people to communicate His will and plan (33:16; 36:10, 16), and draws people to Himself (36:16). Elihu stated that God gives joy in life (35:10) and that He promotes or demotes people justly and fairly (34:30; 36:7, 11). Therefore God was active in Job's suffering and struggle. The Lord was not Job's enemy (13:24; 33:10); He desired a deeper relationship with Job (33:26-30).

Third, Elihu described God's relationship with the righteous. God’s might and power, he said, are involved in carrying out His plans and purposes for the righteous (36:5-7). God's relationship with them is unparalleled (vv. 5-6), and He is aware of all that happens to them (v. 7a). God does not oppress the righteous or do violence to righteousness (37:23b). Nothing happens to the righteous of which God is unaware; in this the righteous can be secure. God was involved in the life of Job and had a special interest in him as one of His righteous ones. Contrary to Job's accusations, God was not oppressing him or doing violence to him (37:23). Unlike readers who know the events of the prologue, Elihu accepted this truth by faith and encouraged Job to do the same. In reality the only enemy Job had to fear was himself, and suffering was revealing that to him (34:35, 37; 35:16; cf. 38:2; 40:2, 8). Job's suffering was more than Satan's insinuation against him. He was suffering to vindicate more than himself. He was vindicating God's trust in him. Elihu was saying that when suffering comes undeservedly, one should not react as Job did with accusation and self-defense. Instead the sufferer should "face it with trust [for] if he could know the cause, he too might find that he was serving God and was honored in his very agony."15

Fourth, Elihu described God's relationship with the wicked. Elihu recognized that people are sinners (33:17, 27; 34:22-27, 30; 35:12-13, 15; 36:9-10, 13-14), and are therefore held accountable to God (32:22; 33:26; 34:11, 30; 35:15; 36:10-12). For Elihu people are unable to deliver themselves and therefore need God's intervention and involvement (33:23-32; 36:15; 37:13). Even those who are mighty are ultimately subject to God (34:24). He knows their works (v. 25) and will overthrow them (vv. 25-26), because they have turned from following Him and have not regarded His ways (v. 27). They also cause the poor to cry out to God (v. 28). Furthermore God does not value an evil or proud person (35:12-13). Ultimately they are removed from their place (32:22; 34:24) and another is promoted above them (34:24). Especially pertinent to Job was the issue of pride (33:17; 35:12) and his accusation that God does not punish the wicked (21:7-16; cf. 35:12; 36:6).

The point Elihu was making is that God's retributive justice is still in effect regardless of the charges brought against it by a faulty theology or false accusations. People are accountable to God and are totally dependent on His grace for deliverance.

ELIHU'S VIEW OF SUFFERING RELATIVE TO THE THEOLOGY OF RETRIBUTION

For most ancient peoples, the quintessential principle of life was that God (or the gods) rule with predictive, moral, and compensative order. It was generally believed that the sovereign God/gods ruled His/their world, and that when necessary He/they would intervene in human history to reward the good and punish the wicked. Of course the Scriptures teach that God will ultimately punish the wicked and reward the righteous. It would seem that moral order in the world was and continues to be "one of those requirements of the human mind which God cannot fail to satisfy without appearing unjust."18

A belief held generally throughout the ancient world was "that there is an exact correspondence between one's behavior and one's destiny," and this principle "is known as the doctrine of retribution." Generally in this view there was no room for the suffering of the righteous or the blessing of the wicked.21

Eichrodt asserts that a "deeply rooted belief in retribution" was found in Israel.22 Eichrodt's theology of the Old Testament

17 Jerome D. Quinn, "The Scriptures of Merit," in Justification by Faith, ed. H. George Anderson, T. Austin Murphy, and Joseph A. Burgess (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985), 84.
19 Robert Gordis states that the doctrine "was universally accepted throughout the ancient Near East, from the Nile to the Euphrates. The concept of family solidarity was joined to that of lex talionis (measure for measure) and became a cardinal principle in the legal system of the ancient Babylonians, Assyrians, and Hit-tites" (The Book of God and Man [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965], 137).
22 Walter Eichrodt considered retribution as one of the characteristic peculiarities that mark the Israelite religion: "Hence in Babylonia . . .we find a terrifying uncertainty about the principle of God's dealings with men; but the Israelite is cer-
was instrumental in popularizing the term "retribution." The term is so entrenched within present-day Old Testament theology that it seems advisable to retain that term to represent the biblical principle of retribution or retribution theology. The terms "compensation" and "compensation theology," on the other hand, designate the misconception of the biblical principle of retribution.23

RETribution theoloGY
"Retribution" or "retribution theology" may be defined as deserved reward or punishment that comes to an obedient or offending party when a divine requirement, agreement, verbal promise, or covenant is kept or broken. That there could be verbal requirements or verbal agreements between God and people is clearly indicated by (a) the sacrifices Job offered (Job 1:5 and 42:8); (b) the phrases regarding God's "path," "command," "words of His mouth," in 23:11-12; (c) Job's oath of innocence and list of virtues in chapter 31; (d) Elihu's insistence that God is involved in individual human life (33:14-30; 34:14-15, 21-22, 25, 29; 36:5-12, 31; 37:13); and (e) God's speeches and the epilogue (chaps. 38-42).

Negatively, retribution is punishment for breaking a contract or covenant (verbal or written) that was relation ally or legally binding on two parties. Positively, retribution is reward for keeping the commands and requirements of that same contract or agreement. Retribution resulted from disobedience or obedience, anticipated by the offending or obedient party, when the verbal agreement, command, or covenant was broken or kept. It was therefore fair and Just both legally and morally.

However, the traditional wisdom of Job's day saw the concept of retribution as a fixed systematic formula for judging the condition of a nation or the life of an individual.24 Therefore it limit-
ited God to predetermined actions in dealing with people's responses to Him. People "seek an explanation of suffering in cause and effect. . . . They look backwards for a connection between prior sin and present suffering."25

However, according to the Scriptures, within the true principle of retribution there is room for exceptions to a fixed formula for the working out of God's justice in the lives of His people.26 "God's actions can at times suspend all dogmatic statements and theories about God's own inner workings."27 This is not to say that He is capricious or that the principle of retribution contradicts His justice and freedom to act, but it does explain why people have attempted to develop fixed formulas by which to try to explain or predict God's actions.28 Even so, retribution theology remains a tenet of God's justice and righteousness and does not violate God's mercy, love, and grace toward His people (37:13).

COMPENSATION THEOLOGY
"Compensation" or "compensation theology" is a belief system based on human observation, presumption, prejudice, and dogmatic traditional wisdom. Compensation is an airtight reward-and-punishment system related to performance of the individual within a set standard of assumed values. While there is evidence that God communicated certain requirements related to the true principle of retribution in the Book of Job, there is no evidence the book that God followed this concept of compensation. God did not agree to the assumptions of Satan, the three counselors, or Job himself. There is no evidence of mutual agreement between the relevant" (The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature, Anchor Bible Reference Library [New York: Doubleday & Co., 1990], 34).

25 Francis I. Andersen, Job: An Introduction and Commentary, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1976), 68. As an example of this principle Andersen points to the man who was born blind "in order that the works of God might be displayed in him" (John 9:3).

26 This is also true in reverse. Righteous servants of God have suffered undeservedly, such as Joseph, Elijah, David as a fugitive, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Daniel. The New Testament also gives examples, such as Jesus Himself, the apostle Paul, the apostle Peter, and early-church believers.

27 Koch "Is There a Doctrine of Retribution in the Old Testament?" 82. Richard Rohr says, "The Book of Job proclaims from the beginning that there is no [fixed] correlation between sin and suffering, between virtue and reward. That logic is hard for us to break. This book tries to break it, so that a new logos, called grace, can happen" (Job and the Mystery of Suffering [New York: Crossroad, 1996], 33).

28 J. A. Loader says, "The Book of Job has no objection to a connexion (sic) of deed and consequence, but indeed objects to a doctrine of retribution into which reality is forced" ("Relativity in Near Eastern Wisdom," In Studies in Wisdom Literature, ed. W. C. van Wyk [Hercules, S.A.: N.H.W., 1981], 54 [italics his]).
Lord and Job, nor a verbal or written covenant that promised that the righteous would always prosper and never suffer. That is, Job and his three companions had made an assumption, but God had not validated it. Therefore it was neither legally nor morally binding on the Lord.

The terms "compensation" and "compensation theology" represent the fixed formula that became a distortion of the true principle of retribution. For instance Job's accusers, holding to compensation theology, communicated the idea that God is somehow under obligation to exact payment according to a principle that confines Him to the limitations of human interpretation of how good or bad a person is or acts.29

Therefore compensation theology is presumptuous and prejudicial. It is presumptuous toward the Lord in that it demands that He act in accord with traditional wisdom. It is prejudicial toward human beings in that it classifies their relationship with God and their righteousness on the basis of having or not having material prosperity. Job's suffering and the prosperity of the wicked provide clear evidence to the contrary.30 In contrast to compensation theology, the biblical principle of retribution is neither presumptuous (forcing assumptions from human wisdom on the sovereign God) nor prejudicial (favoring one person over another; 34:19). The proper application of retribution theology breaks down when wrong assumptions are placed on it. It then becomes a different theology, namely, compensation theology.

29 This may also be referred to as "the traditional theory of retribution." J. Clinton McCann says, "By its rejection of the traditional theory of retribution, the Book of Job reveals a God whose essence is love, and thus a God who suffers with, for, and on account of humankind in the world" ("Wisdom's Dilemma: The Book of Job, the Final Form of the Book of Psalms, the Entire Bible," in Wisdom You Are My Sister: Studies in Honor of Roland E. Murphy. O. Carm., on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday, ed. Michael L. Barre, Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 29 [Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1997]. 21).
30 See, for example, Job's remarks in Job 12 and 21.
ELIHU'S INSIGHTS INTO SUFFERING COMPARED WITH OTHERS' VIEWS

Ancient Near Eastern View

1. Worshipers held a general belief in some form of mechanical compensation: the automatic connection between one's deeds and state of being. Compensation was governed by the god(s) somewhat capriciously.31

2. This theology became a universal human philosophy of cosmic order for explaining individual destinies, suffering, and prosperity.

3. As a result of belief in this principle, misfortunes were always the result of sins and misdeeds. Suffers were not therefore truly "innocent" but were ignorant and in need of enlightenment.

4. Therefore worshipers could expect reward and protection based on a life dedicated to their deity. Being "righteous" and "innocent, meant the person was obedient to the human explanations regarding the will of the deity. "Wise men" then became the interpreters of divine will.

5. When suffering, the person (or sage) would simply acquiesce to the situation, because the god(s) were usually aloof and detached.

6. Since suffering was evidence of sin, the only recourse was to admit guilt, praise the deity, and plead for mercy.

Elihu's View

1. Elihu held a belief in true retribution that was fairly and justly administered by God. It was not mechanical nor were one's deeds necessarily connected to its operation. God does not govern capriciously (34:10-12).

2. True retribution is a correction of the distorted views of human philosophy and is explainable only by God Himself (34:12-15; 36:5).

3. While the principle of retribution is observable, neither suffering nor prosperity is always predictable. Suffering is not always due to sin, nor prosperity to righteousness (36:6-8, 15). Reward and protection cannot be guaranteed by dedication of life to God. The righteous suffer undeservedly for purposes known to God. Being "righteous" or "innocent" means a person is obedient to the will of God. "Wise men" were to clarify and announce the will of God but not presume on His prerogatives.

5. Elihu agonized with the C sufferer over the paradox of undeserved suffering and God's retributive justice (33:6). Also Elihu said God is personally involved in the lives of sufferers (34:14-15).

6. Since suffering is not always evidence of sin, sufferers are allowed to ask why, but not to blame God (33:12; 36:22-26).

**Satan's View**

1. Suffering is a tool to use against both sufferers and God with the ultimate objective being that people curse God (1:9-11; 2:4-5).

2. Suffering is a tool to manipulate sufferers into doubting the goodness and justice of God.

3. Suffering generally has two objectives: to induce sufferers to blame God for what Satan does, and to motivate sufferers to sin.

4. Satan's objectives in his misuse of suffering are reinforced by the false principle of compensation.

5. Satan uses undeserved suffering to cause loss of perspective, disillusionment, and discouragement.

6. Satan used undeserved suffering to attempt to frustrate God's destiny for Job.

**Elihu's View**

1. Suffering is allowed by God for His own purposes and for the benefit of individuals (33:14, 19, 23-24).

2. Suffering is allowed by God to strengthen sufferers' faith in the goodness and justice of God (34:12; 37:23).

3. Suffering has many objectives, all of which are designed to guide sufferers to a closer relationship with God and a better understanding of themselves and God (36:5, 22, 24).

4. God's objectives in His use of suffering are in perfect harmony with His gracious administration of the true principle of retribution (36:2-7).

5. Suffering is designed by God to sharpen perspective, correct weaknesses, and strengthen one's faith (33:15; 34:31; 37:13).


**The View of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar**

1. Job's suffering was deserved; only the wicked suffer. Job was suffering; therefore Job was wicked (4:8; 11:6, 11; 18:5-21; 20:25-29; 22:2-11, 21-30).

2. Job's suffering was divine judgment or chastisement for sins committed before his suffering began (chap. 22).

**Elihu's View**

1. Job's initial suffering was not deserved (Elihu limited his argument to present faults like pride; 33:17-18, 29-30). Job was not wicked, but he had sinned during the debates and was in a precarious position (32:14; 33:12).

2. Job's suffering was not due to sins committed before the initial suffering began; rather he sinned in his speeches and attitudes (34:35-37; 35:16).
3. The solution to Job's suffering was to confess his sin and repent; his prosperity was the motivation for repentance, because prosperity is always assured to the repentant (5:8, 27; 8:5; 11:13-14; 15:20-35; 22:21-23).

4. The three held firmly to a traditional compensation theology that dictated the relationship between God and sufferers and obligated God to administer justice according to its precepts (chaps. 15, 18, 20, 22).

5. The certainty of compensation theology was more important to the three than their duty to Job as friends and comforters during his suffering (6:14, 21; 17:1-5).

6. The three drew wrong conclusions from Job's situation and thus made erroneous applications: (1) Job was sinful and therefore deserved suffering. (2) Job could have previously fallen unknowingly into sin, so suffering was deserved. (3) Job's suffering was disciplinary because of previous sin; therefore it was deserved.

Job's View

1. Job viewed his suffering as undeserved and unexplainable by the theology of compensation (9:21; 21:7).

2. Job associated his suffering with his past and related it to his present situation (7:17-20; 9:17-20).

Elihu's View

1. Elihu agreed and therefore concentrated on Job's present situation, offering no explanation for Job's undeserved initial suffering.

2. Elihu associated Job's suffering with the present and related it to his future (33:12; 34:10; 37:14).
3. Job observed that the righteous often suffer and the wicked often prosper, contrary to the belief system held by the three friends and to some extent by himself (chap. 21).

4. Job's suffering caused a dilemma in his thinking with regard to traditional wisdom. He was unable to reconcile his suffering with his exemplary life (7:20; 10:2; chaps. 29-31).

5. Though tempted by the offer of return of prosperity and social status, Job rejected this and maintained that, even though prosperity was given by God, it is not the incentive for service to God (he rejected all calls for his repentance).

6. Suffering caused Job to contend with God and to attempt to explain His actions by human reason (7:17-21; 9:22-24; 33:8-11, 13).

7. Suffering caused Job to misunderstand God's plan, accuse God falsely, arrogantly challenge God, and criticize the operation of God's justice.

8. Job's suffering made him anthropocentric, focusing on the injustice of his situation and the ramifications of his losses (chaps. 3, 29-31).

9. In Job's discourse on wisdom he recognized that it is possible to be closer to true wisdom during times of suffering and pain (28:20-22). But it is still God who gives the wisdom necessary to understand and deal with such suffering wisely.

3. Elihu agreed, but did not connect this to the false principle of compensation that viewed Job as wicked (view of the three) or that God was unjust (Job's view; 34:10, 12, 21; 36:5, 26).

4. Elihu, as a fellow human being, shared in the dilemma, but did not allow it to undermine his belief and trust in God's retributive justice (33:6-7; 37:23).

5. Like Job in the prologue, Elihu recognized that both prosperity and suffering can be gifts from God (2:10). God, not circumstances, is to be the focus of one's life (36:24; 37:13-14, 24).

6. Elihu maintained that God's actions, though inexplicable, are perfectly good, just, and fair (34:10,12; 37:5, 23).

7. Elihu saw suffering as preventive, correctional, and educational. It was meant to clarify Job's misunderstandings, correct his false accusations, reveal his arrogance, and counter his criticism of God's justice.

8. Elihu presented suffering as glorificational, revelational, organizational, and relational. Job's suffering was to make him theocentric, focusing on God's justice and the positive aspects of his situation (35:5, 36:5, 22, 26; 37:14).

God's View

1. The reason or cause of undeserved suffering is known only to God, but the effect is felt by people, who are allowed to respond or react to their particular circumstances (38:4, 33).

2. Although people cannot fully understand the cause and reason behind suffering, God allows suffering to reveal defects that surface when believers suffer undeservedly (38:2; 40:2; 41:11).

3. God uses elements in nature (e.g., rain) for discipline or punishment, for His own pleasure and enjoyment, and as an expression of His covenant love (38:25-28).

4. God also rejected the inflexible theology of compensation, pointing the three friends and Job to the grace and sovereign operation of His retributive justice (41:10b-11).

5. Job's suffering was important to God, but Job was not the exclusive object of His concern; His purposes often extend beyond the needs of people (38:26-27).

6. The divine speeches influenced Job to repent of attitudes and sins developed during the debates mainly by causing him to concentrate on God's work in creating and sustaining the world (chaps. 38-41).

Elihu's View

1. Elihu similarly attempted to convince Job to respond properly to his situation rather than react to undeserved suffering (36:25-26; 37:5, 14, 23).

2. Elihu dealt directly with these faults and developed principles that were necessary for Job to comprehend and apply before God appeared (33:8-11; 34:5-6, 9; 35:2-3).

3. Elihu presented the principle of ἀγάπη ("loyal love") in 37:13. Rain can be viewed as an expression of God's judgment or of His grace and mercy.

4. Elihu did not answer Job according to the arguments of the three (32:14); he upheld the true principle of just retribution (34:10-12; 35:4-8). And he indicated that God provides for all people (36:31).


6. Elihu recommended several actions that Job should take to advance beyond his occupation with his undeserved suffering: ponder and praise God's work (35:5; 37:14), and revere Him (36:24; 37:24).
7. Without the occurrence of undeserved suffering Job would not have known and appreciated the magnitude of God's greatness (40:2) or recognized his own limitations (38:2).

7. This was one of Elihu's objectives throughout the discourse: to bring Job to a better understanding of the greatness of God (34:10-12; 36:5; 37: 14, 23) and to a humble position before Him (33:6; 37:24).

8. God's speeches demonstrate that He is the source of everything on earth (38:28), and He has control, ability, power, knowledge over nature all life (38:34-38). To understand undeserved suffering fully, one would have to be God.

8. Elihu agreed (37:6, 9-10, 15-16). He had made no pretense of understanding the preexistent reason or and cause for Job's undeserved and suffering. That knowledge rests with God alone.

CONCLUSION
Worshipers of the ancient Near Eastern gods, Satan, Job, and his three antagonists—all these believed that suffering originated from a "tit for tat," "measure for measure," compensation theology, which governs the correspondence between righteous behavior and prosperity, and sinful behavior and misery. However, Elihu showed that neither he nor God supported this theory. Under God's justice, suffering comes to people for several reasons, many of which are unrelated to compensation theology. Therefore Elihu uniquely declared that God's presence is seen precisely in the one place Job had claimed it was not, namely, suffering. Suffering may be, and often is, God's voice to His highest creation. This in fact could be one of the most important contributions Elihu made to the theology of suffering: God speaks to humankind through various categories of suffering. And He is not limited to compensation theology.

Something apparently happened to Job while he was listening to Elihu. "With the help of Elihu, Job's confrontation with God became a revealing and healing experience, and he realizes that it is not only safe, but actually necessary to relinquish his insistence on his loyalty, his purity, his righteousness." Prepared by Elihu, and then confronted by God (chaps. 38-42), Job refocused

on God, recognized who he was in relation to his Creator, and understood the proper function of retributive justice. He ceased his insistence that God had acted with injustice, that he would approach God like a "prince," and that God had to act in a prescribed manner. Job was no longer overwhelmed by his suffering and the injustice of it; he was no longer verbal and defensive; he was no longer proud of his righteousness, orthodoxy, and purity; instead he was willing to let go of his security in a false theology.35

Job's response to God, recorded in 40:4-5 and 42:5-6, demonstrates this observation. In his response he acknowledged two things. First, Job recognized a basic principle about his sin: "I am unworthy. . . I put my hand over my mouth. ..I will say no more" (40:4, NIV). Second, he recognized the nature of God and responded with a humility, love, and godly fear for God's sovereignty (42:1-2); he realized God's inscrutability (42:3); reflected on God's superiority (42:4); refocused on God's intimacy (42:5); and repented of serving God from wrong motivations or presumption (42:6).36 Satan was silenced in chapter 42, because Job's response (42:1-6) proved that God's confidence in him was not unfounded (1:8; 2:3). Though God needs no vindication, the Book of Job shows that undeserved suffering, accepted and borne by a child of God, does, in a sense, vindicate God's gracious plan for His saints.

Crenshaw states that "true wisdom, like God, defies human reason."37 Therefore true wisdom defies the wrong concepts of compensation theology, and when properly applied during undeserved suffering, godly wisdom becomes a living demonstration of God's grace. Job could say, "My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you" (42:5, NIV), partly because of the help of Elihu, who opened the way for Job to have a better understanding of God and His ways.

35 Ibid.
REFLECTIONS ON SUFFERING
FROM THE BOOK OF JOB

Larry J. Waters

Written by an unknown author, possibly the most ancient literary account in the Bible, the Book of Job is a mixture of divine and human wisdom that addresses a major life issue: Why do righteous people suffer undeservedly? The Book of Job is also a prime example of Hebrew wisdom literature that labors with the concept of theodicy, which is a defense of the integrity of the justice and righteousness of God in light of the evil, injustice, and undeserved suffering in the world. Some writers have sug-

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2 "Undeserved suffering" does not imply that God unjustly placed mankind under the curse as a result of the Fall. Rather it refers to suffering that is not directly traceable to an act of personal sin or disobedience. This phrase does not imply that Job was sinless, nor that he was without sin during the cycles of debate. Suffering is undeserved in the sense of being or appearing to be unfair or unjust.

3 David J. A. Clines, Job 1-20, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word, 1989), xxxviii. He points to three major issues in suffering: (1) How do we answer the why's, how's, and what's of suffering? (2) Is there really such a thing as innocent suffering? (3) What kind of answers can be given when suffering?

4 This is not to imply that "theodicy" is the one main theme of the book, nor that one main theme can be agreed on. While one may see one primary emphasis in the J Book of Job, it encompasses several related themes. See the review on theodicy in Konrad Muller, "Die Auslegung des Theodizeeproblems im Buche Hiob," Theologische Blatter 32 (1992): 73-79.
gested that theodicy is the theme of the Book of Job. If this is so,
then the emphasis of the book is not totally on the man Job and his
suffering, though he and his suffering are certainly central, but
also on God Himself and His relationship to His supreme cre-
ation.

Job therefore is a book dealing with human suffering, even
though the suffering of the innocent does not encompass the au-
thor's entire purpose. It is also more than an ancient play written
to portray the absurdities of life, the weaknesses of man, and the
prominence of the sovereignty of God. The Book of Job shows that
the sufferer can question and doubt, face the hard questions of
life with faith, maintain an unbroken relationship with a loving
God, and still come to a satisfactory resolution for personal and
collective injustice and undeserved suffering. These observa-
tions need to be addressed not only within the context of the suffer-
ing by the righteous man Job, but also because many believers to-
day suffer and can identify with Job. As Andersen points out,
"the problem of suffering, human misery, or the larger sum of
evil in all its forms is a problem only for the person who believes
in one God who is all-powerful and all-loving." Suffering,

5 For example Clines, Job 1-20, xxxiii.
6 "What one learns from suffering is the central theme" (Bruce Wilkinson and
7 Matitiahu Tsevat, "The Meaning of the Book of Job," Hebrew Union College An-
nual 37 (1966): 195. Though the word "innocent" disturbs some, it is used here in
the sense of innocence of any wrongdoing as the base for the suffering Job endured,
not innocence in the sense of having no sin or culpability as a fallen creation. See
Clines, Job 1-20, xxxviii, for a more detailed discussion.
8 Stanley E. Porter, "The Message of the Book of Job: Job 42:7b as Key to Interpre-
tation?" Evangelical Quarterly 63 (1991): 151. It would seem that the author of Job
had several purposes under the general theme of wisdom's teaching about God and
human suffering. While God and His freedom are the major focus of the book, the
problem of suffering is the medium through which the book's purpose is pre-
sented. Stressing one subject over the other would be unproductive.
9 Zuck, "Job," 715. "The Book of Job also teaches that to ask why, as Job did (3:11-
12, 16,20), is not wrong. But to demand that God answer why, as Job also did (13:22;
19:7; 31:15) is wrong" (ibid.).
10 Wesley C. Baker, More Than a Man Can Take: A Study of Job (Philadelphia:
Westminster, 1966), 17.
11 Francis I. Andersen, Job: An Introduction and Commentary, Tyndale Old Test-
tament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1976),64-65. This is not to
say that a nonbeliever does not struggle with the same questions. But if an unbe-
believer's questions do not lead to a relationship with God, then they are normally
used as excuses for not believing in God and as reasons to dismiss divine claims
without struggling with the biblical issues. The believer, however, struggles with
the seeming inconsistencies and incongruities, attempting to harmonize these dif-
ficulties with faith in what is known of God in His Word.
then, is the prominent issue that forces a consideration of the deeper questions posed by this concept, especially as it affects the lives of those who have a loving, intimate relationship with the true and living God. All the questions that relate to God, man, and Satan-justice and injustice, sovereignty and freedom, innocence and guilt, good and evil, blessing and cursing-are interwoven within the context of undeserved suffering. The Book of Job and its presentation of undeserved suffering, therefore, serves as a dependable, useful model\textsuperscript{12} for the believer of any generation in dealing with the problem of theodicy.

Is God to be held to a strict set of regulations based on human interpretations of His relationship with mankind? How does the Book of Job handle this question and its connection with undeserved suffering, while still demanding faith in an omnipotent, sovereign, and loving God? This study suggests several answers from the Book of Job in an attempt to (a) reveal the false theological method of Satan in regard to human suffering, and his role as the cause or "prime mover" of suffering, (b) show how the three counselors, while presenting some truth, follow a retribution\textsuperscript{13} or recompense\textsuperscript{14} theology as a method of explaining suffering that is related to Satan's original attack on Job, (c) briefly present Elihu's answer to Job's suffering, (d) suggest God's estimation of Job's complaint and suffering, that is, a correction of the three counselors and Job himself, and (e) summarize the various lessons Job learned from his suffering.

\textsuperscript{12} "By all means let Job the patient be your model so long as that is possible for you; but when equanimity fails, let the grief and anger of Job the impatient direct itself and yourself toward God, for only in encounter with him will the tension of suffering be resolved" (Clines, \textit{Job 1-20}, xxxix).

\textsuperscript{13} "Retribution theology" is a term often used to explain the "cursing and blessing" clauses of the Mosaic Covenant. Here it is used mainly to describe a misuse of that theology that attempts to set boundaries on God's sovereign will and obligate Him to man's actions and assumptions concerning blessing and cursing. The term is also used to represent a theology that assumes God's blessing is based on how good a person is or acts and that His cursing is based on how bad a person is or acts. While Israel deserved cursing on many occasions, God's longsuffering was often extended in grace. Conversely the righteous often suffered along with the unrighteous under the discipline due them, the nation, and its leaders. In Job, Satan and the three counselors tried to limit God and His freedom to act according to their own standards. They saw this concept as a fixed formula for judging the life of an individual and therefore for limiting God to predetermined actions in dealings with people. The biblical idea of blessing and cursing is based on a relationship with God and is primarily internal in nature. The satanic counterfeit of blessing and cursing is based on a relationship with health, other people, and material goods, and is primarily external in nature.

\textsuperscript{14} The term "recompense theology" suggests the concept of "payment." Job's accusers said God is somehow under obligation to mankind and is confirmed to giving exact payment to individuals.
Job is truly a wisdom book. The basic concept of wisdom has always been connected with skill and "know-how,"\textsuperscript{15} for "wisdom was the art of achieving," and the "emphasis was on competence."\textsuperscript{16} Wisdom (חכמה) challenges readers to discover the "know-how" presented in the book so that they might achieve competence in dealing with the questions of suffering. From the Book of Job readers can learn how to challenge the false concepts related to suffering and how to maintain a loving and meaningful relationship, in the midst of suffering, with the sovereign God. Only God "understands the way to [wisdom] and he alone knows where it dwells" (Job 28:23, NIV).

**SATANIC MOTIVATION AND METHOD AS A CAUSE OF SUFFERING**

As Alden points out, blaming the devil for suffering is an all-too-common activity of many Christians.\textsuperscript{17} The message of Job deals not with "cause and effect"\textsuperscript{18} but with coming to the realization that "nothing happens to us that is not ultimately controlled by the knowledge, love, wisdom, and power of our God of all comfort"\textsuperscript{19} (2 Cor. 1:3). Certainly he is correct; however, this principle also often leads to blaming God for suffering. While Satan is the prime mover behind sin, evil, and suffering, it is also correct to point out that one cannot ignore the connection between Satan's desires and God's permitting him to carry out those desires. This friction is clearly demonstrated in the terrible troubles inflicted on Job. Satan was the cause, and Job felt the effect. God, however, was also at work in Job's suffering. But this does not mean God is unconcerned about what happens to His people. "We must admit that God plays in a higher league than we do. His ways are far above our ways. God is greater in intellect, power, and knowledge than we are. So, His ways are usually past our finding out"\textsuperscript{20} (Job 28:23; Isa. 55:9). God does inflict suffering directly and indirectly for many different reasons: judgment, discipline, refining, and more, but Satan is behind much of human misery.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} Robert L. Alden, Job, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 41.
\textsuperscript{18} Andersen, Job: An Introduction and Commentary, 68.
\textsuperscript{19} Alden, Job, 41.
\textsuperscript{20} Steven J. Lawson, When All Hell Breaks Loose (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1994), 14.
The book opens when the Accuser, after traveling throughout the earth, went before the throne of God. Satan challenged Job in three areas: Job's righteousness, Job's fear of God, and Job's separation from sin (Job 1:8-11). Why does Job live righteously, fear God, and separate himself from sin? Satan alleged that Job fears God only because God protects and prospers him. The prosperity issue and its resultant retribution/recompense theology become a major focus in understanding suffering throughout the book (1:9-10; 2:4; 5:19-26; 8:6-7; 11:17-19; 13:15-16; 17:5; 20:21-22; 22:21; 24:1-12; 34:9; 36:11, 16; 42:10). The presentation of this false theology is therefore found in Satan's statements before the throne of God (chaps. 1-2), Job's lament (chap. 3), and the three dialogue cycles involving Eliphaz and Job, Bildad and Job, and Zophar and Job (chaps. 4-31). The monologues of Elihu (chaps. 32-37) and the speeches of God (chaps. 38-42) present a correction to this theology.

Ancient Israelites and others of the ancient Near East

21 "The Accuser" (חַדָּשׁ) occurs fourteen times in eleven verses (Job 1:6-9, 12; 2:1-4, 6-7), always with the definite article.

22 Johnson, Out of the Whirlwind, 25.


24 "The classical Judaic tradition toward suffering is expressed in the Talmudic-Midrashic writings. God is seen as the One who punishes the wicked, as well as the One who brings good and rewards the righteous. Job is considered by some exeges to be a Jew while others believe that he never existed as a person but was merely an example. Other talmudic writers thought God rebuked Job for his lack of patience when suffering was inflicted on Job; still others excused his outbursts because they were uttered under duress" (Buddy R. Pipes, "Christian Response to Human Suffering: A Lay Theological Response to the Book of Job" [D.Min. project, Drew University, 1981], 10). There is evidence of this concept in ancient Near Eastern literature and in the Old Testament (see Bildad's appeal to "tradition" in Job 8:11-22 and the many parallels in the Book of Proverbs and the Psalms). That this was a general viewpoint of ancient peoples can been seen in the parallels between ancient wisdom texts and the Book of Job (Gregory W. Parsons, "A Biblical Theology of Job 38:1-42:6" [Ph.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1980], 19-54). See James B. Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950),418-19,589-91,597; and W. G. Lambert, "The Babylonian Theodicy," in The Babylonian Wisdom Literature (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967),71-89, especially page 75, lines 70-71. "The Mesopotamian texts dealing with the problem of the righteous sufferer give one a glimpse of the intellectual tradition within which the book of Job fits. It is a long tradition that includes an early Sumerian composition and an Old Babylonian Akkadian text. Its most elaborate literary expressions, how-
viewed suffering under the rubric of retribution/recompense theology. This theology is challenged by Job's own personal struggle with this faulty theology.

If Job accepted Satan's false theology, as presented in the dialogues, and "repented" under false pretenses, then Satan would have proved his case in the court of heaven. When Satan asked, "Does Job fear God for nothing?" he implied Job served God for "something," that is, some reward. If Job confessed some nonexistent sin so he could return to his former prosperous and healthy status, then Satan's premise in 1:9-10 and 2:4 would be substantiated. Also God Himself would be deemed guilty of blessing Job's deception and falsehood and therefore would be at fault.

Satan's accusation was directed toward both God's justice and Job's righteousness. Satan basically asked the question, Is it love or is it self-serving greed that motivates a person to be righteous, to fear God, and to be separate from sin? Satan wrongly assumed that since God protected and blessed Job, greed was the foundation of his righteousness rather than Job's personal intimate relationship based on love, trust, and fear of God (1:8-10; 2:3). Traditional wisdom reasoned that since God is in control of the world and because He is just, the only way wise people can maintain faith in Him is to see all blessing as evidence of goodness and righteousness and all suffering as evidence of unrighteousness and sin. Johnson correctly calls this viewpoint "pragmatic religion" and an "insidious heresy."

After the first two chapters, Satan is noticeably absent from the story. His presence was no longer a factor, but his assumptions, accusations, and theology are still evident throughout the dialogue. In the fabric of retribution/recompense theology, expressed by the three friends who interacted with Job, Satan's purpose was to see God's highest creation curse Him. Satan's objective was to turn a righteous man against the just God (1:11).

ever, are found in the long poem 'I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom' (Ludlul bēl ne-meqi) and 'The Babylonian Theodicy,' a text constructed in the form of a cycle of dialogues between the righteous sufferer and a friend" (James Luther Mays, ed., Harper's Bible Commentary [New York: Harper and Row, 1988], 36).


27 "Traditional wisdom" refers here to what is contrary to God's wisdom (Matt. 15:3, 6; Mark 7:3, 5, 13; Col. 2:8).


29 Ibid., 18.
It is interesting that God's charge against Satan, "You incited me against him to ruin him without any reason" (2:3b, NIV), is a horrifying, yet enlightening look into the character of Satan. Humanity means no more to the Accuser than a vehicle for cursing God.

THE THREE FRIENDS' FALSE THEOLOGY OF RETRIBUTION/RECOMPENSE

Job's three counselors perpetuated the same satanic false doctrine of retribution/recompense. They held that the righteous never suffer and the unrighteous always do. Each friend had his own approach to Job's problem, yet they shared this theology of retribution/recompense. Therefore their proposed solution was the same: Repent of your sins so God can restore your prosperity." Or, more directly, "If you want your health, family, and prosperity back, accept our evaluation, admit to sin and wrongdoing."

The avowed objective of the three friends was "to sympathize with him and comfort him" (2:11). But this objective was never achieved (except for the first seven days when their silent presence may have been of some comfort to Job). A short summary of the speeches of these men reveals this fact.

After Job lamented his birth (chap. 3), Eliphaz began the three cycles of debate (chaps. 4-31). His speeches are recorded in chapters 4-5, 15, and 22. Eliphaz's questions immediately revealed his theology, "Who ever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright destroyed?" (4:7). However, experience and history, Job said, show that many innocent persons have suffered (24:1-12). Job himself, he said, is an example. Yet based on a wrong premise Eliphaz sought to convict Job of his "foolish" response to misfortune and to urge him to lay his sin before God (5:8; 15:20-35; 22:5-12). His basic message was that Job must be sinning because he was suffering (4:12-5:16; 15:2-5, 20-35; 22:5-15). Without the benefit of knowing the unseen events of chapter 1, Eliphaz saw God as both the initiator and reliever of suffering (Job 5:18). Therefore Eliphaz wanted Job to see that God's oppression resulted from the patriarch's many presumed sins (15:11-16, 20; 22:5-11). Once Job admitted his sin, God would heal Job and his prosperity would return (22:21).

When Job said to his friends, "If I have sinned, show me" (6:24; cf. 7:20-21), Bildad took up the challenge (chaps. 8, 18, 25), and in his first speech he appealed to traditional wisdom ("inquire of past generations, and consider the things searched out by their fathers," 8:8). Bildad correctly asserted that God is not unjust or unfair (8:2-3). But Bildad was wrong in saying that Job.
was totally at fault and needed to repent before he could be restored (8:4-7). God would be unfair to allow undeserved suffering to come to a righteous man. Job's insistence on innocence was an affront to the justice and rightness of God (8:3, 20). Bildad frankly told Job he was evil and that he must repent so that God could bring back his laughter, joy, and peace (8:21-22, a cruel reminder of Job's losses). According to Bildad, Job was suffering because of sin; and according to the principle of retribution/recompense, Job deserved to be punished. Because Job refused to accept this principle, Bildad said the patriarch did not know God and had been rejected by Him (8:4; 18:5-21). Therefore how could Job claim to be righteous when the evidence against him was so strong (25:4-6)?

Zophar continued the attack on Job's righteousness and integrity (11:2-4), fear of God (vv. 5-6), and morality (vv. 6, 14). Claiming to have a superior understanding of God and His wisdom, Zophar said Job was too superficial to understand the deeper things of God (vv. 7-12). This third agitator stated that God had even overlooked some of Job's sins (v. 6). While Job admitted that God was the source of his suffering (12:14-25), he insisted that he had committed no sin commensurate with his suffering (chap. 31).30

While it is true that God's wisdom, as Zophar said, is unfathomable (11:7-9), this was not the issue in Job's situation. Satan's original faulty premise was repeated by Zophar: If Job were good, he would prosper; but since he suffers, he must be evil and will die (vv. 13-20). Zophar accused Job of wickedness (20:6), pride (v. 6), perishing like dung (v. 7), and oppressing the poor (v. 19). Like the other two antagonists, Zophar spoke of the wicked person's loss of prosperity (vv. 15, 18, 20-22). He hoped this would establish the premise of traditional wisdom and eventually lead Job to repent. Job's irritation at the arguments of these three advisers (and at God) can be seen in these paraphrased responses: "When will your arguments end?" (6:14-17). "What have I done to deserve this?" (6:24). "God, just forgive me and get it over with" (7:21). "No matter what I do, nothing changes" (chap. 9). "Why won't You answer me, God?" (10:1-7). "I can't take any more of this!" (14:18-22). "Nobody cares about me!" (19:13-22). "Where can I get some answers?" (28:12). "Everything used to be so perfect" (chap. 29). "What good is it to serve God?" (chap. 30).31

Soon after his first calamities, Job worshiped God, saying "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord (1:21). He "did not smit nor did he blame God" (v. 22). But later, under the pressure of his opponents' accusations and under the weight of his seemingly endless physical and emotional plight, Job said, "For He bruises me with a tempest, and multiplies my wounds without cause" (9:17).32 In his despair Job accused God of being unfair and unjust (vv. 17-20), since he observed that God punishes good people and rewards bad people (vv. 21-24). God does not fit the preconceived claims of traditional wisdom, so as Job became despondent over the brevity of life (vv. 25-26), he sensed that God would never forgive him (vv. 27-31), and he pleaded for a mediator33 (vv. 32-33). Given up on that possibility, Job asked God to diminish his suffering so that he could meet God in court and plead his own case (vv. 34-35). Even though Job saw great inconsistencies in the application of the retribution/recompense doctrine by the three antagonists (24:1-12),34 he concluded that God did not really care for him and that he was caught in some sort of divine entrapment in which God's lovingkindness was absent (10:1-13, 16-17). He lamented his birth (vv. 18-19) and his coming death (vv. 20-22). Captured by false counsel and confused by God's ways, Job was now ready for a true counselor.

THE INTERVENTION OF ELIHU

Elihu began his discourses with a lengthy introduction and expression of anger toward both Job and the three older companions (32:1-10).35 He felt that both parties had been guilty of perverting

34 The fact that God postpones judgment disproves the theory of the three friends concerning immediate retribution for wrongdoing. "Job is no more out of God's favor as one of the victims than the criminal in vv. 13-17 is in God's favor because of God's inaction" (The NIV Study Bible, ed. Kenneth Barker [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985], 759).
35 Like the reader, Elihu was dismayed, worn down, and tired of the dialogues which had solved nothing. Many have criticized Elihu's lengthy introduction, but both protocol (his youth against the age of the others), local custom, and his exasperation were justly expressed.
divine justice and of misrepresenting God (32:2-3, 11-22). Elihu attempted to correct the friends' and Job's faulty image of God. Elihu affirmed that God was not silent during Job's suffering (33:14-30). He argued that God is not unjust (34:10-12, 21-28). Furthermore God is neither uncaring (35:15), nor is He powerless to act on behalf of His people (chaps. 36-37). Elihu presented a totally different perspective on suffering from that of the three. He said Job's suffering was not because of past sin, but was designed to keep him from continuing to accept a sinful premise for suffering, to draw him closer to God, to teach him that God is sovereignly in control of the affairs of life, and to show him that God does reward the righteous, but only on the basis of His love and grace.36 It was as if Elihu were saying, "You insist on justice and righteousness, but do you really want to be treated justly? Have you really considered what would happen if God took you at your word?"37

One cannot have a relationship with God as long as one thinks that there is something in oneself which makes one deserve God's friendship—or for that matter, a genuine relationship with another human being on such terms. ...God never withdraws from the just, no matter what, no matter how deep the frustration, the bitterness, the darkness, the confusion, the pain.38

Elihu identified himself with Job. He was a fellow sufferer, not an observer (33:6).39 He helped Job realize that a relationship with God is not founded on nor maintained by his insistence on loyalty, purity, or righteousness, but is wholly of God's grace. Elihu did not see the primary basis of Job's suffering as sin, though he did not minimize Job's move toward sin in the dialogue (e.g., 34:36-37; 35:16). Among other things suffering, Elihu said, was a preventive measure to keep Job from perpetuating a sinful, false theology. God's sovereign control and freedom of action over the affairs of Job's life were not restricted by a theological system of retribution/recompense, but were acts of grace and

36 Lawson, When All Hell Breaks Loose, 220.
38 Ibid.
39 "Elihu appeared on the scene. . . . He confesses that he, too, is involved. He admits that Job's problem is humanity's problem and he realizes that Job's question is basically the same as his own. In contrast to Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, who rejected Job, Elihu identifies with him and speaks to him out of inner solidarity" (Henri J. M. Nouwen, "Living the Questions: The Spirituality of the Religion Teacher," Union Seminary Quarterly Review 32 [Fall 1976]: 21). Also see Marvin Tate, "The Speeches of Elihu," Review & Expositor 68 (Fall 1971): 490; and Gordis, "Elihu the Intruder," 62-63.
mercy. God therefore rewards the righteous in grace, not because “of some human action seeking a deserved response." Job was never the same after his contact with Elihu.

The three counselors intensified their pressure on Job to accept the traditional doctrine of retribution/recompense, thus inflicting greater mental suffering on Job. Acting unknowingly as agents of Satan's philosophy, the three friends increased the suffering of an already hurting man. However, even though Job found inconsistencies with the application of the doctrine, he shared the view of the friends that the world is based on a reward-and-punishment scheme. This position only added to his frustration.

This quid pro quo premise was contested by Elihu and shown to be without substance. He prepared Job for God's response to the debates and Job's ultimate submission to His sovereignty. Elihu brought "perspective, clarity, empathy, compassion, and concrete help," thereby preparing Job for God's words.

**GOD'S SPEECHES TO JOB**

Speaking out of a windstorm, God began by charging Job with darkening His counsel by "words without knowledge" (38:2; as Elihu had said twice [34:35; 35:16]). God did not address Job's suffering directly during this discourse, nor did He answer Job's attacks on His justice. After attempting to find answers to unanswerable problems, Job and his friends were now forced to return to God. God spoke of His sovereignty and omnipotence as demonstrated in the creation of the earth, the sea, the sun, the underworld, light and darkness, the weather, and the heavenly bodies (38:4-38). Animate creation testifies of God's sovereign power and providential compassion: the lion (vv. 39-40), the raven (v. 41), the mountain goat and the deer (39:1-4), the donkey (39:5-8), the ox (39:9-12), the ostrich (39:13-18), the horse (39:19-25), the hawk (39:26), and the eagle or vulture (39:27-30). Then He said to Job, "Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer it" (40:2). Of course Job could not respond to God's remarks (40:3-5).

The storm motif continued in the second speech (40:6). Job 40:8-14 presents the power of God versus the power of man. God

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40 Lawson, When All Hell Breaks Loose, 220.
41 Johnson, Out of the Whirlwind, 30-60.
affirmed His justice without defending or explaining it. God said, in essence, that He is and always will be just and fair to His creatures. God alone—not Job, nor the three friends, and certainly not Satan—administers and regulates justice. "The ode to the behemoth" follows, in which God's own wisdom poetry stresses His power in opposition to that of man or Satan (40: 15-24). The second poem (chap. 41), "the ode to the leviathan," represents the same essential principles. What the behemoth and the leviathan represent is contested in scholarly circles, but the message is clear: Since man has no power over these creatures, he can find strength and power only in God. God is sovereign, omnipotent, just, loving, and perfectly righteous.44

God did not tell Job to repent so that his pain would be explained, or that he would be vindicated, or that his prosperity would be restored. Instead, God brought Job to a face-to-face meeting with Himself. What did Job learn from this encounter?

Perhaps the first thing he discovered concerned the mistaken reason for Job's quest. The consuming passion for vindication suddenly presented itself as ludicrous once the courageous rebel stood in God's presence. By maintaining complete silence on this singular issue which had brought Job to a confrontation with his maker, God taught his servant the error in assuming that the universe operated according to a principle of rationality. Once that putative principle of order collapsed before divine freedom, the need for personal vindication vanished as well, since God's anger and favor show no positive correspondence with human acts of villainy or virtue. Job's personal experience had taught him that last bit of information, but he had also clung tenaciously to an assumption of order. Faced with a stark reminder of divine freedom, Job finally gave up this comforting claim, which had hardly brought solace in his case.45

Then Job repented of his misconception of God, not of any alleged sin on which his three friends had focused.46 Still, God

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44 Zuck comments, "The behemoth and leviathan have many similarities, so if one is an actual animal, then the other probably is also. As discussed earlier, in the ancient Near East both animals were symbols of chaotic evil. . . . Man cannot subdue single-handedly a hippopotamus or a crocodile, his fellow creatures (40:15). Nor can man conquer evil in the world, which they symbolize. Only God can do that. Therefore Job's defiant impugning of God's ways in the moral universe-as if God were incompetent or even evil—was totally absurd and uncalled for" (Zuck, "Job," 772-73). Also see Roy B. Zuck, Job, Everyman's Bible Commentary (Chicago: Moody, 1978), 180.


46 "His emotional world suddenly assumes a different form. The clouds of darkness are dispersed. A feeling of infinite confidence in the world and its Divine Leader arises in his soul and he laughs at the thousand questions, the hungry
commended Job, because even in the face of doubt and pressure from false theology, he maintained a personal relationship with Him and brought his doubts directly to Him. Therefore Satan's hypothesis (1:9-11; 2:3-4) was proven false. Job finally rejected human approaches, the approaches of tradition, logic, and all wisdom that was foreign to what he learned about God and himself. All attempts to explain God and His actions, either logically, historically, or, traditionally, failed. Job was left with God and God alone. Job's prosperity was returned only after everyone involved understood that all blessing comes by God's grace alone, not because of an individual's piety nor because of accepting a retribution/recompense theology.

CONCLUSION

While God is just, it is wrong to assume that the fallen world, under the rulership of Satan, is fair. The failure of traditional wisdom to answer Job's complaint reveals that the world operates by the plan of a fallen being, and only by a personal relationship with God can fallen humanity find meaning and purpose within the injustices of the world. Satan,Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, and to some extent Job wrongly assumed that punishment of the wicked and reward of the righteous in this life is a fixed doctrine. But this limits God's freedom. For example in retribution/recompense theology, rain was often seen as a reward, or if rain were withheld that was viewed as punishment. Here, however, "the phenomenon is shown not to be a vehicle of morality at all-the moral purpose ascribed to it just does not exist (38:25-27)," Rain falls by the grace of God on both the righteous and wicked (Matt. 5:45).

Is it not conceivable that God wanted to show that neither man's piety nor his sin affects how God administers His plan? Did He not then, and does He not now, administer that plan by grace? As Tsevat wrote, "Job behaved piously throughout, but his behavior had, in the narrated time of 1:13-31:40, no consequences compatible with the accepted idea of reward and punishment." His hope had been in the positive results of a false doctrine, while his friends had extolled the negative aspects of that same doctrine. First Elihu (chaps. 32-37) and then God (chaps. 38-41) wolves with burning eyes, and they disappear from his soul" (Chaim Zhitlowsky "Job and Faust," in Two Studies in Yiddish Culture, ed. Percy Matenko [Leiden: Brill, 1968], 152).

47 Tsevat, "The Meaning of the Book of Job," 100,
48 Ibid., 104.
stated that these misplaced hopes of retribution/recompense have no place in the divine economy. In fact in his final replies (40:3-5; 42:2-3, 5-6) "Job acknowledges this fact and is now prepared for a pious and moral life uncluttered by false hopes and unfounded claims." 49

This is not to say that the Book of Job teaches that a person has no obligation to moral and righteous living nor to a commitment to truth and justice in the face of sin and evil. What it does say, at least in large part, is that the believer has an obligation to examine his motivation in coming to and serving God, especially during times of trial and suffering. Furthermore the Book of Job does not support the mistaken idea that all suffering is for discipline or that suffering always results from sin and evil. God does discipline, teach, guide, and direct through suffering, but He cannot be manipulated by a manmade system of blessing and cursing—a system negatively called the theology of retribution/recompense or positively labeled the theology of prosperity. God is not obligated to man under any conditions. Once this is understood, believers are free to examine their suffering on the basis of God's grace. All saints share in the "fellowship of his sufferings" (Phil. 3:10). "That the Lord Himself has embraced and absorbed the undeserved consequences of all evil is the final answer to Job and to all the Jobs of humanity. As an innocent sufferer, Job is the companion of God." 50

The question, "Why do the righteous suffer?" cannot be clarified by only one answer. The many reasons given in Scripture for personal suffering 51 must all be examined in light of God's

49 Ibid.
50 Andersen, Job: An Introduction and Commentary, 73.
51 The most common examples are these: (1) Suffering is used to test and teach (Wilkinson and Boa, Talk Thru the Old Testament, 1:145). The focus is on what Job learned from suffering, not suffering itself. Suffering therefore teaches believers to look to future glory, to be obedient, to learn patience, to be sympathetic to others who suffer, to live a life of faith, to understand God's gracious purposes, to abide in Christ, to pray, to be sensitive to sin, to love God, to draw closer to the Scriptures, to learn contentment, and more (George Washington Oestreich, "The Suffering of Believers under Grace" [Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1944], 42). (2) Some hold that no answer is given to the problem of undeserved suffering. God is so great that if an answer were given, one could not understand it (David M. Howard, How Come, God? Reflections from Job about God and Puzzled Man [Philadelphia: Holman, 1972], 114). (3) Others state that the sufferer is honored by God to "demonstrate the meaning of full surrender" and to demonstrate the New Testament principle of Romans 8:28 (Archer, The Book of Job, 18). (4) Suffering is given for the purpose of preventing one from becoming arrogant (2 Cor. 12:7-10). (5) Suffering demonstrates that God is absolutely sovereign and can do with His creatures whatever He pleases (Parsons, "A Biblical Theology of Job 38:1-42:6," 151), with focus on the "sovereign grace of God and man's response of faith and submis-
Job was righteous because he had a grace relationship with the Righteous One, not because he had earned it. Job responded with humility and godly fear of God's sovereignty (42:1-2), he acknowledged God's inscrutability (v. 3), reflected on His superiority (v. 4), refocused on God's intimacy (v. 5), and repented of serving God from wrong motivation (v. 6).52 So why did God put Job through all of his suffering? Primarily it was to reveal Himself to Job. . . . Through this interrogation, God has taught Job that He alone created everything—the heavens and the earth, and all that is in them—and He alone controls all that He created. He alone has the right to do with His own as He pleases. He is under no obligation to explain His actions to His creation. He alone is sovereign and unaccountable to anyone.53 However, the purpose of the Book of Job should not be limited to an expression of God's sovereignty. Can a community of suffering saints find other answers and applications here? Yes, because Job's struggle and ultimate triumph gives those who suffer much more to apply. The following sixteen truths may be gained from the Book of Job.

1. God is not to be limited to a preconceived notion of retribution/recompense theology.
2. Sin is not always the basis for suffering.
3. Accepting false tenets about suffering can cause one to blame and challenge God.

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52 Lawson, When All Hell Breaks Loose, 245-48.
53 Ibid., 240.
5. Satan is behind this false concept and delights in using it to afflict the righteous.

6. The devil's world is unfair and unjust, and even though people may misunderstand the ways of God and the "why's" of life, having a personal relationship with God is the only way one can know justice.

7. Life is more than a series of absurdities and unexplainable pains that simply must be endured. Instead life for believers is linked with God's unseen purpose.

8. People do not always know all the facts, nor is such knowledge necessary for living a life of faith.

9. God's wisdom is above human wisdom.

10. God's blessings are based solely on grace, not on a traditional, legalistic formula.

11. Suffering can be faced with faith and trust in a loving, gracious God even when there is no immediately satisfying logical reason to do so.

12. God does allow suffering, pain, and even death, if they best serve His purposes.

13. Prosperity theology has no place in God's grace plan.

14. Suffering can have a preventive purpose.

15. The greatest of saints struggle with the problem of undeserved suffering and will continue to do so.

16. Because God's people are intimately related to Him, suffering is often specifically designed to glorify God in the unseen war with Satan.

Satan, who attacked Job in Job 1-2, was silenced in chapter 42 because Job's response (42:1-6) proved that God's confidence in him was not unfounded (1:8; 2:3). Though God needs no vindication, the Book of Job shows that undeserved suffering, accepted and borne by a child of God, does in a sense vindicate God's grace plan for His saints. "True wisdom, like God, defies human reason."54 Therefore true wisdom defies the wrong concepts of traditional wisdom, and, when properly applied by God's people during undeserved suffering, it becomes a living demonstration of God's grace and a believer's faith. "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees Thee" (42:5).