HEBREW EXEGESIS OF JOB

by

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PART I: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


PART II: INTRODUCTION TO JOB

Our introduction will examine issues that are normally discussed under the subject of special introduction. This will focus on areas such as the title, authorship and date, location, literary composition, ancient Near Eastern wisdom and Job, message, canonicity, and text.

I. Title

A. The Title in Manuscripts and Selected Versions

MT: בִּיָּא, “Job”
LXX: Ιωβς, “Job”
V: Liber Iob, “The Book of Job”

B. The History of the Name Job

1. Different appearances in second millennium B.C.
   a. A-ja-ab—from Tell el Amarna Letter #256
   b. Ha-a-ia-bu-um-in—in Mari documents
   c. A-ia-ib—in the Alalakh tablets
   d. ‘ybn—in Egyptian Exegetation Texts

2. Different etymologies
   a. ‘ayya-‘abun—from בִּיָּא + נ = בִּיָּא נ; Albright holds this understanding of the name. It appears in an Egyptian list of Palestinian chiefs (JAOS 74 [1954]: 225f., 232).
b. ‏אַבָּא‏ is an Arabic term meaning, “he who turns to God” (Ewald).

c. ‏אָבָא‏ is related to ‏אֵֽבָּא‏ in Genesis 36:33. The context in this passage is dealing with Esau’s genealogy. It is also used for our protagonist in the pseudepigraphal work the Testament of Job (Meyer).

d. Gordis relates the name Job to a previously existing Hebrew name, which was a passive participial noun from the verb ‏בָּא‏, “to hate” (Gordis, The Book of Job, pp. 10–11). Other examples of this are:
1) ‏ליָא‏, “someone born”
2) ‏כָּאָב‏, “one who is drunk” and hence a “drunk”
3) ‏נָא‏, “one who is hated”

II. Authorship and Date

As we examine Job’s authorship and date we should notice that precise information is not available for drawing firm conclusions. The data is generally derived from circumstantial evidence.

A. Authorship

Neither the book of Job nor the other 65 books of the canon specify who the author was. So speculation on this is completely circumstantial. We can say that the author appears to have been an Israelite since some form of the divine name (Yahweh) was used in the book 25 times in the prologue, divine speeches, and epilogue. One of these is found in Job’s mouth in the prologue, 1:22. The name is found only once in the dialogue (3–37), 12:9. Since Job only uses the name twice (1:22 and 12:9), we can say that he was familiar with it; however, based on the absence of any Israelite records claiming him as a Jew (in fact it is usually the opposite), we can infer that he was not a Jew. The fact that neither the friends nor Elihu use the name may indicate that they were not Jews; however, these are not absolute conclusions. The fact that the author uses the divine name 23 times suggests that he was a Jew.

B. Date

When evaluating the date of Job, we must differentiate between the date of the events and the date for the book’s composition. These will briefly be examined.

1. Date of the events in the book fit in with the first half of the second millennium B.C.
   a. Names fit in with the first half of the second millennium B.C. W. F. Albright has done much work to show that names such as Zophar, Bildad, and Eliphaz are in this period.
   b. Job resembles other ANE literature from this same period.
   c. Sabaeans and Chaldeans were marauding bands in prologue. This appears to be a time before they became a sedentary population.
   d. Job reflects patriarchal practices. For example, Job as the head of the house offered sacrifices; Job’s wealth was reckoned in livestock (1:3, 42:12) like Abraham (Gen 12:16, 13:2) and Jacob (Gen 30:43; 32:5).
2. Date of the writing for the book
   There are six different views (at times these are associated with specific individuals as
the case is with Moses and Solomon).

a. In patriarchal days
   Some would say that Job himself wrote this book. This is usually offered on a
popular/preaching level (Dr. Smith at Grace Theological Seminary talked about Job
writing it but his field was not Joban studies) by conservative scholars (though some
conservative scholars such as Archer talk about a pre-Mosaic writing without
claiming that Job was the author). The major reason for this suggestion is to solve the
transmission problem. However, we have the same issue with the primeval and
patriarchal narratives in Genesis. How did Moses receive all of this information. In
addition, the Book of Job is written as if Job was an ancient man and it is very
interesting to observe that very few Jewish scholars have opted for this.

b. By Moses
   This view was held by some early rabbis (B. Baba Bathra, 14b, 15a) and some
Church Fathers. This or a pre-Mosaic writing have also been suggested by Archer.
This has been maintained based upon items such as:
   1) Job follow the Pentateuch in Syriac version of OT.
   2) From Qumran, only Job and the Pentateuch are found in a palaeo-Hebrew script.

c. During the days of Solomon
   This view was held by some early rabbis, Gregory Nazianzen (death c. A.D. 390),
Martin Luther, Haevernick, Keil, Delitzsch, and Young.
   Support has been drawn from this:
   1) Solomon’s age was a cosmopolitan era.
   2) The emphasis placed on דֶּאֶּעֲלָשׁ in Job fits in well with the wisdom literature
      movement during Solomon’s era.

d. During the reign of Manasseh
   This period was a time of social disaster. This is seen as being parallel with Job.

e. In Jeremiah’s day
   This period had a time of social disaster. This is seen as being parallel with Job.

f. During Babylonian exile or postexilic era
   Support for this is generally drawn from these:
   1) Reflects captivity and suffering
   2) Analogy of suffering servant in so-called Deutero-Isaiah
   3) Satan is late.

Against this data the following should be noted:
1) Job was not suffering because of any sin that he had committed, Israel was.
2) Job was not a national servant (as the suffering servant was in Isaiah 40–55)
3) If so-called Deutero-Isaiah is early (and it is), then the validity in the analogy with Deutero-Isaiah breaks down.
4) Job’s suffering was not redemptive in nature as was the suffering servant in Isaiah 52:13–53:12.
5) If written late, would this book have been accepted into the Jewish canon since there was such a heavy national emphasis (N.B. if Job was from an Edomite background, this late date is very questionable because of Jewish animosity against the Edomites).

III. Location
The most prevalent locations have been Hauran and Edom.

A. Hauran
This is south of Damascus. Andersen and Rowley hold this view. There are three reasons for this view.

1. There are some Aramaic contentions; cf. the use of Uz in Gen 10:22–23; 22:21.
2. According to Josephus, there is an Arabic and Byzantine tradition supporting this.
3. This could explain the Aramaic influence on the book.

B. Edom
This has been located in a region southeast of the Dead Sea; Dhorme, Gordis, and Harrison hold this. There are four reasons for this view.

1. Uṣ is the son of an Edomite chieftain, Dishan (Gen 36:28).
2. Uṣ is parallel with Edom in Lamentations 4:21.
3. The geographical names of the places associated with Job’s three friends are of an apparent Edomite provenance (note also Eliphaz’s name may also be of Edomite origination, he was the son of Esau according to Genesis 36:4).
   a. Têmân (Eliphaz in 2:11) was the son of Eliphaz in Genesis 36:11. This is a well-known district in Arabia (see Obad 9 and Jer 49:27).
   b. ûaḥ (Bildad in 2:11) is the name of a son of Abraham by Keturah, Genesis 25:2 = 1 Chronicles 1:32.
   c. Naʿāmâ (Zophar in 2:11) is the name of a female descendant of Cain, Genesis 4:22.
4. Edomites were known for their wisdom literature.

C. In concluding this, we should notice that the arguments on either side are somewhat circumstantial, thus any conclusion must be maintained with this in mind.

IV. Literary Composition
In looking at this subject we will examine the language of the book of Job, its authenticity, structure, and genre.

A. Language of Job
Because of the complexities of the language such as the variations from classical Hebrew and the over one hundred *hapax legomena* found in Job, there have been many discussions on this subject. Is the book a translation from another language or is it some Hebrew dialect?

1. Translation
   Is our extant Hebrew text a translation from another language? Supposedly the deviations from standard Hebrew are best explained as deriving from another Semitic language. Some of the suggestions have been these:

   a. Arabic (Guillaume)
   b. Aramaic (Tur-Sinai)
   c. Edomite (Pope)—Pope has justified this on the basis of the Edomite notoriety for wisdom (Pope, p. XLIV).

   **PROBLEM:** If any of these are accepted, we must admit then that we do not have the language from the original preserved. In this case, we will never confidently be able to say that we have an accurate representation of the original for Job.

2. Genuine Hebrew
   To explain the language peculiarities, some have suggested that this is a variation of Jerusalem Hebrew. It has been identified as either Ephramite or Transjordanian Hebrew.

   a. Ephramite—this is a northern dialect; it is based on similarities between the Hebrew of Job and Phoenician and Aramaic (Freedman, “Orthographic Peculiarities,” pp. 35–44; see also Andersen, pp. 56–61).
   b. Transjordan—this is based on affinities with Akkadian and/or Arabic influence (Harrison, p. 1023; see also Newell [1983], p. 2).
   c. The first two cannot absolutely be proven; however, it is best to see this as genuine Hebrew whose author and participants in the book were cosmopolitan in their perspectives. Hartley has summarized this view: “The style of the book of Job suggests that the poet probably came from a region outside of Jerusalem; therefore his Hebrew was a dialect different from Jerusalem Hebrew and may have been very close to Aramaic. Further, the poet most likely had traveled much and was multilingual. As an artist he no doubt enriched the vocabulary of his poem to capture nuances and to communicate subtle tones as he sought to grapple with the gravest human question, suffering. Since there were multiple dialects of these Northwest Semitic languages in a close geographical area, most people would know more than one dialect and thus would have little trouble understanding a presentation of this work” (*ISBE*, rev. ed., s.v. “Job,” p. 1065).

B. Authenticity of Job
   When we are dealing with the subject of a book’s authenticity, we are using the term authenticity to denote the work’s genuineness as a product of the original Joban author. There are perhaps more complex critical problems associated with this book than any other Old Testament work (*ABD*, s.v., “Job, Book of,” by James L. Crenshaw, 3:860). These
problems are associated with these: the relationship of the prologue-epilogue to the speeches, the abbreviated third cycle, the placement of chapter 28, the Elihu speeches, and the Yahweh speeches.

1. The relationship of the prologue-epilogue to the speeches.

The prologue is found in 1:1–2:13 and the epilogue in 42:7–17. Early commentators noticed a tension between the patient nature of Job in the prologue and the defiant Job in the poetic section. Further, Job is commended in the epilogue but in the God speeches he has reasons to repent. These tensions have motivated some scholars to see an original smaller work contained in the prosaic section and a later development of this in the poetic section by a literary genius. A rather common view among critics is that Job is a hero of a Volksbuch, “folktale.” Either the writer of this epic substratum directly borrowed from this folk sage (so Wellhausen) or this material is taken directly from this Volksbuch (so Duhm; for support, see Sarna). With this type of understanding the hero goes back to the days of the patriarchs. Biblical support is drawn from Ezekiel 14:14, 20 where Job is placed alongside Noah and the Ugaritic legendary hero Daniel. Job became the hero of this folktale. Sometime during first millennium B.C., a skilled poet wrote his own version of the dialogue between Job and his three friends. This is the central section of the extant book. The poem on wisdom (Job 28), the Elihu speeches, and Yahweh’s speeches were added later either by this poet or by some later redactor.

In the twentieth century there have been some modifications of this view by leading critical scholars. Some of the more conservative variations are these:

a. Dhorme (pp. 1xi–cx) argues for the same writer being responsible for the prose framework and poetic dialogue. A later redactor added the Elihu speeches.

b. Snaith views one author writing the book in three stages. The writer’s inspiration was derived from the Babylonian Job (Ludlul Bel Nemeqi).
   1) 1st stage: shortened prologue and epilogue, chapters 3, 29–31, 38:1–42:6
   2) 2nd stage: the friends’ speeches and Job’s response to them (4–27)
   3) 3rd stage: chapters 28, 32–37

c. Gordis has the same essential view as Snaith except that he maintains that the book was written in two stages. The writer’s work is derived from a legendary hero. The Elihu speeches emanate from the second stage.

2. The abbreviated third cycle

The first two cycles of speeches are arranged in a symmetrical fashion. The first two cycles of speakers with the appropriate chapters are arranged like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First cycle</th>
<th>Second cycle</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Eliphaz, 4–5</td>
<td>1. Eliphaz, 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Job, 6–7</td>
<td>2. Job, 16–17</td>
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</tbody>
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When this is compared with the third cycle (22–27), what is significant is that Bildad’s speech is only six verses in length and it lacks an introduction and conclusion. Especially more significant in this third cycle is that Zophar never speaks at all. It has been generally understood that the third cycle either has material that is out of order or that some material has been lost (Eissfeldt, p. 464). A liberal Jewish commentator with fairly conservative views on the text of Job, Robert Gordis, has been compelled by this lacunae to reassign part of Job’s speech in 27:13–23 to Zophar (Book of Job, p. 536). Some of this data has also prompted a commentator as fairly conservative as Hartley to rearrange the text. Because of the brevity of Bildad’s third speech, he expands it by adding 27:13–23. Many commentators sees Job’s remarks in 27:13–23 as being inappropriate for him but more appropriate for the friends (Job, pp. 25–26).

3. The placement of the wisdom poem in chapter 28
Because of its more abstract character as opposed to the passionate style of Job’s preceding speeches, the passage does not seem to fit (Rowley, Book of Job, p. 179). In addition, it has been maintained that the theology of Job in chapter 28 asserting that wisdom is too high for man and can only be found with God makes the content of the God speeches unnecessary (Eissfeldt, p. 458).

4. The Elihu speeches
Many OT scholars see the Elihu speeches as a disruptive and secondary interpolation. This position has been set forth because Elihu is never addressed in the dialogue or in the epilogue (Eissfeldt, p. 457). In addition, Elihu appears to interrupt Job’s request for God to respond to him in chapter 31 (Childs, Introduction, p. 530). Furthermore, there are significant stylistic linguistic differences between the Elihu material and the rest of Job (Driver and Gray, 1:xlii–xlv). Additionally, Elihu quotes Job verbatim and calls him by name as if he is working from a manuscript. Finally, Elihu makes no significant contribution to the book (Childs, Introduction, p. 530).

5. The Yahweh speeches
The authenticity of God’s two speeches has also been questioned. Why is it necessary for God to speak a second time when Job capitulates at the end of God’s first speech? Also does not Yahweh spoil the point of the Satan’s test of Job’s character by appearing to him or has the conclusions from the test already been demonstrated? Furthermore, “does Yahweh not attempt to ‘bully’ Job into submission just as Job had cynically predicted (i.e., Yahweh forces the issues back to the question of his power, not his justice)” (ABD, s.v., “Job, Book of,” by James L. Crenshaw, 3:861).

6. As far as the historicity of the book is concerned, we either have to take the book of Job as being completely true or as being a parable. The parabolic view, though held by some Jewish scholars such as Maimonides, seems unlikely in light of the reference to Job as a historical person in Ezekiel 14:14, 20. It seems to me that we do not have a middle-of-the-road position as the Volksbuch position would suggest since this is unparalleled in
biblical literature and allows for an embellishment of historical data. Consequently, we must understand that the book of Job reflects that there was an actual historical person named Job.

If we accept the historical integrity about Job, then it would also follow that we accept the historical integrity for the other participants in the book. This is to say there were three historical figures that came to console the suffering hero. Because of Job’s curse of his day of birth and lament in chapter three, his three friends were forced to contend with Job’s complaint. When the friends were unable to cogently respond to Job, they became quiet. This provided the occasion for the young, brash Elihu to speak. As Elihu was speaking God appeared in the midst of a storm and spoke to Job.

This raises another question about the book’s authenticity. Do we have the actual words, *ipsissima verba*, of Job and the other participants or an accurate representation of what each participant said, *ipsissima vox*? Since it is hard to conceive of someone speaking in such a highly artistic manner as Job was when he was suffering so greatly, it would seem that we have the actual message of each speaker. This would also be true of the friends of Job and Elihu when they were in the heat of a debate. This would have some correspondence with some of the issues associated with the synoptic problem in the Gospels. This allows the Joban author to shape his work to effectively communicate his message. Two items control the literary shaping: the historical material and the author’s accurate theological interpretation of this material (for more information, see my dissertation, pp. 236–39). As such, the book of Job is a historically and theologically accurate representation of this event that took place in Job’s life. The authenticity of this work will be further corroborated by the following presentation of the book’s structure.

C. The Literary Structure

![Diagram of the Literary Structure](chart.png)

(RThis chart has been taken from Newell [1983], p. 90; see also the use of this analysis as applied to 1 Kings 22:1–38 by Longman [*Literary Approaches*, pp. 101–111].)
D. Literary Genre

Broadly speaking the genre of Job is a contemplative form of wisdom literature. As a piece of wisdom literature, it stresses man’s finite, limited nature and his need to depend on God as the ultimate source of true wisdom. Osborne’s definition of genre is the one that we will in Job. Genre is “a grouping of literary works based, theoretically, upon both outer form (specific meter or structure) and also upon inner form (attitude, tone, purpose—more crudely, subject and audience)” (Osborne, pp. 4–5). I have tried to follow Longman’s distinction of labeling a whole work as genre, and subsections within this genre as form. So for example Job 3 has the form of a complaint, and Psalm 3 has the genre of lament (see Longman, “Form Criticism,” p. 50).

1. Use of Various Forms

The Joban author predominantly used the following literary forms.

- **a. True story**—this takes into account the narrative framework in 1:1–2:13; 42:7–17
- **e. Lament**—7:1–21
- **f. Lawsuit**—13:1–27
- **g. Oath of innocence**—31:1–40
- **h. Apology**—32:6–22
- **i. Challenge to rival**—38:1–40:2; 40:6–41:26

This brief overview represents the various literary forms used in the various pericopes of this work. The Joban author uses various literary forms in each of these pericopes. For example, with Job’s complaint in chapter three, two different forms are used: curse in vv. 3–10 and lament in vv. 11–26. Eliphaz’s first speech can be broadly categorized as a disputation speech; however, this disputation speech contains wisdom saying in 4:3–11, 5:3–7, 17–27; hymnic material in 5:8–13; and a vision report in 4:12–16 (for more information on this, see Hartley, pp. 37–43, Murphy, pp. 14–45, and Westermann’s *The Structure of the Book of Job*).

2. Joban Genre

- **a. Lawsuit** (Gemser, Scholnick, Habel [1985, pp. 54–57])—this is supposedly a lawsuit initiated by Job against God. This understanding has come about because of the legal terminology. The problem is that it does not do justice to the work as a whole.

- **b. Lament** (Westermann)—Westermann has maintained that the Joban author took two genres and combined them. Consequently, the Book of Job is a compilation of a lament and disputation genre with the lament being the dominant form in Job. In analyzing why he maintains that Job is lament, we should notice that he makes a
sharp distinction between wisdom literature and lament, almost as if they were mutually exclusive. His reason for this conclusion is that Job contains thoughts about suffering and lament (=mourning). For example, Job’s lament in Job 3 is not his reflections on suffering but suffering itself. Against this, we must ask ourselves why could the Joban author not integrate wisdom literature with lament? Why can suffering not be a part of wisdom? Perhaps, the author’s point is to have his audience to reflect on suffering. At this point, I think this distinction is too artificial. I would not maintain that the genre or even primary genre of Job is lament. My rationale for this is drawn from my understanding of lament in the psalms. In the Psalms there is a triangular relationship in lament: God, the enemy (which could be disease, death, physical danger, persecution, or a personal foe), and the sufferer. In Job God is the supposed problem (the apparent enemy).

c. Complaint dialogue (Crenshaw, Fries)—This is a variation of a philosophic debate; it is similar to a disputation or contest literature of the ancient Near East (see Parsons, “Literary Features,” p. 214).

d. Forerunner of a Greek Tragedy (Kallen)—This type of genre like a lament deals with suffering, except it is more of a tragedy. The major problem with this is that this type of genre was nonexistent in early Hebrew literature.

e. Parable (Rabbi Simeon, 2nd century A.D.)—A parable is generally understood as being a shorter story designed to teach a spiritual lesson. Job is far too complicated for this.

f. Epic History—Andersen has labeled Job as epic history. Now an epic is “a long narrative poem in a dignified style about the deeds of a traditional or historical hero or heroes” (Webster); for example, poems like the Iliad or the Odyssey are considered classical epics (they have certain formal elements); an example of a literary epic is Milton’s Paradise Lost (it has structural characteristics like an epic); an example of a national epic is Beowulf (it expresses ideals and traditions of a people). Andersen has likened this to the stories of Moses, David, and Ruth. These would be parallel to our national epics. There are four elements with this: (a) the facts are related tersely; (b) the characters’ actions are described objectively; (c) the author refrains from making moral judgments; (d) the author focuses upon speeches which reflect the problems and faith of the participants in the story (pp. 36–37). The major difference between Job and these other biblical stories is that Job is longer and more intense. However, I think Andersen’s genre does have some merit.

g. Comedy—J. W. Whedbee has maintained that Job is a comedy in “its perception of incongruity and irony; and . . . its basic plot line that leads ultimately to the happiness of the hero” (“The Comedy of Job,” Semeia 7 (1977): 1). David Robertson has argued for Job being an example of irony (The Old Testament and the Literary Critic, pp. 33–54). My problem is related to the use of the terms incongruity and irony as applied by Whedbee and Robertson. For example, Robertson maintains that God is the object of an “ironic joke” in Job 42:7 (p. 54). In reading these authors, it appears to me that
the term incongruity would be better replaced by inconsistency. If this was intended by the Joban author and understood by his audience, it is very difficult for me to see how this would have ever been included in the Canon since it makes God the object of the joke. However, the term comedy can be used with different nuances. Leland Ryken has defined a comedy as a u-shaped narrative, i.e., a story ending up where it started (*How to Read the Bible As Literature*, pp. 81–82). Job started prosperous and in a right relationship to God and he ends up in the same way. If this is all that is meant by comedy, then I have no problem with it. Outside of explaining the overall parameters, does it really explain the uniqueness of the Book of Job?

h. Joban genre—many have concluded with Pope that Job is a *sui generis*, a unique genre. This contains elements of a drama that involves a plot and conflict carried out through dialogue between two or more participants; however, in the Old Testament we do not have a drama strictly speaking because a drama is generally designed to be performed in a public enactment. However, it does have many of those type of elements; perhaps we might stay that this was carried out in the real life arena. As such, this is didactic in that it seeks to teach a message. This also indicates that it contains genuine history. It also has elements as we have in epics.

V. Ancient Near Eastern Wisdom and Job
Initially we will examined the Mesopotamian literature followed by the Egyptian literature dealing with innocent suffering. This will be followed by a comparison between these and the biblical book of Job.

A. Mesopotamian Literature

1. Ludlul Bel Nemeqi (=“I will praise the lord of wisdom”; see *ANET*, pp. 596–600), ca. 2000–1500 B.C.
This story is on four tablets. It is a monologue of a Babylonian in a high position. The name of this individual is Shubshi-meshre-Shakkan. He is a pious servant of Marduk who is both the author of his suffering and the author of his salvation. He is conscious of no misdeeds in his life. Tablet II deals with the problem of theodicy. Marduk restores this man’s fortunes and he praises Marduk.

The significance of this is to show how a noble had faced monumental afflictions and calamities and how Marduk subsequently restored him to health and prosperity.

2. The Babylonian Theodicy (see *ANET*, pp. 601–4), ca. 1000 B.C.
The story is divided into twenty-seven sections with eleven lines to a section. It contains a dialogue between a sufferer and his friend. The story laments the innocent who suffer in an unrighteous world.

3. Man and His God (see *ANET*, pp. 589–91), ca. 2000–1700 B.C.
This is supposedly a Sumerian variation of Job. The purpose seems to be to encourage people to have the proper attitudes to the apparently undeserved misfortunes of life. Sumerians were perplexed about the causes and remedies related to the problem of
suffering. The Sumerians believed that the misfortunes of life were the results of sinful ways of living. “The main thesis of our poet is that in cases of suffering and adversity, no matter how seemingly unjustified, the victim has but one valid and effective recourse, and that is to continually glorify his god and keep wailing and lamenting before him until he turns a favourable ear to his prayers.” This is a story about a man who was blessed with prosperity in every area of life, but one day suffering overwhelmed him. Instead of cursing his god, he humbled himself before his god and fervently prayed to his god. The result was that his god answered his prayer and delivered him from his misfortune (see Newell [1983], pp. 50–51).

4. Summation of Mesopotamian theology

a. Man was a slave of the capricious gods.

1) Man was weak and totally dependent upon the gods who decreed man’s destiny.
2) The decision of the assembly of the gods was final and man did not challenge their decisions.
3) Justice for mankind was a favor of the gods—very impersonal relationship existed between man and the gods in the third millennium B.C.; but in the second millennium B.C. this changed and there developed a more personal religion as is reflected by the personal god concept. (i) At first the personal god concept was one of an intermediary between the individual and more important deities who could influence the sun god in his decisions. (ii) As the personal god became more moralized, the idea of man’s justice became a right and not a favor of man.

b. As Mesopotamian religion became more personalized, justice became man’s right; he was no longer regarded as a slave with no rights. This was more a second millennium B.C. development that was an outgrowth of the personal god type influence on religion. The intent was to have a more personal religion.

1) Virtue and obedience would now be rewarded and sin and disobedience would result in punishment—divine retribution.
2) A further development was bargaining rights; if a man was not appropriately rewarded, he could withhold his religious service (Parsons, “Biblical Theology of Job 38:1—42:6,” pp. 14–17).

B. Egyptian Literature

1. The Admonitions of Ipu-wer (see ANET, pp. 441–44), present text is dated about 1350–1100 B.C., but it goes back between 2300–2050 B.C. Ipu-wer, about whom nothing is known except what is in the extant text, denounces the pharaoh for the anarchy in the land. This was written somewhere between the Old and Middle Kingdom but the extant manuscript is from the 19th and 20th dynasty.

2. A Dispute over Suicide (see ANET, pp. 405–7), end of 3rd millennium B.C.
This probably comes from the troubled time period between the Old and Middle Kingdom. This tale carries the argument between a man who is weary of life and his soul. Since he finds life unbearable, the man contemplates suicide. His soul vacillates, first agrees, then fears that suicide will entail the danger that the man will have no mortuary service from his survivors, then progresses an abandonment to a life of careless pleasures, and finally agrees to remain with the man in any case.

3. The Protests of the Eloquent Peasant (see ANET, pp. 407–10), ca. 2000 B.C.
This story is set in the 21st century B.C. during the reign of Neb-kau-Re Khety III, King of Heracleopolis. The theme of this relates to the duty of social justice. During this time the man of authority and position was asked to deal impartially with mankind. In this story this theme is place in a story setting and is given its dynamics by permitting a poor man to demand his rights.

4. The Instruction of King Amen-em-het (see ANET, pp. 418–19)
This text indicates the advice that Amen-em-het gave to his son Sesostiris I. Since Amen-em-het died around 1960 B.C., a problem is encountered for all the extant manuscripts of this come from 1500–1100 B.C. At this time period, the text was quite popular with schoolboys. The text reflects the pessimism and social idealism of an older king.

5. Summation of Egyptian theology

a. Man was not a slave of the gods in Egypt since the gods had delivered the world over to man.

1) Man lived in harmony with the cosmic order, Maat. Man contributed to this order.
2) Pharaoh, a god incarnate, was an intermediary. This was necessary because of the impersonal nature of their religion. Pharaoh had to maintain Maat and to live by it.

b. Man’s justice was a right.

1) Man had to conform to Maat. If he did, the gods blessed; if not, the gods punished.
2) As far as the juridical relationship between man and the gods was concerned, they had mutual claims on each other.

C. Comparisons Between Ancient Near Wisdom and the Biblical Job

1. In Job God is presented as being sovereign and transcendent to creation. This is in contrast with the ANE where the deities were aspects of creation, i.e., they were immanent.

2. In Job there is a different relationship between God and man.
a. In ANE an *impersonal relationship* existed between God and man (men had access to higher deities through lesser deities). In Job a personal relationship between God and man is presented via the theophany in Job 38–42.

b. In ANE the concept prevailed that the relationship between God and man was governed by the dogma of divine retribution. Job is a polemic against this.

c. Closely related to the preceding point, the relationship between god and man was regarded as a business transaction. This is also refuted in Job.

VI. Message

In this section we will briefly examine the various proposals followed by a presentation of our understanding of the book’s message.

A. Various suggestions

1. Theodicy (Andersen, MacKenzie, Laurence, Bullock, Besserman)— A theodicy is “a vindication of the justice of God in permitting evil to exist”; this is generally used to explain why God permits good people to suffer evil (s.v. “Theodicy” in *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, by Feinberg).

2. Polemic challenging the dogma of divine retribution (Driver, Dhorme, Pope, Hoffman)

3. Righteous men need suffering to grow (Harrison)

4. The presence of God given to righteous men in good and bad times (Rowley, pp. 19–21).

5. Proper conduct for a man who is suffering—devotion to God (Fohrer, in *EJ*, 10:123).

6. Proper relationship between God and man is grace (Parsons)


8. Man can bear suffering if he has a reverence for the mystery and miracle of life (Gordis, *God and Man*, pp. 149–56).

9. God’s freedom in administering justice in this world should produce in man a submissive faith.

B. Development of the Message of Job

Many interpreters have understood that the message of the book of Job is primarily dealing with the subject of the righteous suffering. However, this approach is myopic for the suffering Job is never told who was immediately responsible for his suffering nor the reason for his suffering. In dealing with the book’s message, it would be more precise to view Job’s suffering as a catalyst to explore the central concern of the book, viz., God’s administration of justice. This refers to God either blessing a person for living righteously, remunerative justice, or judging a person for living wickedly, retributive justice. In 1:1–5 Job is pictured as having a genuine righteousness with the consequential blessings of an ideal family, wealth, social prestige, and a good reputation. Job was living proof of God’s remunerative justice. However, in 1:6–2:10 Job’s life of blessing is quickly changed into one of severe suffering and this was for no apparent action that Job could have been held accountable (see 1:8, 2:3). This situation challenges Job’s understanding of this dogma of God’s administration of justice. Job wants another explanation of how the moral sphere of this life is governed. Even his friends also find their understanding challenged. However, they tenaciously cling to their interpretation of God’s administration of justice. We will
briefly examine the various misguided applications of God’s administration of justice followed by the divine interpretation of God’s administration of justice.

1. The Misguided Applications of God’s Administration of Justice
   Satan, Job’s friends, and Job have various interpretations of this subject. We will summarize each of these.

   a. God’s administration of justice is inherently flawed.
      This is the view of Satan. After having roamed the earth, Satan presents himself before God. God asks him in 1:8 if he had found anyone on earth as upright as Job. In response to this, Satan raises a question about God’s administration of justice. In 1:9–11 Satan reflects that if God would remove Job’s blessings, Job would curse God. This is to say, Job is righteous because God has rewarded him. The implication is that God’s system of justice does not promote genuine righteousness. Man serves God for His blessings and not for true devotion to God. With God’s permission, Satan then removes God’s blessings from Job. Job loses his ideal family (with the exception of his wife), wealth, social prestige, and even his reputation is questioned. Satan’s goal is to get Job to curse God. By doing this, Satan will demonstrate that God’s moral order has an intrinsic defect.

   b. God’s administration of justice is mechanically applied.
      Job’s three friends and Elihu share a common belief that God mechanically rewards and judges people for their actions. This was an immediate cause and effect understanding of God’s administration of justice. This is demonstrated by their acceptance of the corollary of retributive and remunerative justice. The corollary of the former is this: if one is suffering, he had to be living in sin; and the later: if one was prospering, he was living righteously. In each case the degree of results was directly proportional to one’s behavior. Prior to Job’s suffering, the friends viewed Job as living proof of the corollary of remunerative justice; however, after the extreme disasters that Job encountered, he was definitely living in extreme sin but apparently not extreme enough to have his life taken as his children’s lives had been (see 4:7–9; 8:3–4; 11:4–6). The three friends and Elihu agree that Job was suffering because of sin (see 4:7–9; 8:3–4; 11:4–6; 34:11–12). They also agree that God will reverse Job’s suffering if he presents his appeal to God or confesses his sin and lives righteously (5:17–27; 8:5–7; 11:13–20; 34:31–32). However, they disagree about the significance of Job’s suffering.

      1) Eliphaz assumes in his first speech that Job’s sin is minor and that he is basically an innocent man. In 4:3–6 he recognizes that Job is a blameless man who is suffering. This is a problem to his theology. His solution is that even one as righteous as Job will suffer deservedly at times, 4:17–19. He also assumes that Job’s suffering is minimal and may be quickly removed (4:7). He further postulates in 5:17–27 that God uses suffering for correction purposes.
      2) Bildad is convinced that God has appropriately administered justice to Job and his family. He views Job as being sinful and deservedly suffering but not so sinful that God had to immediately take his life as He had to do with his children, 8:2–4.
3) Zophar is convinced that Job is a hypocritical sinner. Since Job claims that he is clean in God’s sight (11:4) and he is greatly suffering, Job must be concealing sin. For Zophar, God’s retributive theology was not quid pro quo since God has mercifully overlooked a portion of Job’s sins (11:5–6). If the truth had been revealed, Job was a greater sinner than any of his friends could have imagined.

4) When the friends’ argumentation against Job becomes ineffective with them becoming silent, another participant, Elihu, appears in 32:1–37:24. Like Job’s three friends, Elihu is a defender of God’s justice. Because he also accepted its corollary, he assumed that Job was suffering because of sin (33:27; 34:11–12, 31–33, 37; 36:8–10). Though Eliphaz had postulated that God used suffering for purposes of correction, Elihu more thoroughly develops God instructional use of suffering in 33:19–28 and 36:8–12. For Elihu suffering was not only for retribution but also for correction.

c. God’s administration of justice is capriciously interpreted.

Until he had experienced his intense suffering, Job agreed with his friends about God’s moral order. However, he has changed his mind. Since he is living righteously yet suffering, he is confused and looking for other explanations as to how God administers justice. Job’s initial response to his calamities is a calm acceptance of these as God’s will for his life. After further prolonged reflection, he realizes that his understanding of the moral order of life has collapsed. We will summarize Job’s argumentation and then note his wrong accusations against God.

1) Summary of Job’s argument

In examining Job’s thought, we will organize this summary around the sequential development of his speeches.

a) Job’s complaint and his speeches from the first cycle

In his first speech in chapter 3 Job’s complaint provides the occasioning incident for the friends to speak. Job reacts to his situation by wishing that he had never been born. Since this wish is impossible, he pleads with God to kill him in his second speech (6:8). In Job’s third speech, he moves beyond his death wish and desires a declaration of innocence (9:2–3). In the heat of defending his reputation, Job accuses God of being hostile to him (9:8) and of oppressing him while smiling on the plans of the wicked (10:3). Because of God’s posture toward him, Job realizes that God will never give him what he feels is his right, viz., a declaration of innocence (9:14–20). Job’s thought develops further in that he feels that with an arbiter it might be possible for him to enter into litigation with God (9:32–35). Job’s desire for a court hearing with God grows stronger in his fourth speech for he requests a legal hearing with God before he dies (13:3, 16–19; 14:13–17).

b) Job’s speeches from the second cycle

In his fifth and sixth speeches, he again wishes that an impartial mediator would serve as his defense attorney before God (16:18–22; 19:25–27). Job is convinced of his innocence and is confident that God will vindicate him, even if
it is not in the present earthly sphere. However, Job’s conviction of his innocence prompts him to accuse God of having wronged him (19:6). In his seventh speech he ponders God’s system of justice in light of God permitting the wicked to live happy and long lives (21:7–26) and permitting them to even be buried with honor (21:27–34). Job is confused about God’s moral order. However, he is still convinced that he wants no part with the counsel of the wicked since they do not recognize that God is the ultimate source of their blessing (21:16).

c) Job’s speeches from the third cycle
In his eighth speech, Job observes some enigmas in God’s moral order (24:2–21). Yet Job is convinced God will rectify these enigmas (24:22–25). Job’s quest for the vindication of his integrity moves him in his ninth speech to declare that God has denied him of his justice (27:2). However, he subsequently balances this out by affirming that God will judge the wicked (27:13–23).

d) Job’s final speeches
In his tenth speech, Job presents a poem on wisdom. In this poem he states that man does not have sufficient wisdom to solve some of the problems in the world, only God has this type of wisdom (28:20–28). After reviewing his earlier state of blessing (29:1–25), he then ridicules those who have attacked him (30:1–15) and affirms that God has attacked him and refuses to respond to his requests (30:16–26). Job’s conviction of his innocence and of God’s justice compels him to take an oath of innocence in chapter 31. Job’s oath poses a problem for God’s moral order. If Job is innocently suffering, divine justice appears to be in error. In Job’s desire to go to court with God, he is attempting to approach God as an equal. Though Job believes that God does have a system of justice, he is in effect accusing God of using it capriciously.

2) Job’s wrong accusations against God
God accuses Job of speaking out of ignorance in 38:2, of making false accusations against Him in 40:2, and of discrediting His justice in 40:8. Because of these, we should understand that Job made a number of false accusations against God.


b) God was not taking care of other suffering people. This is to say, God was not doing His job as ruler since he allowed the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the needy to be oppressed by the wicked, 24:1–12.

c) By accusing God in this manner, though done in ignorance, and by desiring, consequently, to enter into litigation with God, Job was in effect passing judgment on God and, therefore, making himself out to be God’s equal (pride). In effect, Job was maintaining that God capriciously administered justice. In
response to this, there is only One who is able to speak *ex cathedra* on the administration of justice.

2. The Divine Interpretation of God’s Administration of Justice

Rather than responding to Job’s demand for a legal hearing, God appears in a storm. Rather than discussing Job’s innocence or how He administers justice, God overwhelms Job with questions about His creation and management of the world. In both speeches the LORD challenges Job’s anthropocentric view of the moral order of life and substantiates a theocentric perspective. Each speech will briefly be presented.

a. The LORD’s control of the universe is beyond anyone’s comprehension (38:2–40:2).

God initiates this speech with an accusation against Job in 38:2. The point of this is that Job has darkened the LORD’s counsel with words spoken in ignorance. The LORD concludes this speech with the same type of accusation in 40:2 where He questions Job concerning the validity of his desire to legally contend with Him. God is reflecting with each accusation that Job does not comprehend His plan and work.

In demonstrating His accusation about Job’s lack of wisdom, God raises a series of rhetorical questions. These can be broken down in a threefold manner: God’s creation of the world in 38:4–11, His sustenance of the world in 38:12–38, and His management of the animal kingdom most of which were undomesticated in 38:39–39:30. The point of these is to demonstrate that Job is unable to comprehend what God is doing because he is not God’s equal. God in His freedom as an all-wise and all-powerful Sovereign had created and is sustaining His creation. This is a God-centered world in contrast to the man-centered world and life view advocated by Job in his ignorance as well as his fellow wise men.

b. The LORD’s administration of justice is beyond anyone’s comprehension (40:7–41:34).

Like the first speech, God makes another accusation in 40:8 against Job. With this accusation Job is accused of having discredited the LORD’s justice, condemning God to justify himself. As such, the LORD’s last speech does relate to His administration of justice; but it is not in the manner that either Job or his friends had expected. After this accusation, the LORD challenges Job in 40:9–14 to take over God’s place and to execute retributive justice on the wicked. God then returns to continue questioning Job in reference to His control of the animal kingdom. His questions focus on two of the wildest animals in Job’s day, behemoth and leviathan. God uses both creatures analogously to demonstrate to Job that His administration of justice is beyond Job’s comprehension.

The LORD challenges Job to look at behemoth (possibly a hippopotamus or an elephant) in 40:15–24. The point is that Job himself could not readily control behemoth. God reminds Job in the middle of the speech, v. 19, that He has behemoth completely under His control. God concludes this speech with a challenge in v. 24 reminding Job of his inability to subdue behemoth. When we compare v. 24 with v. 19, God is stressing that Job was unable to capture behemoth (v. 24), yet God has him
completely under His control (v. 19). We should compare these two verses with vv.
8–14. If Job cannot govern behemoth, how could he hope to humiliate all the proud
ones of this earth (vv. 11–14). If he cannot do either, how can he question God’s
administration of justice (vv. 8–9). Thus Job should forget his request for vindication
and completely submit to the LORD and His control of this world.

The LORD challenges Job to subdue leviathan (crocodile) in 41:1–34. God reminds
Job in v. 10 that he was not fierce enough to arouse leviathan and, therefore, how
could he hope to come before God with His claim. This is developed further in v. 11
where God highlights that He owns everything. Because of this, God does not have to
respond to any created beings’ claim against Him. In vv. 33–34 God brings this
speech to a conclusion. Using personification, God describes leviathan as a unique
creature. As such leviathan had no equal on earth. Being fearless, no creature could
intimidate leviathan, v. 33. God further describes leviathan in v. 34 as looking down
on all other creatures. As such, he is king over all the haughty including Job since Job
could not approach him with a bridle (41:5). The a fortiori argument is this, if
leviathan is king over all the proud including Job, how much more so is his Creator,
the Sovereign Lord of the universe.

If Job can neither capture nor control behemoth nor leviathan, then how could he
hope to take God’s place in administering justice. God never tells Job how he
exercises justice. This was impossible since God’s control of the moral order of this
life was beyond Job’s creaturely comprehension. The LORD’s administration of
justice is beyond any created being’s understanding. Though Job does not have the
issue of justice explained, he does learn that this is too profound for him and that he
must submit to the Sovereign God who administers justice in perfect conformity with
His nature and plan.

3. Summation of the Message of Job

Because of God’s incomprehensible wisdom and incomparable power as reflected by
His creating and sustaining the world and its inhabitants, He is its sovereign who freely
administers justice correctly. Because this is a theocentric world, man must fearfully
submit to the LORD and His sovereign will.

VII. Canonicity

“The canonicity of Job has never been seriously questioned. Its position, however, has
fluctuated. In Protestant Bibles it falls after the historical works, which end with Esther, and
thus heads the poetical books: Job, Psalms, Proverbs. Cyril of Jerusalem and Epiphanius attest
this tradition, among others. Jerome preferred this order, and the Council of Trent established
it for the Vulgate. In the Hebrew Bible it appears in the third division, the writings or
Kethubhim; the order is Psalms, Job, Proverbs. The oldest tradition lists the books thus: Ruth,
Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, etc. The Syriac Bible places Job after
the Pentateuch in honor of the tradition that Moses was its author” (JSBE, rev. ed., s.v., “Job,”
by J. E. Hartley, 2:1064).

VIII. Text
The text of Job has been much debated in Joban studies. To this problem, we have many lexical and syntactical obscurities that make it difficult in some case to know whether the problem is textual or grammatical. Furthermore, the highly artistic nature of the poetry in the dialogues makes the problems even more difficult. In determining the original text, we may have difficulties in places. The Septuagint is not of much help since it contains only 5/6 of the MT and it is difficult to determine the Proto-LXX because of Origen’s Hexaplaric embellishments. Fortunately, Jerome made a direct translation from a Hebrew text. The only difficulty we encounter in using it is that Jerome also consulted rabbinic targum. However, it generally conforms to the MT. An Aramaic targum found in Cave 11 at Qumran (11QtgJob) is more a translation than a targum. It is fragmentary so it has limited value. There have also been some smaller fragments found at Qumran in Cave 2 that contains only 33:18–20 and three in Cave 4, which are also quite small. What is significant for us is that the Vulgate and 11QtgJob have remarkable similarities with our Hebrew manuscript (see Parsons, “Biblical Theology,” pp. 299–327). As Kissane has stated it: “The fidelity with which the text has been handed down to us is really remarkable, as the fewness of the emendations required testifies. It may be said with truth that the text has suffered much more at the hands of some modern critics than it had suffered throughout the ages of its history by the usual accidents of reproduction by scribes” (Kissane, p. xli).
PART III: EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF JOB

A. The Preliminary Conflict Generates Man’s Questioning of God’s Administration of Justice, 1:1–2:13.

In his introduction to the book of Job, the Joban author presents his material in alternating scenes. Following Clines we can accordingly view 1:1–2:13 in this manner (Job 1–20, p. 6; see also Hartley, p. 64):

1. On earth Job’s piety (1:1–5)
2. In heaven First dialogue of Yahweh and the Satan (1:6–12)
3. On earth Disasters announced to Job (1:13–22)
4. In heaven Second dialogue of Yahweh and the Satan (2:1–7a)
5. On earth Personal afflictions of Job (2:7b–10)

A transitional item is added,

6. Arrival of Job’s friends (2:11–13)

This material is presented in a highly structured manner. We should especially notice the parallels between the second and fourth scenes extend to the similarities in words. We could visualize the stylized structure of the scenes with Clines in the following manner (Job 1–20, p. 6):

1. Situation
   The angels present themselves before Yahweh (1:6; 2:1)
2. Complication
   a. Question by Yahweh (1:7a; 2:2a)
   b. Reply by Satan (1:7b; 2:2b)
   c. Question by Yahweh (1:8; 2:3)
   d. Reply by Satan (1:9–11; 2:4–5)
   e. Authorization by Yahweh (1:12a; 2:6)
3. Resolution
   Satan goes out (1:12b; 2:7a)

This material can be broken down into two major units: the setting in 1:1–5 and the preliminary incidents in 1:6–2:13 (see chart on p. 18).

1. The Setting, 1:1–5
   The setting “may describe location, time and circumstances of the event. It describes the state of affairs and sets up for the action” (Newell [1983, p. 90]). The Joban author describes Job as a genuinely godly man. This lays the foundation for the tension portrayed in the book. The setting here forms a chiastic arrangement with the conclusion of the book. This structural arrangement could be presented like this:
a. Job’s Homeland, v. 1a

The narrative is begun with הָיָה בִּלְאָם, “a man was” (or, “there was a man”). The more usual formula used for introducing a historical narrative is יָהּ בִּלְאָם. This introduces the book of Joshua, Judges, Ezekiel, Ruth, and Esther. Gordis has understood that the use of הָיָה בִּלְאָם to begin the book of Job as introducing a tale (p. 10). Since this type of language is common to narrative material, we would not agree with the position that takes Job as a tale. As Pope has correctly understood this clause, we understand that הָיָה בִּלְאָם reflects a beginning with no clear-cut connection with any preceding material (p. 3; see also Clines, Job 1–20, p. 9). This is also found in Esther 2:5 and 2 Samuel 12:1.

As was pointed out in our introduction (see above), the prepositional phrase לְוָיָּרָא can be located in Hauran or Edom.

b. Job’s Character, v. 1b

This part of v. 1 begins with נִחָלָה יִשְׂרָאֵל הָיָה (“and that man was…”). הָיָה, a waw-consecutive plus the perfect, continues the thought begun in v. 1 (juana בִּלְאָם, “there was a man…and that man was…”). The clause under discussion should be understood as habitual in nature. The use of the suffixed conjugation of הָיָה in the lead clause is an imperfective, i.e., customary use of the verb. It conceives of a situation as a whole or a state extending without interruption over a period of time. This state occurred prior to the time of the narrative (see Waltke & O’Connor, pp. 502–3, par. 31.1.2 and 31.2b). This situation is continued in the clause under discussion with the waw-relative (or waw-consecutive) used epexegetically (ibid., p. 530, par. 32.2.3a). As such, this is explaining the situation and is contemporary with the state described in the first clause (pp. 533–34, par. 32.2.3e). Two pairs of words or phrases are used to describe Job’s character.

I. In the first phrase, נִחָלָה יִשְׂרָאֵל, the term יִשְׂרָאֵל comes from a verb יָשָׁר, to “be complete, finished” (BDB, p. 1070). The basic idea of יָשָׁר is “completeness.” In Israel sacrifices were to be without blemish, יָשָׁר. When this is used in the ethical areas of life, it relates to “that which is ethically sound, upright” as in Ps 19:14 (Eng v 13). It has the idea of integrity (Ps 78:72). When used of Job, Gordis has suggested that the idea is “whole, free from double-dealing, morally innocent, sincere” (p. 11). NIV has translated this as “blameless.” יָשָׁר means “straight, upright”; it is often
used in reference to one’s treatment of others (2 Kgs 10:13). Possibly we have a hendiadys here, the two terms denote that Job was blameless and upright.

2. The second pair of word units, הָרְפָאֹת, מַעֲרַ֣שֶׁת, continues the characterization of Job. The verb for fear, מַעֲרַ֣שֶׁת, may denote emotional fear (as an emotional reaction, Deut 5:5), intellectual fear as when one anticipates evil (this may include fear but it seems to be distinct in that it is not an immediate reaction since this is something that is anticipated before the event, 1 Sam 21:13), and reverence, awe, honor. When this last use has its object as God, it is significant for our discussion in that honoring manifests itself by worship and obedience. This is reflected in the following examples: Genesis 22:12; Psalms 25:12; 128:1; Proverbs 14:2; Ecclesiastes 7:18. These examples are significant for showing that fearing Yahweh includes how one lives. Another significant example is the use of the feminine noun נָקָּה, in its singular construct form with Yahweh in Proverbs 9:10 for here fearing Yahweh is parallel with knowing God. Therefore, in biblical theology for OT wisdom literature, this appears to be a way of describing an OT believer.

c. Job’s Affluence and Godliness, vv. 2–5

These verses describe the extent of God’s blessing on Job, along with an example of his religious integrity.

Verse 2—because of Job’s godliness, God gives Job a great family. The verb הָרְפָאֹת breaks the connection with the preceding waw-relative attached to a perfect. In this verse we begin a chain of waw-relatives attached to the preterite. Here it reflects a consequential idea. It represents a specific, concrete example of the blessings that Job shared in as a godly man (Clines, Job 1–20, p. 13). The following verbs continue the use of examples from Job’s life by the use of the waw-relative with the preterite (see Waltke & O’Connor, p. 551, par. 33.2.2b).

Verse 3—as the Joban author continues his presentation of Job’s blessings, he emphasizes Job’s great wealth.

וַיָּבֶשׁ may be taken as “service . . . of household servants as body” (BDB, p. 715). The entry definition in BDB is “service”; however, one has to wonder at points about renderings such as these for this word is only used twice in the OT, here and Genesis 26:14 and each case what is needed in context is the idea of “servants” or “slaves” (so KB, p. 673). In both cases the singular form of this word is used and since a plural idea is demanded, this must be a collective.

The Hebrew noun נָקָּה (נָקָּה יָבֶשׁ) is used generically as a reference to individuals or people of the “east,” i.e., “easterners.” נָקָּה may be used to refer to those living east of the Euphrates (Gen 29:1) or for those living in the land of Israel, it is used to refer to the area east of the Jordan River (Jer 49:28; Ezek 25:4, 10).

Verses 4–5—our author provides an impressive illustration of Job’s piety. These verses also advance the narrative by presenting a “little cameo which explains how all
the children of Job could happen to be together in the one place and so suffer the one fate that meets them all” (Clines, *Job 1–20*, p. 15).

Verse 4—there are essentially four different interpretations of גִּבּוֹ, “his day.”

1) Each day of a weeklong celebration that took place every week (Dhorme, p. 4; Rowley, p. 29). “The seven brothers took it in turn to entertain on the seven days of every week, so that every day was a feast day” (Rowley, p. 29).

2) Each day of a weeklong celebration (Deltizsch, p. 50). The difference between this and the previous one is that it is confined to only one week where as the previous one views this as occurring every week. “The text, understood simply as it stands, speaks of a weekly round (Oehler and others). The seven sons took it in turn to dine with one another the week round, and did not forget their sisters in the loneliness of the parental home, but added them to their number” (ibid.).

3) His appointed day (Gordis, p. 12; Habel, p. 87). His day apparently means “on his appointed day” or “his turn.” The narrative never tells us what the nature of the day was; all we know is that each brother had an appointed day for celebration and he had his brothers with him and made certain that his sisters were also included.

4) His birthday (Hartley, p. 69). Zöckler popularized this view. This interpretation is based on the use of גִּבּוֹ in Job 3:1. The use of גִּבּוֹ is clearly his birthday because of the context that unfolds in the following verses. This does not provide absolute proof but it does provide meager proof for this view. It would seem to me that either this view or Gordis’s view are the preferable options (so also Clines, *Job 1–20*, p. 15). Possibly the author is vague at this point because his major emphasis is to show the closeness and affluence of Job’s family.

Each of Job’s sons would have a special party or a birthday party. They would extend a special invitation to their sisters who apparently were unmarried and living at home with their father. The point of this is to demonstrate “the closeness and affluence of Job’s family” (the author’s point is not to say that Job’s children were riotous living) (Hartley, p. 69).

Verse 5—והָכְרָמֵם (“and cursed [God in their hearts”]) is an obvious euphemism since God would be the object of cursing (see Job 1:11; 2:5, 9; Pss 9:10; 10:3; 1 Kgs 21:10, 13). Were Job’s children so preoccupied with pleasure that they had a habit of cursing God? This is probably not the case. Cursing God is neither the only nor primary sin that Job’s children might commit but it reflects the extent that Job imagined his depraved children could have sunk to. In this regard, we should specifically notice that this is something that they might have thought in their
hearts (Clines, Job 1–20, p. 16). This event also reflects a Tendenz of the Joban author. As Hartley has stated: “At this point it is important to note that the sin of cursing God is pivotal to the prologue. Whereas Job feared that his children might speak lightly about God, the Satan will argue that Job would certainly curse God should he suffer loss (1:11; 2:5). Then Job’s wife will urge him to curse God and die (2:9)” (Hartley, p. 69). For Job to curse God would provide clear-cut proof that Job fears God for something.

The use of כָּפָלְתָּא אָנָּה בֵּי חַיּוֹנָא (םיָכָלְאੜ) (יָכָלְאੜ יָכָלְאੜ), “Thus Job did regularly”), is a classic example of the imperfect in a past tense context showing continuous action. כָּפָלְתָּא אָנָּה does not mean all the days on which the feasting occurred, but shows continuity/habit.

This introduction demonstrates that Job did fear God and departed from evil; even to the point as this related to his family.


This is where the action begins (see earlier chart). This unit of material gives an account of the testing of Job. The action moves back and forth between heaven and earth. This material is relevant for the following argument. We see that God initiates the conversation with Satan. This dialogue focuses on the genuinely righteous character of Job. Satan in response challenges God’s view of Job. In order to vindicate Himself and Job, God permits Satan to test Job.

a. The First Test, 1:6–22

1) The conversation between Yahweh and Satan, vv. 6–12

What impresses us as we read these verses is that God has the same view of Job as the Joban author had in vv. 1–5. However, Satan appears before God to challenge this assessment. In this heavenly conversation, Satan informs God that Job’s piety is disingenuous. Job only serves God because God has blessed him so greatly. As such, Satan is suggesting that God’s system of rewards and judgements is defective. God gives Satan permission to take away Job’s blessings in order to make an open declaration of the superiority divinely produced life, along with its attendant blessings. We should not be mislead into thinking that God was manipulated by Satan, and this is so for three reasons: first, God initiates the conversation about Job with Satan; second, the ultimate victory of Job suggests that God had everything under control; and, third, if anyone or anything can manipulate God, we have a superior being to our God. On this last point, consider Isaiah 46:9–10:

9Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. 10I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.
And, Psalm 115:1–3

1Not to us, O LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness. 2Why do the nations say, “Where is their God?” 3Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.

Therefore, God used Satan to flawlessly and precisely fulfill all that He had predestined for Job in order to show the greatness and goodness of God in all that He does.

a) Introduction to Satan, vv. 6–7

As the angels present themselves before God, God also grants Satan an audience. The point of vv. 6–7 is to introduce us to the heavenly backdrop for Job’s suffering.

Verse 6—םיִלְוֹא הַשָּׁמָּיִם stands at the head of this verse. In Hebrew the article generally shows determination; and those nouns without the article, or other syntactical indicators of definiteness, are considered indeterminate. The use of the article on יְהֹוָה is an example of the particular referential use (Waltke & O’Connor, pp. 242–44, par. 13.5.1). The Joban author used the article not because יְהֹוָה has already been identified in the context but because it is vivid in his imagination or mind. In English we are best to translate it as “one day” or “a certain day” (see ibid., p. 244, par. 13.5.1e, example no. 19; for other examples, see Job 1:13; 2:1; 1 Samuel 1:4; 14:1; 2 Kings 4:8, 11, 18.

םיִלְוֹא is generally understood as a reference to angels. In contrast to this, Pope has taken this as a reference to gods (p. 9). However, the monotheistic context of the book of Job makes it quite clear that this expression refers to angels. The essential idea of the word שֵׁמֶר, “son,” is one of having the characteristics of something. The sense is a “member of a guild, order or class” (BDB, p. 121); in our context, this is a reference to the members of the genus elohim, i.e., those who have characteristics of the divine (see its use in Job 2:1, 38:7).

םיִלְוֹא may be translated as “to present themselves before Yahweh.” In contrast to this, Rashi understood this phrase to mean to stand against Yahweh; however, this appears to be a late interpretation. Here he is standing in the presence of God, as courtiers before a monarch (see Zech 6:5, Job 2:1; Gordis, p. 14; and Pope, p. 9).

The article on חָכָם demonstrates that this is a title and not a personal name; apparently what has happened in biblical history is that this title essentially functions as a personal name.

Verse 7—the point of this is not for God to learn about Satan’s meandering throughout the earth. Rather, the point is to focus on God’s initiating the events
that are about to effect Job. Theologically, the point is to show how God uses Satan to accomplish His will.

b) Satan’s challenge, vv. 8–12

i) Yahweh’s catalytic remarks, v. 8

“my servant,” could also be translated as “my slave.” Though in the OT it recognizes one’s humble service for God, it is only used of a few of Yahweh’s choice servants; e.g., Abraham (Ps 105:6, 42), Jacob or Israel (Isa 41:8), Moses (Exod 14:31), Joshua (Josh 24:29), etc.

In this context it is Yahweh who initiates the dialogue by bringing before the Accuser one who was extremely dedicated to Yahweh. Yahweh’s estimate of Job was the same as the author’s estimate in 1:1.

ii) Satan’s challenge, vv. 9–11

Satan questions Yahweh’s praise of Job.

Verse 9—The ending (םְּגָנְנַנ) makes the substantive הָנָנָנ, “favour, grace,” into an adverb, “out of favour”; thus, “without favour.” Other examples of this are הָנְנַנ, “daily,” and הָנְנַנ, “truly.” הָנָנ can be used in two senses: “without payment/recompense” as here and “without cause” as in 2:3 (BDB, p. 336). This verse is a key question for understanding the argument of the book: “Does Job fear God for nothing?” This is to say does Job fear God because of pure undivided loyalty or “does he have an ulterior motive?” (Wilson, “Protest and Faith,” p. 4). As we read Job 1–2, we are convinced that Job is as pure as redeemed fallen humanity can be; however, when we begin to read Job 3, we begin to question his undivided devotion because of his protest (ibid.).

Verse 10—The verb הֶבֶן is a qal perfect 2ms from הָנָנ, “hedge or fence up, about.” This is only used here and in Hosea 2:8. Its nominal abstraction הָבֶן, “hedge,” is only used in Proverbs 15:19 (BDB, p. 962). A by-form of this verb is הָבֶן (II), to “hedge, or fence about, shut in” (BDB, p. 692). Illustratively speaking, God has hedged Job about or fenced him in, that is He has protected him.

Verse 11—Satan emphatically maintains that if Job’s wealth is removed, then Job will rebelliously curse God.
“indeed, surely” (Williams, p. 74, sec. 456; see also 2 Kgs 9:26), expresses affirmation. It is like Arabic inna (Gordis, p. 15).

“to your face,” has the idea of “directly, impudently, without hesitation”; this is to say that it is not used in the sense of “immediately” as Rashi took it (Gordis, p. 15).

“he will curse you,” is not used in the same semantic sense of “bless” as it is clearly used in v. 10. Semantically, this use of רָבָּה is the opposite of its use in v 10. We should notice that it is impossible to understand the sense of רָבָּה in v. 10 in the same way we understand its use in v. 11. This suggests that the old translation adage that the same word be translated in the same manner in a specific context is only proverbial and not an absolute translation standard.

iii) Yahweh’s acceptance of the challenge, v. 12

“Confident of his servant Job, Yahweh accepted the Satan’s challenge. He granted the Satan full power over Job’s possessions, but not over Job’s body. Many scholars speak of this transaction between Yahweh and the Satan as a wager. But this is inaccurate, for no sum was set to be handed over to the winner. The single issue at stake was the motivation for Job’s upright behavior and his fear of God. The Satan functions as God’s servant, solely an instrument in the testing. The author holds to a pure monotheism wherein God is ultimately responsible for all that happens” (Hartley, p. 74).

“This scene and its counterpart in 2:1–7a are essential for the audience to comprehend the spiritual dimensions of Job’s trial. They afford insight into God’s evaluation of Job and his confidence that under the severest testing his servant will prove that this evaluation is well-founded. Without knowledge of God’s position the dialogue would be meaningless and Job’s stubbornness would be thought the height of self-delusion. In order to make a proper assessment of Job’s complaint the audience must know God’s attitude toward Job and his direction of the events that will befall Job” (Hartley, p. 74). This reflects part of the Joban author’s Tendenz.

2) The resultant test, vv. 13–22

a) Satan’s challenge executed, vv. 13–19
Four catastrophes happen to Job’s family and possessions.

i) The first catastrophe, vv. 13–15
No one in Job’s household is aware of the dialogue that has occurred between Yahweh and Satan so they are completely unprepared. “Scrupulous Job would have recently offered whole burnt offerings to atone for any
possible sin either in his children’s lives or in his life. His sons had joyfully begun a new round of feasting at the home of the eldest” (Hartley, p. 76).

Verse 13—‘וָאָלַי, “one day,” is same form as we had at the beginning of v. 6 (see above).

Verse 14—the subject of רָאָס, a fp qal part, is יִשְׂרָאֵל which is normally masculine. Here, however, it appears to be feminine; possibly this is like וַיְרָא which, though normally masculine, does appear with a feminine plural adjective in Genesis 30:43.

Verse 15— the Sabeans, נַבָּשַׂ, have generally been “identified as a Semitic people living in a fertile district of the southwestern corner of the Arabian peninsula, the area of present-day Yemen. Their capital was located at modern Marib. In the OT Saba or Sheba is associated with Tema (6:19; cf. Isa. 21:13–15; Jer. 25:23) and Dedan (Gen. 10:7; 25:3). The Sabeans are known for trafficking in incense, gold, and precious stones (Isa. 60:6; Jer. 6:20; Ezek. 27:22–23)” (Hartley, p. 76, n. 14). This possibly reflects an early period of time before the Sabeans had become a sedentary population (Gordis, p. 16).

Verse 17, since this cohortative is obviously not a request, it is best understood as reflecting a resolve on the speaker’s part, i.e., his determination or will.

ii) The second catastrophe, v. 16

When the adverb בֶּאֵר and the participle בָּאָר are taken together, this is a clear way of saying that the conversation was still in progress when the next messenger interrupted him.

Verse 17 could be rendered in one of two ways:

1) “fire of God”—this is simply a way of referring to lightning; see 20:26; Numbers 11:1–3; 16:35; 26:10; 1 Kings 18:38; 2 Kings 1:10–14.

2) “great fire”—בֶּאֵר can be taken as a superlative and thus be translated as “great.” As such it is still taken as lightning (Gordis, p. 16).

This lightning fell and burned up his 7000 sheep and the servants taking care of them.

iii) The third catastrophe, v. 17

בָּאָר is the plural form of בֶּאֵר. This term when used of an ethnic group is usually translated as “Chaldeans.” This word is a transliteration of the Greek word χαλδαῖος. It is a late description of an Aramean-like people who first
appeared in the Babylonian area, the south or Sea-Land, about 1000 B.C. The Assyrians called this land the Kaldu-land (Babylonian equivalent for Kashdu). The Chaldeans were involved in some phase of political life in southern Babylonia during the Neo-Assyrian period. It was very clear that the Chaldeans took Babylon from the Assyrians and placed Nabopolassar on the throne in 627 B.C. The fact that they are a sedentary population in the first millennium B.C. in the Babylonian area tends to support an early date for their activity in the book of Job.

iv) The fourth catastrophe, vv. 18–19

This is the last catastrophe to affect Job. In this unit gives more detail than in the preceding descriptions of the first three catastrophes. Since this is the only stanza describing the catastrophes of Job 1 that uses ḫw rather than ḫh to describe the actual catastrophe, this suggests that it may be used for climactic purposes (Alden, p. 60).

Verse 18—idente could be revocalized in order to conform to what we have had beginning each of the catastrophes, ḫw in vv 16 and 17. Dhorme has noted that there are eighteen manuscripts that have ḫw. However, it should be observed that ḫw is a conjunction meaning “while.” Since so many other items are the same, we might initially be inclined to favor the reading ḫh; however, the reading ḫw does provide a better explanation for the reading ḫh.

Verse 19—the clause, ḫ, is also used in 1:15, 16, 17, and here. This obviously reflects the ipsissima vox and not the ipsissima verba.

b) The apparent resolution, vv. 20–21

In Job’s extreme grief, he mourns and worships God at the same time. We come away convinced that Job is an extremely mature man of God. Unfortunately, the story goes on.

Verse 20—idente has been parsed in one of two ways. First, the old view was that this was a hithpael from either ḫh or ḫh. Either verb supposedly meaning to prostrate oneself. Second, the more current view parses this as a histaphe. This current understanding is based upon Ugaritic. Following this current understanding, ḫ is derived from the root ḫ, to “bow down” or “do obeisance” (CHAL, p. 97).

Verse 21—the verbal form ḫ, comes from the verb ḫ. This identification is supported by the reading in the Qere, ḫ. As found in the Leningrad Codex, the verbal form ḫ is an example of defective writing.

idente is a euphemistic way of referring to death (see Eccl 3:17) (Gordis, p. 18).
Habel has noted the following connections between 1:21 and Job 3 (p. 84). I have taken this chart from him verbatim.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job 1</th>
<th>Job 3</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job’s reverent acceptance of the womb, 21a.</td>
<td>Job’s regrets his emergence from the womb, 10, 11.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Job’s regrets he is not in the tomb, 17, 19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job’s reverent acceptance of the tomb, 21b.</td>
<td>Job’s questioning of God’s ways, 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job’s reverent acceptance of God’s ways, 21c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job blesses God, 21d</td>
<td>Job invokes curses, 1, 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c) The author’s tentative verdict, 22
   The author informs us that Job did not sin with his lips. He wants us to see the righteousness of Job; however, the story is not over.

אָפָל is from the noun אַפָל “tasteless, unseasoned food” (Job 6:18), ‘unsatisfactory’ prophecies (Lam 2:14). Our noun means ‘emptiness, worthlessness’ (Jer 22:13), ‘unseemliness, wrong’ (Job 24:14). It may be related to the Arabic tifl, ‘spittle’” (Gordis, p. 18); i.e., “something you spit out” (Averbeck).

b. The Second Test, 2:1–10
   There are a number of similarities between this chapter and the preceding chapter. “Verses 1–3 are nearly identical to 1:6–8. Job 1:12 correspond with 2:6, and 1:22 corresponds with 2:10c. In these ten verses Job’s testing intensifies. Up to this point he has lost his health, which the Satan hoped would break his will and prompt him to curse his God” (Alden, p. 63).

1) The second conversation between Yahweh and Satan, vv. 1–6
   Though these verses are similar to the first chapter, the significant difference is that this chapter intensifies Job’s suffering to include his own physical affliction.

a) Satan’s Reappearance before Yahweh, v. 1
   When this is compared with the similar statement in 1:6, the infinitive clause לָבֵן הַיָּדוֹן הָלַבֶּן “when this is compared with the similar statement in 1:6, the infinitive clause לָבֵן הַיָּדוֹן has been added in 2:1. This clause has been omitted in the LXX. If the reading in the LXX is correct, this may be an example of dittography. As the Joban text was being copied, the scribe copied the last part of this verse when his eyes moved back to the first part. When he saw the same phrase there, he accidentally copied this with this
sentence about the Satan. However, the LXX translator either directly or indirectly (through a faulty Vorlage) may have made the scribal error, haplography. The evidence supporting the reading preserved in the MT is quite strong so it is best to stick with it. Our author may be showing a theological perspective here. Even the Satan is under Yahweh’s control in that he has to present himself before Yahweh.

b) Satan’s second challenge, vv. 2–6

i) Yahweh’s catalytic remarks, vv. 2–3

Verse 2—this verse is basically identical to 1:7, with the exception that 1:7 does not contain the interrogative (cf. אָ֝בִּיתְךָ בַּ֣עֲרָכָ֖ה יִשְׁנֶ֣ה תִּשָּׁנֶ֑ה in this verse with אָ֝בִּיתְךָ בַּ֣עֲרָכָ֖ה יִשְׁנֶ֣ה תִּשָּׁנֶ֑ה in 1:7). We have the same parallel in Job 28:12, 20. The difference is more stylistic.

Verse 3—the hiphil ms participle qyzI∞j}m’ is derived from qzj to “be or grow firm, strong, strengthen” (BDB, p. 304). In the hiphil, qzj can have the nuance of making strong, making severe, supporting, taking hold of or keeping hold of something (BDB, pp. 304–5). This last use applies to the faithful taking hold of God (Isa 64:6) or as here Job holding on to “his integrity.”

hM;tu˝B is made up of three parts: the prefix preposition ב, the feminine noun hM;(related to µTøø in 1:1, etc.), and the pronominal suffix ו. This phrase is a reference to Job’s blameless character, his integrity. What is impressive is that this is God’s evaluation of Job.

The waw on יִתָּנֹּס is the waw-relative; and the general use of the waw-relative allows us to take it in a concessive sense. Gordis has maintained that waw-consecutives in Hebrew cannot have this use; however, a number of recent articles have noted that we can have logical subordination. This is also reflected in recent grammar books, such as Waltke & O’Connor.

ii) Satan’s challenge, vv. 4–5

Satan proclaims that if Job’s health is removed, this will hit Job where it hurts the most. The consequence of this type of disaster is that Job will curse God.

Verse 4—an interpretative problem is encountered with the following proverb: יִשְׁנֶ֣ה תִּשָּׁנֶ֑ה. The precise meaning of this cryptic proverb is uncertain. We will briefly examine five interpretations of this:

α) One part of the body is sacrificed to protect another part of the body (so Targum, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Delitzsch, Driver-Gray). One would give up his arm to save his head or something similar. A potential problem with this is
that יָעַר generally does not mean part of the body, it refers to skin (Gordis, p. 20), unless this is an example of metonymy.

β) An outer layer of skin for an inner layer of skin (so Budde, Rowley). The major problem with this pertains to whether or not יָעַר can refer to two different layers of skin. This looks very forced (Gordis, p. 20).

γ) Skin after skin (so Tur-Sinai, Pope). The preposition בָּשָׁת has the nuance of “away from” or “behind”; it can have the idea of “after” (BDB, p. 126); the idea may also be communicated as “skin upon skin.” The idea of this proverb is that there is skin upon skin; i.e., many layers of skin. These all protect the soul. Removing Job’s children and wealth is like removing the layers of one skin; to find out what Job is really like, God needs to get the soul, Job himself. This explanation becomes excessively complicated for this context in that it is saying that there are many layers of skin covering the soul (Gordis, p. 20). Though it is possible, does it fit the context?

δ) Job will give his skin in exchange for God’s skin. “If Yahweh scratches Job’s skin, it will be Yahweh’s skin that is put at risk. This understanding would be similar to the lex talonis in Exodus 21:23–25, “life for life, eye for eye.” This is to say, Job will sacrifice his piety if Yahweh harms him personally (Clines, Job 1–20, pp. 44–45). This fits in with the overall context.

ε) One’s skin in exchange for another person’s skin (so Gordis). Let’s first look at the proverb itself and then the clause following it. The word יָעַר means skin just like an animal’s hide. This term as it is used in the OT does not denote different layers of skin. Another issue to consider is the preposition בָּשָׁת. Not only does it have the nuance of “away from” or “behind,” it also has the nuance of “on behalf of” (BDB, p. 126). When it is used with this nuance, it can have the nuance of “for the sake of” or “taking the place of” (ibid.) or “in exchange for” (Gordis, p. 20). Notice this use of the preposition is consistent with its use in the next clause. To see this, we should notice the following clause: יָעַר אִישׁ לְאִישׁ לְאִישׁ נַפְּשָׁה, “that is, everything that belongs to a man, he will give in exchange for himself.” The waw on יָעַר is an example of its epexegetical use; that is, it is explanation of the preceding clause. Job was willing to give someone else’s skin to save himself. The Satan’s point is that Job was selfish, his integrity was not genuine.

is used in this verse and also in v. 6. With its first use, its semantic range is limited by the use of בָּשָׁת and יָעַר in v. 5. The emphasis is on the person who possesses a body. However, in v. 6 יָעַר seems to be used more consistently with the idea of “life-force” as napištu in Akkadian which means “life” or “being alive.” In v. 6 Yahweh is clearly saying “do not take his life force, you may hurt his body but not the life principle.”
iii) Yahweh’s acceptance of the challenge, v. 6
This is similar to 1:12.

2) The resultant test, vv. 7–9

a) Satan’s challenge executed, vv. 7–8
In v. 7 יִטְוֶּה, has been related to a “boil” (BDB, p. 1006), an “ulcer” (so NET Bible), or “inflamed spot” (HALOT, 2:1460). The root of יִטְוֶּה, יִטְו, has cognate forms in Ugaritic, Akkadian, Aramaic, Syriac, and Arabic with nuances of being “hot” or “inflamed” (Clines, Job 1–20, p. 49). In the Old Testament, this term has been used in different ways. It has been used in reference to the boils of Egypt in Exodus 9:9. Deuteronomy 28:27, 35 suggest that יִטְו included boils that may be associated with smallpox (NIDOTTE, s.v. “יִטְו, by R. K. Harrison, 4:80). In Leviticus 13:18 leprosy begins with יִטְו, “boils”; however, the overall contexts of this chapter reflects יִטְו may be associated with a general level of skin disease. Since most skin diseases develop slowly, such as elephantiasis and leprosy, the suddenness and comprehensiveness of Job’s disease indicates that his יִטְו was atypical. As such, it is best to view this as a general descriptive term, rather than diagnostic, and to translate with a general sense, such as “painful sores” (NIV) or “grievous sores” (Clines, Job 1–20, p. 3).

b) The Reaction of Job’s wife, v. 9
Job’s wife, רָאָסָה, has been seen negatively and positively. Chrysotom denounced her (see Pope, pp. 22–23). An Arabic tradition places Job’s wife in a positive light stating that she was very helpful. It is probably best to recognize that she answered foolishly but her motives were not necessarily impure.

c) Apparent resolution, v. 10
Once again our Joban author informs us that Job did not sin with his lips; we will stop and think about how righteous Job was. The author wants us to see that there was no sin for which Job was being punished.

c. The Arrival of Job’s Three Friends, 2:11–13
These verses are transitional and as such could be associated with the preceding material in chapter two or the following material in chapter 3. Habel has correlated this with the second movement of the book as an introduction to it; however, it also provides a fitting conclusion for the preceding section 1:1–2:10 in that we are left with the impression that even with Job’s three friends with him Job was not going to speak anything negative. Both of these observations point to the fact that this is best seen as a transition. In keeping with the chapter breakdowns in our Hebrew and English Bibles, I have placed it with the portion of the outline that is associated with 1:1–2:10.

Verse 11—the article on יִטְו functions like רָאָסָה. The Masoretic accent reflects that they took this as 3fs qal perfect verb and not a participle, which would have been
accented on the ultima. Though the perfect aspect of the verb is not generally used with the article, this apparently occurs at least in a few cases (see GKC, sec 138).

\[\text{\textperiodcentered}\] is from the root יָשַׁב has the sense of appointing; in the niphal as used here, we have the idea of meeting by appointment or agreement (BDB, p. 416).

Let’s notice the plot development: in 1:7–8 Yahweh’s boast about Job was a catalyst for the plot; in 1:9–11 we have Satan’s goal; in 1:20–21 we have Job’s response; we expect the book to end but this is too good to be true. In 2:3 Yahweh’s boast about Job once again serve as a catalyst; in 2:5 we have Satan’s goal; in 2:9 Job’s wife verbalizes to Job the Satan’s goal; and 2:10 we have Job’s good response.

We should observe that the plot anticipation for chapter 3 is found in 1:11; 2:5, 9.


1. The Occasioning Incident, 3:1–26

Having come to comfort Job, his three friends sat patiently without saying anything for seven days and seven nights. In our present context, Job is the first to break the silence. In this speech Job curses the day of his birth. This reflects an incorrect attitude towards God’s gift of life. Job’s complaint was improper behavior from his friends’ perspective and it confirmed to them that Job had to be suffering on account of his sinfulness. This is what creates the tension and initiates the conflict.

For the structure of this pericope, I am basically following Freedman (“The Structure of Job 3,” in Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1980], pp. 323–28; this article was reprinted from its earlier form in Biblica 49 [1968]: 503–8) with some important modifications from Habel (pp. 102–6). For an alternative to this arrangement, see Fishbane (“Jeremiah iv:23–26 and Job iii:3–13: A Recovered Use of the Creation Pattern,” Vetus Testamentum 21 [1971]: 151–67) and Hartley (pp. 88–89). Fishbane’s analysis as followed by Hartley who breaks this chapter down into two stanzas with the breaking point being the conclusion of v. 13. The most obvious problem with this analysis is that vv. 13 and 14 are clearly a unit forming a sentence. In addition notice how rhetorical questions dominate vv. 11–26. In this connection, what Hartley sees as concluding the first stanza, vv. 11–13, and finding a counterpart in vv. 24–26 which concludes that stanza could also be taken as forming an inclusio structure. In light of the use of rhetorical questions and thematic considerations, I find Habel’s modifications of Freedman’s analysis the most exegetically feasible.

In considering the form of this passage, Hartley’s classification of this as a curse-lament has some significance (p. 36). However, there are two problems with this categorization. First, this cannot be a curse per se since Job is wishing for something already passed to be cursed. As such this is probably an adaptation of a curse genre. Second, a lament generally uses a second person addressed to God; however, here God is only remotely addressed. This is probably a Joban modification of a self-lament (vv. 11–19; 24–26).
and a God-lament (vv. 20–23). This poem also has elements of a monologue (see Clines, *Job* 1–20, pp. 76–77). With Murphy (pp. 22-23) and Clines (*Job* 1–20, p. 76), it is probably better to take this as a complaint. About this speech’s function, Clines has noted that this is reflected “by the forms it employs together with its position in the book. The force of the curse and the lament is tempered by the evident avoidance of an addressee for the lament and by the futility of the curse; the form of the monologue indicates that from Job’s point of view the speech is designed for no function [from a form critical perspective] at all. From the author’s perspective, however, such a deliberately uncommunicative speech functions as the spring board for the whole of the ensuing dialogue, for while it does not divulge the whole gamut of Job’s attitudes to his suffering, it makes plain by its very reticence that the one thing Job will not allow is that his suffering proves his guilt. To refuse to acknowledge that presumption in the presence of these friends is a launch pad for controversy” (p. 77).

a. The Introduction, vv. 1–2

חֲלָה, v. 1—“After this” is a typical way of marking some type of literary transition (see Gen 15:14; 23:19; 25:26). This chapter is the occasioning incident for the rest of the book. This is ultimately what generates the conflict (Smick, p. 890). This has a double introduction; it has a special heading in v. 1 followed by a standard introductory formula in v. 2 for a speech in Job.

חֲלָה, v. 1—It should be noticed that Job curses his day and not God. I think this is quite significant. Some have taken this to mean in effect that he curses God. Though Job curses the day he was born, it should be noted that from his framework and the Joban author’s framework, this is not the same as cursing God. If he has cursed God here, it is strange that Yahweh never hints at this. In fact, this would be contradictory to God’s response in 42:7 where He states that God spoke about him what was right. In addition, Job’s frequent claims of innocence are sheer nonsense if he has cursed God here. It is probably best to understand that Job is venting his anger by wishing that he were dead.

חֲלָה, v. 1—This has been taken by Tur-Sinai as “his fate.” In Job 30:25 לֵי is used of life in general. In addition, one cannot curse a day that is already passed. Against Tur-Sinai’s view is the clear context of Job 3. In vv. 3–5 Job is clearly referring to the day of his birth. Furthermore, Job is simply wishing that the day of his birth had not been included in the calendar. His point is not that this could have happened. Job is venting his frustration at this point.

b. The Curse, vv. 3–10

The structure of this is a chiastic arrangement as the following highlights (Habel, p. 103):

A  Subject of the curse: day and night, v. 3
    B  Curses on that day, vv. 4–5
    B1 Curses on that night, vv. 6–9
    A1 Ground for the curse: misery, v. 10
1) Subject of the curse: day and night, v. 3
In this verse we should notice its dramatic movement from the first colon to the second. It is more dramatic to say “a man-child is conceived” than “I was born.” We should also notice the elliptical construction in the second colon (Reyburn, p. 69).

\[ \text{‘Let the day on which I was born perish.’} \]

The verb \( \text{db'ayo} \) is a jussive form. The subject is the clause “the day on which I was born.” Since \( \text{y} \) is qualified by \( \text{‘dl,W:} \), this clearly reflects that the use of \( \text{y} \) in v. 1 is a reference to Job’s day of birth.

\[ \text{‘Let the night on which I was born perish.’} \]

could be rendered as (1) “the night said,” here the night is being personified. As such it is the subject of the verb. This presents no major difficulty in that \( \text{y} \) is a masculine noun. It is also possible to render this type as “the night that said”; or (2) “the night in which one said,” here the verb is used in an impersonal sense; when we have an impersonal use, we can also translate this in English with a passive sense, “the night it was said.”

\[ \text{hr:hø} \]

is from the verb \( \text{hr:h;} \), to “conceive, become pregnant.” Some have taken this as a pual perfect 3ms (BDB, p. 247). Most modern sources seem to prefer taking this as a qal passive since it has a counterpart in the qal. As such, it would be 3ms qal passive perfect. In either case, the term \( \text{rb,G<} \) adds dramatic sense to this curse.

2) Curses on that day, vv. 4–5
In these verses and vv. 6–9 we should notice the use of hyperbole. This undoubtedly grabs our attention as it grabbed the attention of Job’s friends. In these two verses \( \text{aWh%˝h'} \) is the subject.

Verse 4—Job calls upon day, God, and the light to act against the day of his birth.

\[ \text{‘Let not God above take care of it.’} \]

The verb \( \text{Wh˝v´¢r”d”yI} \), 3ms qal imperfect with 3ms object suffix from the root \( \text{vrd} \), to “resort to, seek” (BDB, p. 205, usage 7), has the sense in this context as wishing for God to avoid purposely avoid taking care of that day seek with care, care for” (ibid.). The idea is seeking out its wellbeing. This is the use found in Deuteronomy 11:12 where “the land which Yahweh your God cares for” is found. \( \text{H'/l} \) is used 57 times in OT; it is used 41 times in Job, and all of these 41 uses are found in the poetical sections of Job.

\[ \text{hr:h;n”} \]

, “light, daylight,” is related to the verb \( \text{rhn} \) (II) to “shine, beam” (BDB, p. 626). This feminine nominal form is a hapax legomenon. This form may come from an Aramaic form \( \text{ar:/hn”} \). The ending \( \text{~} \) is the article. When this type of noun is taken over into Hebrew, it reflects how a masculine noun becomes feminine for the \( \text{~} \) ending becomes \( \text{~} \).
Verse 5—Job expresses three wishes in the three colons of this verse. Each wish pertains to some form of darkness overwhelming the day of his birth.

The verb יָשֵׁר , from יָשָׁר, to “redeem.” The imagery of the verb reflects a relative claiming the property of a near relative. With this figure, Job’s day of birth is like a dead relative (Reyburn, p. 72). לְקַלָּמַל has generally been understood as coming from two nouns לַדְּקָה, “death,” and לֶשֶׁת, “shadow.” Support is drawn from the LXX which has σκιά θανάτου, “shadow of death.” However, there is a recent understanding that relates this to an Akkadian verb, salåmu meaning to “be black” or “dark.” According to this view the Hebrew word is an abstract noun and should be repointed as תֹּלַם. This later tradition would reflect an understanding of the word that has been lost at least since the days that the translator of the LXX rendered this book. Both views are possible, but I see no great compelling evidence to discard the so-called traditional understanding of this term, for darkness is presented as death’s shadow by its connection with Sheol in Job 10:21–22 and 38:17 (so Habel, p. 100; and Clines, Job 1–20, p. 69).

יוֹנָה is a hapax legomenon, “let clouds rest (or take up their abode) upon it.”

יָרָא as vocalized in the MT is derived from a form made up of the prefix preposition ב, “like” or “as,” plus some form of the root בָּדָד, to “be bitter”; possibly from its adjective יָרָא, “bitter” (BDB, p. 600–601). Following this, some take this as an eclipse (see some of the possibilities in Clines, Job 1–20, p. 70, n. 5c and Pope, p. 29). Gordis follows this basic analysis except he relates this to another root בָּדָד, to “pass by” and he thus relates this to a demon who passes by. However, BDB suggest another possibility (BDB, p. 601). They suggest that we consult the root בָּם, to “be black.” This comes from a Syriac root kamar meaning to “be black.” They suggest the noun as being בָּם, “darkness, gloominess” (BDB, p. 485). This is probably a reference to an eclipse (Clines, Job 1–20, p. 85). This appears to be the more likely of the two options. The last part of this verse could possibly be translated as “let the darkness of day terrify it” or, less likely, as “may the darkness of day terrify it.” What this means is that the day would be imprisoned by fear because of the eclipse (Hartley, p. 93). Consequently, the translators of both the ESV and the NET Bible have rendered this as “let the blackness of the day terrify it.”

3) Curses on that night, vv. 6–9

In these four verses the subject that Job is addressing is אֲמוֹת אָחָּלָה, introduced at the head of v. 6. Job continues his use of hyperbole to catch his listener’s attention.

Verse 6—Job asks for darkness to seize the night that his conception was announced and for it to be excluded from the days of the year.
The word הָאָמַר appears to have associations with the underworld, in Job 10:22; in Job 28:3 it is used of mining deep in the earth. The NET Bible renders this as “darkness,” while both the ESV and NIV as “thick darkness.”

The verb דָּרָי, as vocalized in our text reflects that the Masoretes took this as a jussive 3ms qal coming from הָרַי, to “rejoice.” This understanding does not seem appropriate for the parallelism. Another possibility is to take this as coming from the verbal root דָּרָי, to “be united,” which includes the idea of counting or reckoning. This would be a qal jussive 3ms (see KJV, NIV, Pope and Gordis). This fits best the parallelism with the last part of this verse. As such, we would need to revocalize this as דָּרָי.

Verse 7—Job wishes that the night of his conception would be a barren night, one in which no one would have been conceived.

דָּרָי, an adjective meaning “hard, barren” (BDB, p. 166), is cognate with Arabic jalmau “rock, stone” (Gordis, p. 34). What Job is asking for is that the night of his conception be robbed of its fertility for conception, that it would be “barren.” He wishes that it had been hard or sterile as “rocky soil that fails to yield crops no matter how carefully it is tended. If such were the case, no ecstatic shout of joy would enter or disrupt that night” (Hartley, pp. 93–94).

Taking the particle הָאָמַר as emphasizing the following clause, we could translate this verse: “Indeed, let that night be barren; let no cry of joy be heard in it.”

Verse 8—Job wishes that those pagan enchanters who were skilled in curses put a spell on the night of his conception.

A note is associated with בֵּין הָאָמַר in the critical apparatus for BHS and BHK suggesting that originally the consonants בֵּין were perhaps to be understood as representing בֵּין instead of בֵּין. The reason for this is that בֵּין would form a more appropriate parallel with בֵּין in the following colon. A parallel from an Aramaic inscription, where the mythological creatures בֵּין and בֵּין are used together, has been drawn to further support this (see G. R. Driver, “Problems in the Hebrew Text of Job,” in Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East, ed. M. Noth and D. Winton Thomas, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum, vol. 3 [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1955], p. 72). There are two problems with this interpretation. First, all manuscripts and early versions have taken this as בֵּין, “day.” Second, if we press the mythological view with בֵּין, in that Yamm and Leviathan are used together, we have a major problem for anyone who curses the sea is “on the side of order and goodness, since the sea is a chaotic and evil power, whereas in the second colon the rousing of Leviathan is obviously for the sake of destructive activity; and it is impossible to see how partisans of order could be invoked to lay spells on the night of Job’s conception” (Clines, Job 1–20, p. 86). Following the MT, we should understand that “those who
curse the day,” along with its appositive “those prepared to rouse Leviathan,” were men like Balaam (Num 22–24), Eastern soothsayers, who made a living out pronouncing curses on objects, people, and days. Job in a time of weakness is wishing that these enchanters had put a spell on the night of his conception.

יְדוּעַ is a polel infinitive absolute from שָׁנָה to “arouse.”

ירָיָה is derived from the noun יִרְאָה, “wreath” (KB, p. 477) which is derived from the verb יָרָה, to “accompany” or “twist.” This verb is cognate with הֲוָי, to “turn, twist, wind,” and Akkadian lamû, to “surround, encircle” (ibid., p. 475). It is also possible that it is cognate with Ugaritic lin (Cyrus H. Gordon, Ugaritic Textbook [Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965], p. 429, par. 1400). יְרָיָה is made up of an ending ו added to יִרְאָה which is the construct form of יָרָה.

When a noun is used to form another noun, the suffix ו may be used. The noun that is formed, here יָרָיָה, is called a denominative noun (see Waltke & O’Connor, p. 92, par. 5.7). The key issue with this term, however, relates to whether Leviathan refers to a real or a mythological creature? Leviathan is used six times in the following Old Testament passages: Psalm 74:14, 104:26, Isaiah 27:1 (twice), Job 3:8, 41:1. It is clear that Leviathan refers to a real creature in Job 41; however, the interpretation of the other passages is not quite as clear. Various commentators will line up for either view about Leviathan in Psalm 74:14, 104:26, and Isaiah 27:1. However, most commentators agree that Job 3:8 is a clear reference to a mythological creature such as we find with Lotan in Ugaritic literature (a seven-headed creature who was the monster of the primeval chaotic waters which Baal overcame in establishing the created world order). The context of this passage indicates that Job is cursing the day of his birth in the strongest way he could, viz., calling on those enchanters who with their incantations and cosmic connections with forces such as Leviathan were able to effectively curse the night. How do we justify a believer such as Job doing this? Is this normative for other believers? Smick has correctly summarized the issue by noting that Job’s “whole mood here is erroneous: he is using a common forceful expression as he yields to his anguish of soul even though he undoubtedly knew that the use of enchanters was forbidden by the Lord” (“Mythology and the Book of Job,” JETS 13 [1970]: 101–8).

Verse 9—Job wishes that the stars of his conception night be darkened. He personifies that night through the use of hoping for light and it having eyelids. This intensifies the effect of his complaint.

The issue with יְדוּעַ, “stars of its twilight,” focuses on יִרְאָה, from יִרָה, “twilight,” with a 3ms object suffix attached, “its twilight.” This is derived from the verbal root יָרָה which means to breathe, blow upon.” The nominal use of יָרָה as twilight is apparently derived from the cool breeze of twilight (BDB, p. 676). This may be used of evening twilight as appears to be the case in Job 24:15 and Proverbs 7:9 or morning twilight as in Job 7:4 and Psalm 119:147. Because of the remainder of this clause (“may it expect light and there be
none”) and the parallelism with the remainder of this verse, it is preferable to see this as a reference to the twilight of dawn. This may refer to Venus and Mercury which shine brightly in the morning announcing the termination of night.

כְּעַנָּרֶתֶן כִּיּוֹם צוּר, “the eyelids of dawn,” refers to “the first rays of dawn” (*NIV, NET Bible*) announcing the end of night; that is, it denotes the breaking of dawn (so *NASB*).

4) Ground for the curse: misery, v. 10

Job brings his curse to a conclusion by providing a reason for his embittered state. Though some have seen Job as in effect cursing God in this chapter, we should notice that with this curse Job never specifically curses God. In addition, we should further note that Job does not curse his parents. Though in this verse he appears to be close to cursing his mother, the actual curse is on the womb of his mother but not his mother per se.

Does בְּכִינָב denote the prevention of conception or the prevention of birth? This may be taken as prevention of conception because the verb בָּכִינָב is used with Yahweh as its subject in 1 Samuel 1:5 where Yahweh had closed the womb (ךְָנִי) of Hannah. However, in light of the context in vv. 3–10, it would be preferable to take this as prevention of birth. One fact is very clear, “my womb” cannot be a reference to Job’s womb. We must understand it as his mother’s womb. As such, the *NASB* has supplied mother with the translation, “my mother’s womb”; the translators of the *NIV* have rendered it in this manner: “for it did not shut the doors of the womb on me.” The translators have taken the suffix on בְּכִינָב as an adverbial genitive. This may be further classified as genitive of effect. With this kind of genitive, the relationship between the nomen regens (the construct) and the nomen rectum (genitive) is directly causational. This is to say, the doors of the womb of Job’s mother caused him or brought him forth (see Waltke & O’Connor, p. 146, sec. 9.5.2c).

c. The Lament, vv. 11–26

Rhetorical questions dominate these verses. Around these, we could view the structure of this unit in this manner (Habel, p. 103):

A  Subject of the lament: the why of Job not dying at birth, v. 11
   B  The why of Job being raised a child, v. 12
      C  Portrayal of the land of death as repose and rest, vv. 13–15
   B¹ The why of Job seeing the light of life, v. 16
      C¹ Portrayal of the land of death as freedom from turmoil, vv. 17–19
   B² The why of any suffer seeing the light of life, v. 20
      C² Portrayal of the sufferer’s longing for death, vv. 21–22
   B³ The why of a sufferer having no direction in life, v. 23
A¹ Ground for the lament: turmoil—no repose or rest, vv. 24–26
1) Subject of the Lament: The Why of Job not Dying at Birth, v. 11
Since it was impossible for Job to prevent his conception and birth, he now questions why he did not die at birth. This longing for death at birth is expressed through the use of rhetorical questions in this verse.

Since מָתִי, מֵעָמָּה means “from [the] womb,” it is a way of referring to “at birth.” The strongest support of this is the second colon of this line “and die as I came forth from the womb.” However, some have wanted to take this as dying before the actual birth. Gordis has taken the prefix mem as a mem of condition, “if in the womb,” i.e., “while in the womb.” Blommerde agrees that this is prior to birth but has derived this differently than Gordis. He has repointed מַרְכָּבָּה to be a pual participle and has translated this as “Why did I not die enwombed?” Further support for this may be derived from the LXX, which has, “Why did I not die in the womb [ἐν κοιλίᾳ]? Although either view is possible, I feel the first view is stronger in the immediate context of this verse.

Job’s thought moves one stage beyond v. 11 where he wished that he would have died immediately at birth. Since death could not have taken place at birth, he wishes that he had not been nourished as a baby and abandoned to die.

Why did knees receive me?” The issue here relates to whether this is a reference to the father’s knees or the mother’s knees. (1) If this is a father’s knees, this is denoting a “practice of legitimization of a child by the father taking it on his knees” (Clines, Job 1–20, p. 90). Support is drawn for this from Roman society and A. Musil has shown this custom among certain groups of bedouin (ibid.). (2) In favor of this being the “mother’s knees is the consideration that legitimization by the father is not so directly a means of ensuring the life of the child as its being suckled by the mother; if sitting on the mother’s knees is essentially only an alternative depiction of the child’s being fed, the point would be clearest: Job wishes that, since his birth could not have been prevented, he had not been nourished as an infant but left to perish” (Clines, Job 1–20, p. 90).

3) Portrayal of the Land of Death as Repose and Rest, vv. 13–15
In these verses, Job portrays death as the opposite of what he has been experiencing.

Verse 13—The two preceding verses began with interrogatives, but the מָשָׁא of v. 13 introduces the reason for the questions. This verse presupposes Job’s death wish in vv. 11–12. In both colons Job uses metaphors for death. In the first colon he used the metaphor of lying down and in the second the metaphor of sleeping. In each death is pictured as a place of peace and rest.

Verses 14—The preposition בְּ introducing this verse modifies the thought of v. 13. It informs us about whom Job’s companions would have been if he were in the
realm of the dead. The point of vv. 14–19 is not to describe the ins-and-outs of life in the hereafter. Rather, Job, in the anguish of his suffering, views death as that which brings an end to earthly existence for all, from the significant to the insignificant. In v. 14, those resting from the pressures of this life in death were kings and counselors. We should note here that Job does not explicitly identify the place to where the dead go as Sheol, though perhaps the concept of Sheol may be an implication. In this context, Job mentions “death” (תֹּבָא), v. 21, and the “grave” (תַּבְעָה), v. 22. In the immediate context, Job describes death as a place that gives relief from earthly pleasures and trials. While he does not explicitly mention Sheol in this context, Job specifically uses it in seven other passages: 7:9, 14:13, 17:13, 17:16, 21:13, 24:19, 26:6 (Zophar uses it once in 11:8). In 7:9, men do not return from Sheol. In 14:13, Job wishes he could hide out in Sheol until God’s anger has passed. When God’s anger has passed, he then wishes he could present his case to God. In 17:13, 16, Sheol is not like his former home in that it offered no hope from knowing that God had vindicated him. In 21:13, the wicked had great prosperity in life, and they seemingly go to Sheol in peace. In this context, Job rejects the apparent peaceful death of the wicked because they reject divine providence as the source of their prosperity. In Job 24, Job denounces those who reject God, such as murderers and adulterers, and the Almighty will use Sheol to suddenly cut off the wicked (v. 19). In Job 26, Job mocks Bildad’s final speech. In this context of ridicule, Job asserts that no one or no part of the created realm, including Sheol in v. 6, can escape the Almighty’s omnipotence. In sum, it is hard to get a clear picture of Job’s understanding of Sheol. In the immediate context of Job 3, Job explicitly mentions death and the grave. Perhaps, Sheol may be found in this context by implication (for a helpful discussion of Sheol, see Johnston, Shades of Sheol, pp. 69–85).

These men are further described as תְּבֻּקָּשׁוּ וְגִבֵּיהֹלֶה. The semantic range of הָבָא includes building, developing, and rebuilding (HALOT, 1:139). It is difficult to know how to translate הָבָא. The semantic range of הָבָא includes “waste, desolation, ruin, of cities, … land,… and temple” (DCH, 3:310). The term can be used to refer to desolate places, as the NET Bible, or to “ruined cities,” as Clines (Job 1–20, pp. 72–73, n. 14b). A lexical case may be made for either option. Further complications relate to how the participle, וּגְבֵהָלָה, and noun, וְגִבֵּיהֹלֶה, semantically relate to each other. Is this qualifying clause indicating that kings built cities/places now in ruins? Or, did they rebuild cities/places from ruined cities/places? Though there is not enough evidence to present an absolute argument, Clines presents a reasonable case for translating this clause as, “who rebuilt ruined cities for themselves” (ibid., p. 68). As his translation reflects, Clines takes וְגִבֵּיהֹלֶה as “ruined cities,” which allows for the implication that these restored cities were still intact while Job curses the day of his birth (ibid., p. 72, n. 14b). The noun וְגִבֵּיהֹלֶה is not infrequently used for ruined cities (see BDB, p. 352). If וְגִבֵּיהֹלֶה does refer to ruined cities, this would imply that that וַיְבַעֵהַ has the sense of “rebuilt.”
Verse 15—This is tied closely to the preceding two verses as the beginning of this verse reflects, מָתַי אֶנָּה. In death those who had great wealth are no longer greedily seeking silver and gold.

4) The why of Job seeing the light of life, v. 16
This verse is begun with אֶנָּה. Since this is not followed by the preposition בֵּן, it does not appear to continue the thought of v. 15. אֶנָּה introduces an elliptical construction that looks to the use of rhetorical questions in vv 11–12. This could be translated, “Or why was I not like a hidden stillborn child, as an infant who never saw the light of day?” Because it looks back to vv. 11–12, some have maintained that this verse is out of position and it should immediately follow v. 12. Dhorme transposes v. 16 accordingly (pp. 32–33). Clines’ argues persuasively that v. 16 as preserved in the MT is the proper placement. “There is no doubt that v 16 belongs logically with vv 11–12; the question must rather be whether there may be any reason why it is to be found in its present place. An adequate reason is that the resumption here of the topic of vv 11–12 sets up two (three-line) depictions of “Sheol” existence (vv 13–15, 17–19), which would otherwise be one, but which need to have their individuality preserved. For the first deals only with the holders of power, and speaks from a seemingly neutral position, while the second constantly juxtaposes the powerful and the powerless and identifies with the latter. In that vv 17–19 are separated from vv 13–15 by the interposition of v 16, they can constitute comment on them more effectively” (Job 1–20, p. 95).

Since the birth happened, the next step was a stillbirth, מָתַי אֶנָּה לִבְנָל. The noun לִבְנָל means “miscarriage, abortion” (BDB, p. 658); Clines notes that לִבְנָל does not strictly mean “miscarriage” or “abortion.” In Ecclesiastes 6:3 and Psalm 58:9 (v. 8 in Eng. text), it reflects a “stillborn” child. The qal ms qal passive participle לִבְנָל from לִבְנָל to “hide, conceal” (BDB, p. 380). Hence the idea is a “hidden stillborn child.” Hidden apparently refers to hidden in the ground, a way of referring to death. The picture is of the dead child having left its mother womb and being buried (Clines, Job 1–20, p. 95).

5) Portrayal of the land of death as freedom from turmoil, vv. 17–19
In these verses Job pictures those who have been freed from death. Those who have experienced this freedom include the wicked, the weary, the captives, the slaves, the great and the small.

Verse 17—This verse is begun with מְשַׁר, “there.” The antecedent of this is not found in vv. 13–15, the place of the dead. At death the wicked cease from their raging and the weary are given rest. נָשַׁנָּה, “the weary of strength,” is an epexegetical genitive denoting those who are “weary in respect to strength.” This may be more simply rendered as “the weary.”

Verse 18—The captives are at ease in death since they no longer have to listen to the slave driver’s shout. In poetry מָשַׁר may have the idea of “all.” We could translate מְשַׁר הַנָּשַׁר as “all the prisoners” (see Gordis, p. 38).
Verse 19—In death there is a contrasting group, the small and the great. In addition, the slave is released from his master. This contrast involves the freedom the slave experience, but an implication is that the master no longer has to worry about the slave.

6) The why of any suffer seeing the light of life, v. 20
This verse is introduced with מִי which reflects a resumption of the rhetorical question. The expression נָפַלְתָּם, “to the bitter of soul,” is genitive-construct relationship. The use of נָפַלְתָּם as a genitive is probably best taken as an adjectival epexegetical genitive. With the adjectival genitive, the construct and genitive modify each other, that is one may be the qualifier of the other. With the adjectival attributive genitive (the largest group of adjectival genitives), the genitive qualifies the construct noun. For example, in the construct-genitive relationship: נָפַלְתָּםibern, “[and] the garments of [the] holiness” (Exod 29:29), the construct term garments is characterized by its genitive holiness. Accordingly, this could be translated as “holy garments” (Waltke & O’Connor, p. 149, sec. 9.5.3b). With the adjectival epexegetical genitive, we have the opposite relationship for in this phrase the genitive is characterized by the construct. In Genesis 39:6, we have יָשֵׁר יָשֵׁר, “Joseph was fair of form.” Here the genitive form is characterized by fair. We could use the circumlocution and say that Joseph was fair with respect to form. This is to say, Joseph was well-built (ibid., p. 151, sec. 9.5.3c). With the type of genitive construction, the construct noun will often be an adjective. The same issue is true in the verse at hand, Job was bitter in respect to soul. The sense of this clause is this: “Why is life given to those bitter in spirit.”

7) Portrayal of the sufferer’s longing for death, vv. 21-22
This continues the rhetorical question of v. 20. Since this further describes their longing, I have followed Habel by including this as a separate unit.

8) The why of a sufferer having no direction in life, v. 23
By placing גָּלֶב at the front of this verse, it looks back to the rhetorical question begun in v. 20; we should note how this corresponds to גָּלֶב, “to the sufferer,” and גָּלֶב, “to the bitter of soul.” Thus we have an ellipsis in that גָּלֶב is missing in this verse. Therefore we could translate this clause in this manner: “Why is light/life given to the man whose way is hidden?”

9) Ground for the lament: Turmoil—no repose or rest, vv. 24-26
We should notice how כָּל introduces both vv 24 and 25. We have here Job’s rational for his complaint.

כָּל כָּל, v 24—this should be rendered as “like” or “as”; notice how it is parallel with כָּל כָּל, “like water.”
“What does this chapter teach us? What is its function as part of Scripture? Job’s attitude is certainly not normative—just the opposite. We should hardly look to this chapter to tell us what to believe about the state of the dead. What we can see in the chapter is how even a man of great faith can fall into the slough of despond. That one as great as Job should have such a struggle of faith is a source of support to those similarly afflicted, especially when viewed in the light of the rest of the Book of Job. God prefers we speak with him honestly, even in our moments of deepest gloom, than that we mouth innocuous clichés far removed from reality” (Smick [1988], p. 891).

2. The Complications, 4:1–27:23
The three cycles of debate between Job and his three friends magnify the conflict and make the solution to the conflict appear to be next to impossible. The friends’ remarks to Job become progressively shorter and in the third cycle of speeches Zophar does not even respond. This reflects that Job’s friends had been defeated. Since the wise men of Job’s day could not refute him, this creates a tension. Is anyone able to answer Job?

a. The first cycle of speeches, 4:1–14:22
1) Eliphaz’s speech, 4:1–5:27
   a) Introduction, 4:1
   b) Body of speech, 4:2–5:27
      This speech falls into a chiastic arrangement with a central section (Andersen, p. 111), a concentric chiastic arrangement.
      A Opening remark, 4:2
         Rhetorical question
      B Exhortation, 4:3–6
         vv 3–4—Job’s past actions
         vv 4–6—Job’s present inconsistency
      C God’s dealings with men, 4:7–11
         The innocent cannot perish like the wicked. The universe operates according to the law of mechanical divine retribution.
         vv 7–9—Reminder of traditional wisdom
         vv 10–11—Two wisdom sayings in support of the traditional theory
      D The revelation of truth, 4:12–21
         vv 12–16—Description of the night vision
         vv 17–21—Message from night vision
         v 17—rhetorical question
         vv 18–19—an a fortiori argument
         vv 20–21—conclusion
   C¹ God’s dealings with men, 5:1–16
      vv. 1–7—the verification of Eliphaz’s teaching
      vv. 1–2—introduction, v 1 rhetorical question; v. 2 wisdom saying in support of question
      vv. 3–5—an example using a story about punishment for doing evil
      vv. 6–7—wisdom sayings concerning man’s trouble
      vv. 8–16—the affirmation of Eliphaz’s hope
vv. 8–9—Job is advised to appeal to God.
vv. 10–13—Doxology
vv. 10–11—God’s providential power
vv. 12–13—God’s wisdom prevails over the wicked.
vv. 14–16—the divine action among men is demonstrated.

B Exhortation, 5:17–26
vv. 17–21—Encouragement to accept divine reproof
vv. 17–18—“Happy is the man” formula with motive clause;
suffering is a chastisement in order to correct and to heal.
vv. 19–21—Graded numerical saying (6/7) concerning divine
deliverance
vv. 22–26—Description of the security of the just man

A Closing remark, 5:27

2) Job’s response to Eliphaz, 6:1–7:21
a) Introduction, 6:1
b) Part one, 6:2–27
i) Complaint, vv. 2–4
This functions as an excuse for Job’s words.
ii) Justification of complaint, vv. 5–7
vv. 5–6—the citation of two proverbs
v. 7—conclusion
iii) Affirmation of loyalty in the form a death wish, vv. 8–10
iv) Motifs from complaint, vv. 11–27
  a) Job’s suffering is so great as to be insupportable, vv. 11–14
     vv. 11–12—three rhetorical questions
     vv. 13–14—transition to reproof of 3 friends
  β) Job’s friends fail him, vv. 15–24
     vv. 15–17—comparison to dry wadi
     vv. 18–20—comparison of self to disappointed caravans
     vv. 21–23—Reasonableness of Job’s complaint
     vv. 24–27—Job’s accusation against his friends

c) Part two, 6:28–7:21
i) Job challenges his friends to hear him, 6:28–30
ii) Complaint, 7:1–21
vv. 1–3—description of man’s lot
vv. 4–6—description of Job’s suffering
vv. 7–10—an implicit appeal to God to intervene: this reflects the transient
caracter of life
vv. 11–12—complaint about being a target of God
vv. 13–15—description of suffering
vv. 16–18—request to be left alone by God
vv. 19–21—appeal for change in divine attitude based on the ground of
approaching death

3) Bildad’s speech, 8:1–22
a) Introduction, v. 1
b) Opening litigation, vv. 2–4
   i) Rhetorical question, v. 2
      A ridiculing of his opponent
   ii) Bildad’s thesis, v. 3
      Presented in the form of a rhetorical question
   iii) Proof of thesis, v. 4
      Job’s children got what they deserved
c) Advice, vv. 5–7
   i) Conditions for deliverance, vv. 5–6a
   ii) Assurance of deliverance, vv. 6b–7
d) Appeal to ancient tradition, vv. 8–13
   i) Experience of the fathers is wisdom, vv. 8–10
      Bildad urges Job to check out history for Job would find out that the (Job himself) was wrong and that Bildad was right. There are two reasons for this:
      a) Each person’s life is brief, v. 9
      b) The ancients possessed wisdom, v. 10.
   ii) Proverb with explanation to illustrate conclusion, vv. 11–12
      Just as papyrus plant and reeds cannot grow without water (v. 11), so it withers without being cut (v. 12).
   iii) Conclusion, v. 13
      In light of vv. 11–12, the wicked cannot sustain themselves without uprightness and because of this they will soon lose their prosperity.
e) Description of the state of the godless, vv. 14–19
   v. 14—When trouble comes the godless man hope will prove to be false hope.
   vv. 16–19—Illustration from botany
f) Description of the fate of the blameless, vv. 20–22
   Bildad applies his truth.

4) Job’s response to Bildad, 9:1–10:22
   a) Job’s speech addressed to his friends, 9:1–24
      i) Introduction, v. 1
      ii) Statement of impossibility of contending legally with God, vv. 2–4
         In v. 2b Job says, “How can I be right with God?” —Job appears to turn from answering Bildad to Eliphaz.
      iii) Doxology, vv. 5–10
         Job extols God’s might who
         v. 5—removes and overthrows mountains;
         v. 6—shakes the earth;
         v. 7—darkens the sun and stars;
         v. 8a—stretches out the heavens;
v. 8b—tramples the waves of the sea;
v. 9—creates the constellations;
v. 10—man cannot comprehend God and His works cannot be numbered

iv) Motif of God’s superiority to man, vv. 11–12

v) Description of hopelessness of judicial process with God, vv. 13–21
Job pictures God as being capricious, notice some of his characteristics:
v. 13—God in his anger was able to conquer all of the forces of evil. This includes both real and mythological forces of evil.
v. 14—How could one defend himself before God.
v. 15—Even if Job was right, this would not help; all he could do is plead for mercy.
vv. 17–18—God would not listen to Job because He was bent on destroying Job.

vi) Accusation of injustice against God, vv. 22–24
In v. 22, Job categorically denies that God works strictly according to the dogma of divine retribution.

b) Job’s speech addressed to himself, 9:25–10:1a
i) Complaint motifs, 9:25–28
   a) Human existence is transitory, vv. 25–26
      Reed boats had wooden frames and sides of papyrus.
   β) Job’s suffering is inevitable, vv. 27–28
      It was futile for Job to forget his problem for his pain would make him sad and God would not acquit him in court.

ii) Legal motifs, 9:29–10:1a
   a) Impossibility of Job proving his innocence, 9:29–31
      God has determined that Job was guilty.
   β) Impossibility of judicial process with God, 9:32–35a
      מַעַרְחֲשָׁא, v. 33—he is an arbiter; for the development of this concept, see the following passages: 13:7–12—Job accuses the friends of being partial witnesses; 16:18–21—the יְשֵׁרָה, the heavenly messenger, is introduced; he is one who will defend Job’s integrity; 19:25–27—the מַעַרְחֲשָׁא is introduced; the same concept is involved with this term for the redeemer is Job’s defender and Job’s defender in the context appears to be God himself and not the Messiah as some have contended.; 33:22–23—Elihu uses the term יְשֵׁרָה, except he maintains that the יְשֵׁרָה will defend God and not Job as Job said in 16:18–21.
   γ) Conclusion, 9:35b–10:1a

c) Job’s speech addressed to God, 10:1b–22
i) Introduction to complaint, vv. 1b–2
ii) Complaint, vv. 3–22
  v. 3—demand for due process
vv. 4–7—Job raises questions about God’s motives: Is God merely human after all?
vv. 8–12—argument to move God against God: Job the divine handiwork
vv. 13–17—accusation against God: He hounds Job
vv. 18–22—complaint motif
  vv. 18–19—why was Job not stillborn?
vv. 20–22—request for respite in view of the prospect of Sheol

5) Zophar’s speech, 11:1–20
  a) Introduction, v. 1
  b) Opening litigation, vv. 2–6
    i) Rhetorical question, vv. 2–3
    ii) Quotation of opponent’s claim, v. 4
      Job was justifying himself.
  iii) Desire for Job to be taught by God, vv. 5–6
      Zophar sarcastically wishes that God would give Job an answer to show Job that he was wrong.
  c) Hymnic description of God’s superiority, vv. 7–12
      Eliphaz and Bildad had expounded God’s inviolable justice, but Zophar emphasizes God’s inscrutable wisdom.
  d) Conditional advice offered to Job, vv. 13–20
      This includes a description of the results of heeding advice.

6) Job’s response to Zophar, 12:1–14:22
  a) Part one, 12:1–25
    i) Introduction, v. 1
    ii) Initiation of litigation, vv. 2–6
      a) Ridicule of opponent, v. 2
      Are you the only one who has wisdom?
      β) Job’s claim to wisdom, v. 3
      γ) Proof that opponents are wrong, vv. 4–6
      Job points out some problems with their dogma of divine retribution. (1) Job’s own case; (2) robbers and God–haters were at ease.
  iii) Proof of Job’s claim to wisdom, vv. 7–12
    a) Even animals know the power of God, vv. 7–10
      This may be a reference back to 11:12 where Zophar indicated that Job was more stupid than a wild donkey.
    β) Sayings of wisdom, vv. 11–12
      v. 11—Job was testing his friends.
v. 12—wisdom is with the aged. This is probably a refutation of Bildad’s remarks in 8:8.

iv) Hymnic description of God’s wisdom and power, vv. 13–25
   a) Theme, v. 13
   β) Examples, vv. 14–25
      A number of instances God’s might are now cited by Job. These are negative aspects of God’s power.
      vv. 14–16—God destroys established orders.
      vv. 17–21—God deprives leaders of their efficiency.
      vv. 22–25—God disorients nations and leaders.

b) Transition, 13:1–5
   i) Job’s claim to wisdom, vv. 1–2
   ii) Job’s desire to confront Yahweh in a legal manner, v. 3
   iii) Job’s ridicule of his opponents, vv. 4–5

c) Part two, 13:6–27
   i) Job’s rebuke of his friends, vv. 6–11
   ii) Job’s determination to appeal to God, vv. 12–16
   iii) Beginning of Job’s address to God, vv. 17–27
      A complaint

d) Part three, 14:1–22
   A continuation of Job’s address to God, a complaint about man’s lot.
   i) The human condition, vv. 1–3
   ii) A plea to God, vv. 4–6
   iii) Contrast between tree and man in terms of their future, vv. 7–12
   iv) A wish for relief in Sheol, vv. 13–17
   v) Complaint motif, vv. 18–22
      Hopelessness of man’s lot

b. The second cycle of speeches, 15:1–21:34
   1) Eliphaz’s speech, 15:1–35
   2) Job’s response to Eliphaz, 16:1–17:16
   3) Bildad’s speech, 18:1–21
   4) Job’s response to Bildad, 19:1–29
   5) Zophar’s speech, 20:1–29
   6) Job’s response to Zophar, 21:1–34

c. The third cycle of speeches, 22:1–27:23
   1) Eliphaz’s speech, 22:1–30
   2) Job’s response to Eliphaz, 23:1–24:25
      For a good presentation of the structural arrangement of these two chapters, see Habel (1985), pp. 346–47; 355–56.
   3) Bildad’s speech, 25:1–6
4) Job’s response to Bildad and the friends, 26:1–27:23

Human wisdom had failed Job. Job’s friends’ solution to his problem did not help. In 27:11, he says “I will teach you about the power of God; the ways of the Almighty I will not conceal.” He then cites truth that they all agree on (vv 13–23), viz., that the truly wicked deserve God’s judgement; but the friends’ wisdom was incorrect in saying that Job deserved the same fate; so from where does wisdom come? Job continues and answers this in chapter twenty-eight.

3. The Climax, 28:1–37:24

Job’s discourse on wisdom indicates that only God has wisdom; yet Job challenges God to a legal conflict by giving his oath of innocence in chapter 31. This is where the conflict reaches its peak.

a. Job’s discourse on wisdom, 28:1–28

This chapter answers the question, “Where can wisdom be found?” Three stanzas are observable here: vv. 1–11, 12–19, 20–28. The refrain is found in v. 12 and v. 20 which serve as an introduction to its respective stanza.

1) Wisdom cannot be found through human research, vv. 1–11.
2) Wisdom cannot be purchased with human wealth, vv. 12–19.
3) Wisdom is with God, vv. 20–28.

b. Job’s final statement about his case, 29:1–31:40

1) The Conflict, 29:1–30:31
   a) Introduction, 29:1
   b) Job’s desire for his former prosperity, 29:2–25
      A  Blessing, vv. 2–6
      B  Honor, vv. 7–10
      C  Benevolence, vv. 11–17
      A1  Blessing, vv. 18–20
      B1  Honor, vv. 21–25
   c) Complaint, 30:1–31
      A  Man’s assault on Job, vv. 1–15
      B  God’s assault on Job, vv. 16–23
      A1  Man’s assault on Job, vv. 24–31

2) Oath, 31:1–40

This chapter is an extended legal metaphor by Job in which he as a defendant asks for a formal juridical hearing. As such v. 35 is Job’s appeal for a civil hearing with God as the plaintiff. In this type of legal hearing the plaintiff must present his accusations against the defendant along with corroborating evidence. When the defendant does this, he must present a formal declaration of innocence along with an oath (see Dick’s article). Habel ([1985], pp. 427–28) has set up the structural arrangement of this chapter in the following way:

A  Covenant and Curse Motif, vv. 1–3
   Job’s past covenant and expected covenant curses
B  Challenge, 4–6
Challenge for God to weigh Job in the balance of justice since he has counted Job’s steps
C  Catalog of Crimes, vv. 7–34
   a) Sin: Impurity of heart and hand, v. 7
       Sanction: Loss of crops, v. 8
   b) Sin: Adultery in thought and deed, 9
       Sanction: Abuse of wife by others, vv. 10
       Comment: a. Sin identified as criminal offense, v. 11
              b. Sin as inherently destructive, v. 12
   c) Sin: Dismissing slaves’ rights, v. 13
       Comment: a. Common standard for Job as judge and accused, v. 14
              b. Common origin as ground for equal justice, v. 15
   d) Sin: Hardheartedness to poor, vv. 16–17
       Comment: Job as father to orphans, v. 18
   e) Sin: Callousness to the unclothed, v. 19
       Comment: Blessings from those Job clothed, v. 20
   f) Sin: Perversion of justice for orphans, v. 21
       Sanction: Broken arm, v. 22
       Comment: Fear of God’s punishment as ground for behavior, v. 23
   g) Sin: Trust in riches, vv. 24–25
   h) Sin: Worship of sun and moon, vv. 26–27
       Comment: Sin identified as criminal offense and betrayal of God, v. 28
   i) Sin: Cursing foes and rejoicing in the fall, vv. 29–30
       Comment: Job’s household harbored no hatred, v. 31
   j) Sin: Inhospitality, v. 32
   k) Sin: Hypocrisy, v. 33
       Comment: Fear of public reaction, v. 34
B1  Challenge, vv. 35–37
Challenge for God to provide a legal document; then Job will repeat the count of his steps before God
A1  Covenant Witness and Curse, vv. 38–40
Final oath relating to the ground/earth as witness to covenant oaths

c. Elihu’s four speeches, 32:1–37:24
   1) The Joban Author’s Introduction to Elihu, 32:1–5
   2) Elihu’s First Speech, 32:6–33:33
      a) Elihu’s apology, 32:6–22
         A  I feared, v. 6
         B  I said to myself, vv. 7–10
         C  I have been waiting, vv. 11–16
         B1  I will speak out, vv. 17–20
A 1 I will not flatter, vv. 21–22

b) Elihu’s address to Job, 33:1–33
   i) Summons to Job to listen, vv. 1–7
   ii) Citation of Job’s thesis, vv. 8–11
   iii) Disputation of Job’s thesis, vv. 12–30
      a) Rejection and counter thesis, vv. 12–14
      b) Substantiation of Elihu’s thesis, vv. 15–30
         First supporting argument, vv. 15–18
         Second supporting argument, vv. 19–28
      γ) Conclusion, vv. 29–30
   iv) Invitation to Job to listen, vv. 31–33

3) Elihu’s Second Speech, 34:1–37
   a) Introduction, v. 1
   b) Summons to the sages to listen, vv. 2–4
   c) Citation of Job’s thesis, vv. 5–9
   d) Disputation of Job’s thesis, vv. 10–33
      i) Directed to the sages, vv. 10–15
         a) Rejection and counter thesis, vv. 10–12
         β) First supporting argument, vv. 13–15
      ii) Directed to Job, vv. 16–33
         a) Second supporting argument, vv. 16–20
         β) Subordinate discourse, vv. 21–30
         γ) Appeal to Job, vv. 31–33
   e) Invitation to the sages, vv. 34–37

4) Elihu’s Third Speech, 35:1–16
   a) Introduction, v. 1
   b) Citation of Job’s thesis, vv. 2–3
   c) Disputation of Job’s thesis, vv. 4–13
      i) Rejection and counter thesis, vv. 4–8
      ii) Supporting argument, vv. 9–13
   d) Application to Job, vv. 14–16

5) Elihu’s Fourth Speech, 36:1–37:24
   a) Introduction, 36:1
   b) Testimony to God’s justice, 36:2–21
      i) Summons to Job, vv. 2–4
      ii) Elihu’s thesis, vv. 5–7
      iii) Substantiation of Elihu’s thesis, vv. 8–15
      iv) Application to Job, vv. 16–21
   c) Testimony to God as Creator, 36:22–37:24
      i) Hymn of Praise, 36:22–37:14
         a) Part one, 36:22–33
            God is exalted in power, vv. 22–26
God’s power is demonstrated in nature through the storm, vv. 27–33

\(\beta\) Part two, 37:1–13

God’s control of thunder and lightning, vv. 1–5
God’s control of winter storms, vv. 6–13

ii) Concluding address, 37:14–24

\(\alpha\) Elihu challenges Job to consider the absolute control of God over the elements, vv. 14–20

\(\beta\) God’s transcendence, vv. 21–24

6) Elihu’s function in the Book of Job (for a discussion of Elihu’s contribution, see my article “Elihu’s Contribution”)

\(\alpha\) Elihu’s summary role

i) Elihu’s preservation of the key tension in the dialogue

ii) Elihu’s similarities with the friends’ argumentation

iii) Elihu’s similarities with the friends’ theology

\(\beta\) Elihu’s anticipatory role

i) Thematic similarities with the Yahweh speeches

ii) Structural similarities with the Yahweh speeches

C. The Divine Response Encourages Man’s Submitting to God’s Administration of Justice, 38:1–42:17.


Job wanted God in a courtroom, but God comes in a storm. Job had thought that Yahweh would crush him in a storm (9:17), but instead He overwhelms Job into submission (see above).

a. Preliminary Remarks about the Overall Form and Structure of Yahweh Speeches

1) Form

Most OT scholars do not agree about the form used in this section of the book of Job. A number of scholars hold one of the following views: legal dispute (Scholnick, Habel), onomastica or scientific listing of cosmological and meteorological information (von Rad), Naturweisheit “nature wisdom” (Richter), Streitrede “controversy speech” (Westermann, Fohrer).

Though the Yahweh speeches have some legal terms, this is very sparse. Thus, this is not a legal dispute. Neither can this be an onomastica since this is not simply an exhaustive list of cosmological and meteorological items, but it is selective. Furthermore, a problem with this being a “nature wisdom” form is the use of rhetorical questions. This type of form simply classifies creatures and thus it has no place for rhetorical questions. However, it would appear that the Yahweh speeches do contain elements from a legal dispute, an onomasticon, and a nature wisdom genre. Because of these classification difficulties, some have wanted to see this as containing a number of different forms, which I am inclined to agree with. However, the form which seems to make the most sense of the whole is the Streitrede if we
understand that this refers to the God material as a whole and does not rule out the use of other forms.

Rowold has more precisely labeled the Streitrede as a “challenge to rival” genre. Parsons also follows this view ([1980], pp. 102–3). Rowold has made a comparison between the trial speeches in Isaiah 40–55 and the Yahweh speeches and has shown the similarities between the uses of rhetorical questions to challenge a rival to duplicate the challenger’s works in order to establish one’s claim to authority. This fits in quite well with God’s perspective in Job (for a fuller discussion, see Parsons [1980], pp. 100–103). With Yahweh’s adaptation of this genre, he “challenges Job’s right to assume a posture of rivalry” (Rowold, p. 61). Yahweh’s goal with this is to restore Job to a proper relationship with Him (pp. 64–65).

2) Structure

Habel has arranged the structure of this unit of material in this fashion (pp. 526–27):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A Introductory formula with report of theophany</th>
<th>B Thematic challenge</th>
<th>C Elaboration of theme</th>
<th>D Challenge to Adversary</th>
<th>E Answer of Job</th>
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We will examine this section of material in this manner: the introduction, 38:1; the opening challenge, 38:2–3; the main body of the speech, 38:4–39:30; and the summary challenge, 40:1–2.

1) Introduction, 38:1

The first verse is the Joban author’s prosaic introduction announcing that Yahweh spoke to Job out of the storm.

This is not whirlwind as found in KJV and NASB but is better seen as a storm. This is like the Akkadian term šāru (see BDB, p. 704; and KB, p. 663).
2) Opening challenge, 38:2–3
In these two verses Yahweh challenges Job about having questioned His wisdom in executing His plan. To prepare for God’s questioning he is challenged to “gird up his loins” (v. 3) which is a way of challenging to prepare for a difficult task.

Verse 2—Yahweh introduces us here to the opening question. Job is challenged to be prepared for God’s addressing of Job but not in the confines of a heavenly court.

Because of the context, הֵעָמָד, “counsel, advice,” denotes Yahweh’s divine counsel/wisdom in creation (BDB, p. 420). This is a reference to His plan or purpose in creation and sustaining of His creation. Because of this Dhorme has rendered this as “providence” (pp. 574–75). At this point, Parsons follows Dhorme ([1980], p. 147). Yahweh’s confrontation of Job is ironic in that Job recognized the הֵעָמָד of Yahweh in 12:13; however, there Job accused Yahweh of using his power and wisdom in an arbitrary and capricious manner. No doubt, Job did this in ignorance, בְּמַלְאָן בְּלֹא הָעֵצָה, “with words without knowledge.” Therefore, the focal point in this first speech is on Yahweh’s wisdom in His creation and the sustaining of the created order (see Habel, p. 528).

This verse is ironic in tone. It is to inform Job of the “ramifications of his defiant attempt to meet YHWH on equal footing in a law court (cf. Job 31:35–37) which amounted to a rival claim to YHWH’s throne” (Parsons [1980], p. 148). We should notice how a question and a command end this section in 40:2. The question concerns legally striving with Yahweh; the command is the same as 38:3, to answer Yahweh. This forms an inclusio.

Verse 3—“Gird up your loins as a man” is a translation of the first colon in this verse. This same expression is also used in 40:7. This is a challenge to face a difficult task (see Jer 1:17). It is also used in Isaiah 5:27 to prepare for battle and in 1 Kings 18:46 for the task of running. When one was going to take on a difficult task, the lower part of the robe was pulled up between the legs and fastened around the waist with a cord (Reyburn, p. 694). In this context, it is a metaphor to challenge to Job to be fully prepared for God’s assault.

In this section, God asks Job a number of rhetorical questions about creating and sustaining the universe and some of the animals in it. The point was that Job did not have the wisdom to do this because he was not God’s equal. God was controlling and caring for all his creation (His sovereignty!). Therefore, God’s plan was theocentric and not anthropocentric as Job and his fellow wise men (including Elihu) saw it.

3) Main body of speech, 38:4–39:30
As God develops the challenge to his superficial rival, Job, we can view God’s questioning around these three items: Job’s non-participation in creation, 38:4–11;
Job’s inability and ignorance about managing the world, 38:12–38; Job’s ignorance about wild animals, 38:39–39:30. The first two questions, we will correlate with the evidence from inanimate creation and the last question with evidence from animate creation. The following chart reflects these two items as well as the focus of each question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inanimate Physical World</th>
<th>Animate Physical World</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>38:4–7</td>
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<td>Sea</td>
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<tr>
<td>38:8–11</td>
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<td>Sunrise</td>
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<td>Underworld</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Light &amp; Darkness</td>
<td>Ostrich</td>
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<td>Weather forces</td>
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<td>Constellations</td>
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<td>Thunderstorm</td>
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a) Evidence from inanimate creation, 38:4–38
Yahweh’s control of inanimate creation is a polemic against Job’s anthropocentric view of life.

i) Earth, vv. 4–7
Yahweh asked Job a rhetorical question that emphasized that Job had certain limitations because he was not around when the earth was created, in contrast to the angels. The earth in this section is pictured as a building, perhaps a temple. “Since it was the prerogative of victorious gods and kings in the ancient Near East to build temples, it is possible that YHWH compares his construction of the earth to a temple. In order for Job to validate his claim of royal attributes and his unconscious rival challenge to YHWH’s throne, YHWH insinuates that Job must duplicate YHWH’s unique construction of his terrestrial temple” (Parsons [1980], p. 149; see also Gordis, p. 443). Notice some of the terms that are used to support this building project, “dimensions” and “measuring line” in v 5; “its footings” and “its cornerstone” in v 6.

Verse 4—the point of the question in v. 4 is to challenge Job as to whether he had gained enough wisdom to understand the mysteries of God’s design in His creation (Habel, p. 537).

, from the phrase , is a qal infinitive construct with the prefix preposition and a pronominal suffix. This functions like a dependent clause with the object suffix becoming the subject of the clause.

Verse 5—God uses a building metaphor in vv. 5–6 to describe His creation of the world. In creating the world God determined the earth’s measurements as an architect (v. 5a) and he did it precisely as the surveying metaphor reflects in v. 5b (Habel, p. 537).
Verses 6–7—in v. 6 God pictures himself as an engineer laying the earth’s foundation. The “bases” of the earth are the “footings” upon which the earth’s pillars would be set. Setting the cornerstone (v. 6) is the final stage in setting the foundation of a structure (Reyburn, pp. 697–98). When the foundation was complete (Gen 1:1), the angels who had apparently been created prior to the completion of the earth’s foundation sang for joy.

ii) Sea, vv. 8–11
Yahweh asks Job another rhetorical question concerning the sea. Who puts limitations on the potentially chaotic sea as easily as putting clothes on a baby?

Verse 8—Yahweh shut the sea in with doors. The verb that begins this verse, עָלָ֖ה יָֽדִ֣ים, uses the waw–consecutive to continue its logical sequence with the preceding. It appears to continue the interrogative force from v. 4. The doors apparently refer to the natural barrier that God used to keep the sea in its place (Reyburn, p. 698). The sea which man considers to be chaotic, God has in control in a protective sense and not hostile. In the second bicolon of v. 8 Yahweh continues to describe the sea by using a metaphor from the birthing process.

Verse 9—this verse continues to use the birth motif. Yahweh used the clouds as a garment to cover His newborn sea. The thick clouds in the last bicolon were the swaddling bands of the baby. This apparently is a reference to the darkness that covered the face of the deep in Genesis 1:2.

Verse 10—the Hebrew, יְשָׁמַר יָֽדוֹ, “I broke my decrees on it,” may seem awkward but sense can be made of the text. Gordis has argued effectively that, חֲשֹׁר, to “break,” has developed a semantic range that includes decreeing or deciding (p. 444; however this should be contrasted with Rowley who maintains that it cannot mean to “prescribe” [pp. 310–11]). Gordis’s explanation of God prescribing limits or boundaries such as shorelines and cliffs correlates well with the immediate context. The imagery of this verse reflects that God created the sea along with its limitations. In using the figures of “bars and doors,” the imagery is similar to a dam in holding back the water (see Parsons [1980], p. 176, n. 50).

Verse 11—the Hebrew of this verse is a bit awkward; however, sense can be made of the verse as the NASB and NIV reflect. The “proud waves” can also be taken as “powerful waves” (Reyburn, p. 700); however, since the author is using personification here, there is no real problem for taking this as “proud waves.”

iii) Sunrise, vv. 12–15
Was Job responsible for the sunrise? Absolutely not! This section appears to be a response to Job’s accusations in 24:13–17 where Job said that the
wicked were rampant at night. By giving orders for the sun to rise, Yahweh controls the activities of the wicked.

Verse 12—God asks Job if he had given the orders for the regulation of the day-and-night cycle. God asking Job reflects this if he had commanded the morning or dawn to take its place. We should remember how Job wanted a curse imposed on the dawn in 3:7–9 in order to keep him from being born. For Job to have known the place in creation where dawn began would in effect mean that he knew the design in regulating its appearance (Reyburn, p. 702).

Verse 13—the use of the infinitive to begin this verse reflects that God is stating the purpose of His question in v. 12. Though some have wanted to emend the text here because the use of “wicked” seems to be out of place, it is best to view the last part of this verse as reflecting a moral fabric included in God’s questioning. If Job could grab the edges of the earth, perhaps he could pull back the darkness and shake the wicked out. With the inception of dawn, the wicked cease from their activities. The implication is that this is one way in which God keeps some of the activities of the wicked under His sovereign control (Habel, p. 540).

Verse 14—in this verse Yahweh uses a simile to compare how the features of the earth are changed when the dawn appears. Since רָדָה (to “turn,” “change”) is preferably taken as a 3fs verbal form, its antecedents is apparently “the earth” in v. 13. So the earth is changed as “clay of a seal,”
This has been problematic for some scholars (Gordis, pp. 445–46). Dhorme suggested that this is best understood as “sealed clay” which is a technical expression used to refer to reddish clay used in the ancient world for medicines (pp. 581–82). As such, this would be an adjectival genitive of species and appears to be a reference to the pinkish color of clay at sunrise. However, this could also be taken as an adverbial genitive of location and, consequently, it would be translated as “clay under a seal.” This is the clay upon which the seal was pressed (Reyburn, p. 703). In the last colon of this verse, Yahweh moves to a plural verb, אֲרֵ ((((דָו))), “they stand out.” Because of this and the following simile, “as a garment,” some have emended this to אֲרֵ ((((דָו))), “and it is dyed like a garment” (Pope, p. 295; Dhorme, p. 582). The emendation of the MT is unnecessary. As our text stands we could interpret it as meaning “they (i.e., the features of the earth) stand out like a garment” (so NIV) or, perhaps, “they (i.e., the wicked of v. 13b), stand out like a garment” (Habel, p. 517; see also Gordis, p. 446).

Verse 15—this could translated like this: “The light of the wicked has been withheld from them and their uplifted arm is broken.” In this verse Yahweh may be responding to what Job had said in 24:17 that “deep darkness” was morning for the wicked; that is, the light for their evil exploits was the darkness of night. Following this, “their light,” אֲרֵ ((((דָו)), is used in an ironic sense as a reference to darkness. The “uplifted arm” of the wicked is a figure denoting their violent activities. The wicked are unable to carry out their pernicious schemes when the dawn appears (Reyburn, p. 704).

iv) Underworld, vv. 16–18

In continuing His emphasis on Job’s inability to manage the world, Yahweh asks him in these verses if he has gone to the extremities of the sea and underworld.

Verse 16—Job is asked here if he has knowledge of places unseen by human eyes. נִנְדֵי is a hapax legomenon (see BDB, p. 614); it denotes “sources” or “springs.” It had no known cognates prior to the Ugaritic discoveries (see HALOT, 1:663, Pope, p. 203 and C. Feinberg, pp. 26–27). נִנְדֵי, “the springs of the sea,” apparently refers to the subterranean regions in the seas as the remotest parts of the earth. While the jury is still out, this may reflect that beyond the remotest parts of the earth was Sheol. In light of the following verse, this had a connection with the place of the departed dead as the gates of death.

Verse 17—Job is further asked if he has seen the entrance to the place of the dead, perhaps Sheol. “The gates of the shadow of death,” לֶחַם לְמָוָה (for a discussion of לֶחַם לְמָוָה, see earlier discussion of Job 3:5), is in parallel with the “gates of death,” לֶחַם לְמָוָה, in the first colon of this verse. Though I have not arrived at a firm conclusion concerning Sheol, “the gates of the shadows of
death/”the gates of death” may refer to the gates that open into Sheol. God’s control extends even to this area and Job knows nothing about this.

Verse 18—Yahweh asks Job if he has comprehended the יָּדוֹתָה. The parallelism may argue for Yahweh questioning Job about the vast expanses of the “underworld” (Hartley, p. 499). This would fit well with vv. 16–17. Yahweh may also have intentionally shifted Job’s focus from “the gates of death,” perhaps Sheol, to the expanses of the earth (Reyburn, p. 705).

v) Light and darkness, vv. 19–21

In continuing His questioning of Job’s inability to manage the world, Yahweh asks him in these verses if he visited the sources of light and darkness.

Verse 19—this verse and v. 20 are closely related. In this verse Yahweh questions Job about knowing the way to the dwelling of light and darkness and v. 20 deals with the purpose of the question. In this question light and darkness are personified in that both have a place to live from which they leave and then return.

Verse 20—if Job could have responded affirmatively to the question in v. 19, he would then be able to control light and darkness. Consequently, he would have the ability to require them to do their assigned jobs (Hartley, p. 499).

Verse 21—this verse rings with sarcasm. יִדְּעֵה must be used in an ironic sense such as “surely you know,” as the remainder of this verse makes clear: “for you were then born, and the number of your days has been many.” For Job to respond to this challenge in v. 21, as well as answering the questions posed in vv. 19–20, in a positive way would be to say that he was old. To admit that he is not old is to say that he does not have precise information and therefore limited in his knowledge/wisdom. “Since he is not so ancient, his position before God must be that of a contrite servant” (Hartley, p. 499).
vi) Weather forces, 22–30

Yahweh again follows up on Job’s inability to manage the universe. In these verses Job is asked if he understands meteorological elements, which are so unpredictable. Even in the current day, we must admit, though having a better grasp of meteorology than Job did, we still have a long way to go. “In this pericope, YHWH cites Job’s lack of firsthand knowledge of YHWH’s superintendence of the seemingly unpredictable weather. These elements, which originate in the atmospheric heavens (cf. v. 29 iginal), are totally independent of man’s perspective (see v. 22) or control. Job had contended that YHWH’s sovereign control of nature (including the weather—see 12:15) was an arbitrary abuse of power in which nations and their leaders were either blessed or cursed without reason (see 12:16ff—esp. verses 18, 23–25). YHWH responds by explaining that although YHWH does employ the weather (and nature) to intervene in the affairs of individuals and nations (vv. 22–24), the purposes of his iginal are not anthropocentric (vv. 25–27); YHWH was showing Job that his contention was based on the faulty assumption that man (and even Job himself) was the center of God’s attention. He exposed Job’s insufficient knowledge of God’s iginal in controlling weather and nature. Rather than merely causing confusion and disorder as contended by Job (12:16–25; cf. 30:18–22), the thundershower (or thunderstorm) may bring life to earthly realms far beyond man’s concerns (38:25–27). Furthermore, it is a source of limiting potentially chaotic forces—symbolized by the irrigation of the desert to limit its encroachment (vv. 26–27) and by ‘capturing’ of the watery deep in its frozen state” (Parsons [1980], p. 153; emphasis mine).

Verses 22—in this verse Yahweh asks Job another rhetorical question. In this question the snow and hail are pictured as dwelling in God’s storehouse. These were stored up for the right occasion, as the next verse indicates.

Verse 23—the relative particle in this verse reflecting that it continues the thought of verse 22. God informs Job that he uses snow and hail for the time of trouble. The verb is from the verb “to withhold, refrain” (HALOT, 1:361). The picture in this verse is of God withholding or reserving the snow and hail for a time of ḥa, “trouble” (see 15:24; 36:16, 19). This is the type of trouble that occurs with violent natural elements such as storms, hail, and rain (Dhorme, p. 585). In the last colon, this time of trouble is identified as the day of battle and war. Hail may be a very effective instrument used by God “to create havoc among troops fighting in an open field, vulnerably exposed to the heavens (e.g., Josh. 10:11). A hailstorm causes so much damage that it was considered to be a plague (Exod. 9:18–26; Ps. 78:47–48; 105:32; Isa. 28:17; 30:30). Snow too can severely cripple or even wipe out an army, especially if a blizzard catches an army making their way through a mountain pass (cf. Ps. 68:15 [Eng. 14]). No wonder Yahweh stores up these elements in the heavenly arsenal, keeping them in reserve for troublous times. When his people are
attacked by a powerful enemy, he may open his arsenal and hurl down hail to route the enemy’s army” (Hartley, p. 499).

Verse 24—again Yahweh asks Job another rhetorical question. “Where, then, is the way to the place where lightning is dispersed or where the east wind is dispersed upon the earth?” In the first colon נָע could be taken as “light” (NASB). Support can be drawn from the preceding stanza, vv 19–21. It could also be taken as “lightning” (NIV). Support for this can be drawn from the Elihu speeches, see 36:30, 32; 37:3, 11. Further support should be drawn from immediate context of a storm.

Verse 25—this verse as well as vv. 26–27 are a complete sentence in our Hebrew text. This is an extended rhetorical question and the implied answer to this extended rhetorical question is that God sends rain where from man’s perspective it may seem unnecessary; however, a certain amount of rain is necessary to even sustain the life forms present in the desert. Yahweh even effectively manages this part of the universe. The Hebrew נָעַרְרַרְרָל is literally “lightning flash with sound.” The term נָעַרְרַר means “thunder-bolt” (HALOT, 1:302) or “lightning flash” (BDB, p. 304). With נָעַרְרַר, “sound” Dhorme takes this as “rumble.” This probably refers to a “thundershower” (see Parson [1980], p. 179, n. 73). The NET Bible’s “rumble of thunder” is a good way to translate this expression.

Verse 26—Yahweh identifies that one of His purposes in sending rain is to water a land where no man lives. In the first colon Yahweh indicates that he sends rain on an uninhabited land. The second colon intensifies this thought where it reflects that Yahweh sends rain in the desert.

Verse 27—the purpose of God sending rain on uninhabited land is announced in this verse, viz., to satisfy the waste lands need for water. הַנַּגְּמָה הַנַּגְּמָה are closely related. The term נַגְּמָה means “storm; trouble, ruin; desert, wilderness” (HALOT, 2:1427) and הַנַּגְּמָה has a similar “wasteland” (HALOT, 1:642). This is an example of a hendiadys. Together they are emphasizing completely devastated land (see Gordis, p. 339). נַגְּמָה, a masculine noun, denotes the “place of going forth, act of going forth; issue, export; source, spring” (BDB, p. 425). It denotes a place such as mine from which something comes forth. This does not seem to make sense to many scholars so they emend (see Habel, p. 522; so also Hartley, p. 500, n. 1 who follows Dhorme [p. 587]). The NASB has understood this to be a reference to the seed from which grass comes. The sense of this verse is like this, “to cause the seeds of the grass to sprout.” The NIV has more simply rendered it as “make it sprout with grass.” With this understanding the NIV translators have apparently understood נַגְּמָה as a reference to the desolate land of vv. 26–27a which is the source from which the grass grows. They have translated the whole verse in this fashion: “to satisfy a desolate wasteland and make it sprout with grass?”
In a similar way, the NET Bible has translated v. 27b: “to cause it to sprout with vegetation.”

Verse 28—this verse pictures life from a father’s perspective. God asks Job a question about the origination of rain and dew. The construct לֶחֶם from the phrase לֶחֶם דּוֹרָה is a hapax and the suggested meaning is “drops” (BDB, p. 8). Since it has no other uses and its etymological background is obscure (see Gordis, p. 449), the rendering of the versions is exactly as BDB suggest, with the exception of the Septuagint which takes it as “clods” which seems unlikely since dew is deposited as drops and not clods (Dhorme, p. 588).

Verses 29—the imagery shifts from fathering in the previous verse to mothering in v. 29. The word נָרְפָּא may at times be taken as “hail” (Reyburn, p. 711); it is more often used as “ice” or “frost” (HALOT, 2:1140). Its rendering as “ice” easily harmonizes with vv. 29–30 (see also 37:10). The “hoar-frost,” נַפְשָׁר (HALOT, 1:492), of v. 29b is the frozen dew left on the ground in morning (Reyburn, p. 711).

Verse 30—this appears to complete the thought of v. 29. In v. 30b the semantics of נָרְפָּא revolve around capturing, seizing, and taking (BDB, p. 539). In this context the term’s semantics would fit in with the concept of “frozen.” When water is gathered/seized, it is compacted or “frozen.” In addition, this is confirmed semantically by the parallelism with the first colon where “water becomes hard [יָדֹּקֶשׁ] as stone.”

vii) Constellations, vv. 31–33
In these verses Yahweh questions Job about his control of the heavenly constellations. In 9:7–9 Job had affirmed Yahweh’s creation of the elements of heaven. In vv. 31–32 Yahweh appears to be drawing upon this earlier affirmation of Job. Verse 33 is a key verse since it denotes that the heavens have a general dominion/rule over the earth (see Gen 1) and Job was not the one who set this up.

Verse 31—though having some uncertainties about ancient traditions, God’s questioning of Job appears to focus on the northern constellations, Pleiades and Orion.

*םֵעַ֔נֵפְיָה, “bonds, bands” (BDB, p. 772), is used one other time in the Old Testament, 1 Samuel 15:32. In this latter context, the NASB renders it as “cheerfully” and the NIV as “confidently.” Neither of these renderings fit our context. Since מַעֲשֵׂה is governed by קֵ֛יָּר, to “bind” or “tie,” it would appear that the idea of bands or chains fits the verb well. This may be an example of oral metathesis for מַעֲשֵׂה יָחַנָּה “chains” (see Gordis, p. 450). Whether or not this hypothesis is accepted, the context would appear to support the semantics of a chain.*
“Pleiades” (BDB, p. 465), has generally been understood as a reference to Pleiades; however, it has also been understood as a reference to Canis Major (see Gordis, p. 450).

“cord” (BDB, p. 604), is only used here in the Old Testament. However, there is no uncertainty about its meaning because its cognate verb יָשַׁר, to “draw” or “drag” (ibid.), is so common in Hebrew.

is used four times in the Old Testament and is rendered as “Orion” (BDB, p. 493).

Verse 32—in this verse God continues his questioning of Job about his control of the constellations.

is only used here and its exact meaning is uncertain (so BDB, p. 561). Many different interpretations of this have been offered. Some of these include “stars” as in TEV, and “constellations” as in NASB, NIV, NLT, and NET Bible. However, there are a number of other options (for a listing, see Gordis, p. 450). At times it may be best to “punt,” as is done by the ESV, NRSV, with their transliteration of this term. However, as much as possible, I avoid transliteration, unless the transliteration is something such as a name. While recognizing the limited availability of data to come to a firm conclusion, we have enough data to tentatively translate it as either “stars” (HALOT, 1:566) or “constellations,” with μαζωραθ, as found in LXX. In addition, the immediate context implies a rendering that is related to the “stars” or “constellations” (Reyburn, p. 713).

is used twice in the Old Testament and has sometimes been equated with “Pleiades” (Gordis, p. 450). However, it has more generally been rendered as “Great Bear” (BDB, p. 747); the “Big Dipper.” “Her children” would be taken as the “Little Dipper” (Reyburn, p. 713).

Verse 33—does Job know the laws of heaven and could he set up their rule upon the earth? The obvious response to God’s question is that Job could most certainly do none of these. מַשָּׁר, “its rule,” is an inflected form, with a 3ms pronominal suffix, attached to the masculine noun מַשָּׁר, “rule, authority.” It is a hapax (BDB, p. 1009; HALOT reflects a difficult translation for מַשָּׁר as “writing in the heavens” meaning “the stars in the sky” [1:645]). It has another nominal cognate מַשָּׁר, “civil servant, office holder” in plural “officials, administrators” (HALOT, 2:1441). The Hebraic root מַשָּׁר is cognate with the Akkadian term šatāru, to “write,” and Arabic satara, to “write or line (a book)” (Gordis, p. 451). It has also been argued that the Arabic cognate rather than meaning to “write” meant “to arrange in order.” Whether its cognate meant writing or arranging, both offer a legitimate explanation for מַשָּׁר meaning “rule,” “dominion,” “law,” or “ordinance”
(ibid.). The 3ms object suffix on this term apparently refers to יָעַלְךָ in the preceding colon, “its rule” or “its dominion,” though the NIV takes it as “God.” Kissane has well summarized the thought of this when he notes that the ordinances of heaven “are the laws which govern the movements of the heavenly bodies to which are due the changes of season, rain, thunder, etc. These have a profound influence on the condition of the earth and by ordering the movements of the heavenly bodies, Job could control its (i.e. heaven’s) rule on the earth” (pp. 270-71).

viii) Thunderstorm, vv. 34–38

The final few verses, vv. 34–38, of 38:4–38:38 again emphasizes Job’s impotence and ignorance. “In this case, the wise and obedient response of the celestial phenomena (especially the lightning and the clouds) to the sovereign command of YHWH serves as a graphic testimony to Job’s impotence to control the atmospheric heavens; also, it functions as a subtle rebuke to Job for his failure to respond obediently and submissively within YHWH’s sovereign dominion” (Parsons [1980], p. 155).

Verse 34—God questions Job about his ability to direct the clouds to give him a shower. For Job to have lifted his voice to the clouds meant that he would have shouted out his personal commands to the clouds (see 36:29).

Verse 35—Job is questioned about his control over lightning. In 36:32 Elihu had observed that God sends the lightning.

Verse 36—there are basically three different understandings of this verse. The first is reflected by the translation of Kissane: “Who has put wisdom in the clouds? And who hath given insight to my covert?” This second understanding is reflected by Hartley’s translation: “Who imparted wisdom to the ibis? Who gave understanding to the cock?” The third is reflected by the translations of the NASB, NIV, ESV, NRSV, NLT, and NET Bible. For example, the NASB has translated it like this, “Who has put wisdom in the innermost being, or has given understanding to the mind?” Another example, the NIV has rendered it in essentially the same manner, “Who endowed the heart with wisdom or gave understanding to the mind?”

The interpretation of this verse hinges on whether יִעֲלֶה should be taken as “clouds,” “ibis,” or “heart”; and יִשָּׂרֶה as “covert,” “cock,” or “mind.” In whichever way either of the terms is interpreted, the other term is semantically paired off with it. As a result of this pairing off there are three different options in the interpretation of the paired units: a reference to celestial phenomena, birds of wisdom, or to man’s inner beings in which wisdom resides. We will briefly evaluate each of these interpretations.

The first interpretation views these terms as references to celestial phenomena. BDB initially define יִעֲלֶה as “inward parts,” though their
preferred understanding is “cloud layers” (p. 376). The rational for BDB’s preferred rendering is the immediate context of Job 38. Their rendering is then supported by the use of נַפְרוֹ, which they suggest have meanings such as “appearance” or “phenomenon,” perhaps as a reference to “clouds” (p. 967). However, what is against this understanding is Psalm 51:8 where נפּוֹ refers to “inward parts.” Because of the uncertainties associated with taking נפּוֹ as “inward parts,” Kissane and Habel support the interpretation of נפּוֹ as something related to the clouds by emending נַפְרוֹ to נַפְרוֹ, “my pavilion” (Kissane, p. 271; Habel, p. 523). As previously noted, BDB’s strongest support for “cloud layers” is the immediate context. Unless this is an example of personification, it is hard to understand how clouds are endowed with wisdom. In addition, though one verse is minimal, it nevertheless provides some support for taking נפּוֹ as “inward parts.” The context of Psalm 51:8 (Eng. v. 6) clearly reflects that נפּוֹ should be taken as something related to man’s inner being: “Surely, you delight in truth in the inward being [נפּוֹ]; you teach me wisdom in the inmost part [נפּו].” While the evidence of Psalm 51:8 is minimized by Kissane and Habel (for further support of this view, see Habel, p. 523 and Kissane, p. 271), it does provide some evidence.

The second interpretation views the problematic terms as references to birds of wisdom. This has been supported by noting that נפּוֹ was used in rabbinical tradition to refer to the cock (for a more elaborate discussion of this tradition, see Gordis [p. 452] and Dhorme [pp. 591–93]). Once this is recognized, it is necessary to demonstrate that נפּוֹ can also be understood as a bird of wisdom. Most interpreters who defend this view follow Dhorme’s identification of נפּוֹ with the Egyptian ḏḥwtj, which in Coptic is qoout. Both of these terms refer to the god Thot, the moon god who was represented by the head of the ibis, the bird of wisdom (so HALOT, 1:373–74). This interpretation is harmonized with the immediate context by connecting the birds of wisdom with the heavens where they are at home. However creative the identification of נפּוֹ with the Egyptian god may be, this interpretation is based on tenuous data.

The third view interprets this pair of terms as a reference to man’s internal wisdom. Though the lexical evidence for this view is limited, it has some lexical support in Psalm 51:8, where נפּוֹ refers to man’s inner being. Furthermore, the verb from which it is derived, נָפָר, to “over-spread, overlay, coat, besmear” (BDB, p. 376) semantically relates to that which is covered over. Taking נפּוֹ as man’s “inward parts” fits in with the semantics of the verb. When this is balanced against the fact that we have no clear identification of נפּוֹ with the Egyptian ḏḥwtj, it is preferable to take this as a reference to man’s inward parts. Since נפּוֹ is a hapax, we do face a problem no matter which interpretation is taken. The assumption of view 2 is that the rabbinical tradition for taking נפּוֹ as “cock” is clear so
we therefore interpret נפשו in light of that. Against this we should note that an early Targum rendered יָדוֶיהוֹ, "to the heart" (Dhorme, p. 591). In reference to the logic, it would seem to me that the opposite may be true here, since we have a decent understanding of נפשו, we should then interpret יָדוֶיהוֹ in light of that. As such, the Hebrew text does not need to be emended. At face value, the immediate verse refers to God placing wisdom in man’s inner being. However, the problem with this interpretation is that it does not fit the context.

Some conclusions may be drawn. The biggest problem for second and third views is the immediate context since it is dealing with the celestial phenomena. However, a problem for the first view is that clouds do not have inner wisdom. How then do we harmonize a verse dealing with man’s inner wisdom and its immediate context focusing on celestial phenomena? Perhaps, the easiest solution, as hinted at above, is to see this as an example of personification. Yahweh has used personification in previous verses. For example, in v. 35 lightning bolts saying “Here we are” is an example of personification. Does ice come from a mother’s womb (v. 29)? This is a physiological impossibility! However, personification is regularly used in poetry and is often used by Yahweh in the poetry of Job 38–41. With this understanding, we can explain the personal elements of the verse and also explain how it correlates with its immediate context. The connection of this type of interpretation with the immediate context of vv. 34–38 has been summarized by Parsons: “The twofold theme of Job’s impotence and lack of knowledge (or wisdom), which implies YHWH’s sovereignty and omniscience, is again reiterated in this pericope. In this case, the wise and obedient response of the celestial phenomena (especially the lightning and the clouds) to the sovereign command of YHWH serves as a graphic testimony to Job’s impotence to control the atmospheric heavens; also, it functions as a subtle rebuke to Job for his failure to respond obediently and submissively within YHWH’s sovereign ḫōn” (“Biblical Theology, p. 155).

Verses 37–38—the subordinate clause in v. 38 ties it in closely with v. 37. Job is asked who can count the clouds or cause them to send water (v. 37) on a land that needs it (v. 38).

b) Evidence from animate creation, 38:39–39:30

Beginning with 38:39 and extending through 39:30, Yahweh now deals with the animal kingdom. The animals Yahweh uses in this list are not the domesticated kind that Job was used to handling but wild animals that Job could not control. In 38:39–39:30 the Joban author deals with the second portion of Yahweh’s first speech. Having moved from a discussion of His wise control of heavenly bodies, Yahweh then comments on the unusual characteristics of these wild animals. His selection of animals in this particular order appears to be random.
These animals, great and small, are all part of God’s wise providential care of his creation.

Hartley has provided a helpful overview of this section: “The animal portraits include the lion, the raven, the mountain goat, the hind, the wild ass, the wild ox, the ostrich, the horse, and birds of prey. In the OT these animals are particularly associated with the desert or the desolate steppe, the habitation of adverse, demonic spirits. They are also the sole inhabitants of postwar desolate ruins (e.g., Isa. 34:6–7; Ezek 34:8). For example, the wild ass is the enemy of cultivated land and the lion the enemy of a shepherd’s flocks. With these portraits Yahweh asserts his lordship over the entire earth—the cultivated land and the wilderness, the domesticated animals and the wild beasts. No part of the world lies outside his rule. No hostile forces exist beyond his authority. That which seems unruly and demonic to mankind is assuredly subject to God’s rule…. As the Lord of the universe he governs the whole world for the well-being of every creature, including those mankind despises” (p. 504). This demonstrates Yahweh’s wise rule of the created world.

Like the preceding section dealing with Yahweh’s control of inanimate creation, this section dealing with Yahweh’s control of animate creation is also a polemic against Job’s anthropocentric view of life.

i) Lioness and the raven, 38:39–41

“It has never crossed Job’s mind to hunt prey for lions (v.39) or to stuff food into the outstretched gullets of the raven’s nestlings (v.41). But are not their growls and squawks cries to God, on whom all these creatures ultimately depend?” (Smick, p. 1038). God’s provisions for the animal world demonstrate His wise rule.

Verse 39—this verse and the next form a long question. Yahweh’s questioning of Job reflects that Job as well as any human being does not provide food for lions, God in his management of the animal kingdom has taken care of this.

ְָּהַּ/לי has been translated by the NASB, ESV, and NRSV as “lion” and by the NET Bible, NLT, and NIV as “lioness.” Since this word is an epicene noun, it can be taken in either direction; however, I slightly prefer the rendering of the NIV because the only other place that it is used in Job is 4:11, and this reference appears to be a “lioness.” In addition, lioness fits in well with the second colon’s emphasis on satisfying the appetites of young lions. “The lioness terrifies mankind. Her loud growling sends chills throughout a town. In ancient thought the people drew a close parallel between wild animals and their enemies; e.g., Ashurbanipal (668–627 B.C.) describes his hunting expedition for wild game, especially the lion, both as a fight against a powerful enemy and as a fight against the powers of chaos. But Yahweh provides prey for this stout beast and sees that she
has an adequate supply to feed *her whelps*. The lioness usually makes her den among thickets, like the thick brush growing along the banks of the Jordan, for they offer her good protection and afford an excellent *ambush* (*āreb*) where she may lie in wait for some unsuspecting prey” (Hartley, p. 505).

Yahweh’s use of the lion is significant for these reasons: (1) Eliphaz used it in Job 4:11 as symbol for those who are wicked and thus would be destroyed by Yahweh. This use of the lioness was tied to Eliphaz’s understanding of divine retribution. Eliphaz used this as an attack on Job by indicating that Job was like the wicked lion from which God withheld its food. This may be a subtle rebuttal to this abuse of divine retribution. (2) In 10:16 Job had compared God to a lion hunting (*dWx*) down its prey, Job. Yahweh here indicates that He was the One doing the hunting for food for the lion but not a killer who stalked its prey. (3) Together these show that Yahweh wisely executed His plan.

*מָכָה* is best rendered as “appetite” instead of as “living thing,” or “beast” (BDB, s.v. “מָכָה,” p. 312, no. 3). In this regard, it is like the term *נְבַע* as used in Isaiah 56:11, “with mighty appetites.”

Verse 40—this completes the thought of the question begun in v. 39 by describing the place where lions lie hidden as they wait for their prey.

Verse 41—Yahweh has just questioned Job about the meat-eating king of beasts, the lion; His attention now shifts to another meat-eater. However, this creature, in contrast to the lion, feeds on meat that has been already killed. Yahweh’s rhetorical question indicates that no human being provides food for the raven. God provides for this bird’s appetite through His great providential arrangement in the animal world. Hartley has further noted that this paragraph “functioning as an introduction to the long discourse on animals, teaches that Yahweh sustains both the strong and the delicate among the wild animals. He shows his care and protection for all of his creation, and he does so in a way that far surpasses what any human being could or would do” (p. 505).

*רָבִּים*, “the raven,” is an unclean animal, at least for the Jew (Lev 11:15). In contrast to the lion, it is a helpless animal. Though it eats the same food as the lion, it comes by its food not by hunting but by being a scavenger. One of the sources from which it gathers food was from the lioness’s leftovers. When the lioness does not get any prey then the raven does not eat and its young ones cry out/scream to God for food. Yahweh who has endowed the lioness with her hunting expertise answers their cries.
ii) Mountain goat and the hind, 39:1–4

The question involved here can be summarized in this way: “Who watches over the mountain goat and hind during the time when they are most vulnerable?” This stanza complements the preceding one, in that the mountain goat and hind were the kinds of animals that lions preyed on and these animals were most vulnerable when giving birth. Not only were these animals vulnerable while giving birth, but also these kinds of animals are vulnerable even when young. In v 4 Yahweh expresses that He takes care of these animals even when they are young and vulnerable.

Verse 1 — Yahweh asks Job if he knows when the mountain goat gives birth to her young and if he has observed an adult female deer giving birth to her calf.

אָנָּתָלְךָ כְּאֵילֵי יָם, is literally “the goats of the rock”; i.e., “the mountain goat”; the word “rock” or “cliff,” צָרִים, reflects that this is not a domestic goat but one that runs freely in the mountains, this is possibly the ibex. The Nubian ibex is found today in the areas of “Qumran, En-gedi, and Sinai. These animals go about in small herds of eight to ten. Their light tan bodies with lighter brown stomachs blend in well with the rocky hillside.” (Hartley, p. 506).

אִם לָאָתָלְךָ is a polel infinitive construct from אָתָלָתָלָה, to “to whirl, dance, writhe.” In the polel stem its second use is to “writhe in travail with, bear, bring forth” (BDB, pp. 296–97). Here the expression could be translated, “Do you watch when the deer [ָא,ן] give birth?”

Verses 2 — this verse and v. 3 form a complete thought. In v. 2a Yahweh asks Job if he knows how long the wild goat and deer are pregnant. Verse 2b is a repetition of the thought of v. 1. הָאָתָלָתָלָה תַּשְׁפָּסָה reflects an idiom of the counting of months as an idiom denoting the period of gestation for animals. This has a parallel in Ugaritic literature (2 Aqht ii.43–44) where the Ugaritic hero Daniel sat down and calculated the months until childbirth. The verb הָאָתָלָתָלָה is used in the sense of completing a determined period of time. This verb is used in this sense in Genesis 35:34; 29:27 (see Gordis, p. 455).

Verse 3 — while this verse is a repetition of the thought in v. 2b, it is not expressed in the form of a rhetorical question but its literary form reflects that it is more a commentary on the questions of vv. 1–2 (Alden, p. 383). The clause תַּשְׁפָּסָה is very difficult to render. It could literally be translated, “they send forth their pains.” While תַּשְׁפָּסָה may be translated as “pain” (BDB, p. 286), its semantic range includes the nuance of “labor pains,” as this context plainly indicates (HALOT, 1:286). In light of the immediate context, the thought of this verse is that these animals are relieved of their labor pains at childbirth. In keeping with the nuance of תַּשְׁפָּסָה as “labor pains,” the NASB translates this word in it immediate clause as “they get rid
of their labor pains.” The ESV and NRSV translate this clause with a passive nuance: “[they] are delivered of their young.” The NIV transforms the object of the Hebrew verb into its subject and the active verb into a passive: “their labor pains are ended.” However, יְבוּרָה may also be an example of metonym for effect, that which causes the pain: their offspring (so BDB, p. 286). The NKJV’s translation is consistent with this understanding: “they deliver their offspring.” A cognate of יְבוּרָה is an Arabic term habal, “fetus.” In agreement with the use of יְבוּרָה as “fetus,” Hartley translates this clause in this manner: “they are delivered of their fetus” (p. 505; see the second nuance of in HALOT, 1:286; also see Gordis, p. 456; Rowley, p. 319; Tur-Sinai, p. 540). Due to the parallelism, the last two options are also viable translations of יְבוּרָה.

Verse 4—this birth moves beyond the point of birth to the maturing process for the offspring of the mountain goat and doe. The point of vv. 1–4 is that the mountain goat and doe carry their young during the time of their pregnancy, they give birth to them, and their young vigorously grow up in the wild, and leave their mothers without any assistance from man. In light of the overall context, the point is that this process is part of God’s wise and compassionate control of the animal world.

iii) Wild donkey, 39:5–8

In these verses God pictures the wild donkey. This was a creature who “was admired for both its freedom and its ability to survive under the harshest conditions. There is also a touch of humor in this passage. While its relative the domesticated donkey suffers the noise pollution of the crowded cities and the abuse of animal drivers (v.7), the wild donkey can laugh at that and somehow find green morsels in places humans cannot survive (v.8)—the salt flats and the barren leeward hills (v.6)” (Smick, p. 1038). Job had claimed in Job 3:17–19 that man did not have freedom until he was dead and free from God’s oppression; however, here God is asserting that he had given the wild donkey its freedom (Habel, p. 532).

Verses 5–6—God implies by His questioning that He is the One who has given the wild donkey its freedom to live in the uninhabited areas and to run freely in the hills looking for food. The “desert” (see also Job 24:5) and “salt land” (see Ps 107:34; Jer 17:6) in v. 6 refer to those places where man can neither live nor cultivate. The plains near the Dead Sea were characterized as “salt plains” (Reyburn, p. 722). In v. 5 the word קַרְפָּה, “wild ass” (HALOT, 2:961), is used 10 times in Hebrew text (count is based on Accordance). קַרְפָּה is also called “the onager, a swift ‘half-ass,’ which is basically a horse with several donkey-like characteristics. This animal which survives today only in northern Iran and Afghanistan is considered as virtually untamable [sic] by moderns.” The word רֲדָרָה in the last colon of v. 5 “is a synonym of קַרְפָּה, which in Aramaic (see Daniel 5:21—דכָּרָה) is the exact equivalent of קַרְפָּה” (Parsons [1980], pp. 185–86, n. 128).
Verse 7—the wild donkey does not have to put up with the inconveniences that his domesticated cousin must endure. The wild donkey does not have to put up with the noise of the city. He also does not have to listen to the shout of one that drives or makes his domesticated cousin work. The point is that God has created the wild donkey and he is quite content with his lot in life.

Verse 8—since food is scarce in the wilderness, the wild donkey must roam large areas of land looking for food. There is one difficulty in this verse that we need to briefly examine. The word יָרֵא כָּמִס is vocalized in MT as a noun. This nominal root is a hapax legomenon that has been tentatively rendered as “searching” (BDB, p. 1064). As such the first colon of v. 8 could be translated in this way: “the searching of the mountains is his dwelling,” or with the NKJV: “the range of the mountains is his pasture.” Though Gordis does not agree with this rendering, he provides a literal translation of the MT as “the range of the mountains is his dwelling” (p. 456). Gordis’ understanding of יָרֵא כָּמִס as “range” is not a great difficulty since a range is what is searched. However, Gordis does not take this according to the Masoretic vowel pointing. He, along with NASB, ESV, NRSV, NIV, and the NET Bible, has taken this as a verb coming from יָרֵא, to “spy out,” “seek out,” and “discover” (HALOT, 2:1708). If this is the verb, we would need to revocalize יָרֵא כָּמִס to read as יָרֵא, “he explores” (NASB) or “he ranges” (NIV, ESV, NRSV, NET Bible). This fits the parallelism with the last part of this verse very well.

iv) Wild ox, 39:9–12
The ox served man willingly and efficiently because of its strength; however, man could not subdue the wild ox. “No human being can harness its massive strength. It is ridiculous to think that this freedom-loving creature would ever stay the night by a manger. Unwilling to put its neck to the yoke, it will never drag a harvested grain from the field. This stalwart animal, which is endowed with more strength than wisdom, is, nevertheless, shrewd enough to stay out of bondage. From a human perspective, its strength, being available only for its own needs, goes to waste. God, however, is its master and its sustainer” (Hartley, p. 508).

Verse 9—the wild ox would never work for man as his domesticated counterpart would. Furthermore, he would never be willing to stay enclosed in a pen in order to eat. The idea of spending a night in a stable “implies being closed up in a pen in order to eat. At night the domestic ox is brought from the fields to spend the night in a pen or stable” (Reyburn, p. 723). The implication is that wild ox function exactly as God created it.

The Hebrew term for “wild ox,” כָּיוּר, can also be spelled as כָּיוּר. This is translated as μονοκέρως in the LXX, which has been taken to be the “unicorn”; however, it is also understood as a “wild ox.” The KJV translated this as a “unicorn.” In Deuteronomy 33:17 the translators of the
LXX also rendered this as μονόκερος. Here the KJV also took that as a “unicorn.” In English we have taken the unicorn to be a mythical one-horned creature. This was translated in the Vulgate as “rhinoceros.” This wild ox was a powerful creature that man could not domesticate. The male was very large. It surpasses six feet in width at its shoulders. It has long horns which are pointed forward and has a dark coat (see Num. 23:22; 24:8; Ps. 22:22 [Eng. 21]). This animal was surpassed only in size by the elephant and rhinoceros. This was one of the most dangerous of all hoofed animals. This animal has been extinct since 1627 (Andersen, p. 281).

From various historical sources, we can see that the wild ox loved to graze in wooded areas. Consequently, “it was prime game for a royal hunt; e.g., the great Egyptian Pharaoh Thutmose III published on a scarab that he killed seventy-five aurochs on a hunt. An Ugaritic epic recounts the story of the deity Baal hunting for a wild ox in the marshes of Lake Huleh, located in the fertile valley north of the Sea of Galilee (UT, 76:II:9, 12). This last reference offers evidence that these animals roamed the area of Palestine in the 2nd millennium B.C.” (Hartley, p. 508).

Verse 10—the thought of v. 10a is that of putting a rope about the wild ox and making him to plow. In v. 10b the “valleys” is parallel with “furrows” in the first colon. The verb translated as to “harrow” refers to dragging “a heavy instrument with spikes across a plowed field, to break up the clods of soil and make the ground smooth for planting” (Reyburn, p. 724). Thus the idea of v. 10b is will the wild ox drag a harrow across the furrows of v. 10a.

Verses 11–12—though the wild ox is extremely powerful, it cannot be relied upon by Job to work for him. In v. 12 the same emphasis about work is continued. Job would not be able to rely upon the wild ox to bring in Job’s grain and gather it to the threshing floor.

In vv. 5–12, Yahweh has mentioned two animals that cannot be tamed by man. Yet these creatures do exactly what God has programmed them to do. The creature, who will not serve man (v. 9) and upon whom man cannot depend to work for him (v. 12), follows God’s designs. This is in contrast to Job who no longer submitted to Yahweh’s providence/counsel.

v) Ostrich, 39:13–18

The wings of the ostrich are not sufficient for flying so she lays her eggs on the ground rather than in a nest. While she hunts for food during the day, she leaves her eggs uncovered with the sand left to keep the eggs warm. She seemingly does not have enough wisdom to care for her young as other birds do. Though unable to fly, the ostrich is able to outrun the horse. Though it appears that God has created an uncaring and physically deficient bird, Yahweh in His wisdom has marvelously created and takes care of this strange bird. Rather than being a capricious God, Yahweh is an omniscient and omnipotent Sovereign.
Verse 13—Though there are difficulties with this verse, in the final analysis I have taken it as a comparison between the feathers of the ostrich, which though beautiful cannot sustain flight, and the less beautiful wings of the stork, which enable it to fly. Since this is an extremely difficult verse to understand, we will examine it in detail.

Gordis notes the difficulty of this verse when he point out that there are over twenty different interpretations of it. This has resulted in many textual emendations (Gordis, p. 458; Rowley lists some of the different possibilities as well, see pp. 249-50). To this difficulty, it should be noted that this is not found in the LXX. Since so many educated guesses are available, we will stick to working with the MT as best we can. However, this is also quite difficult and undoubtedly is the reason why so many different interpretations are available. A quick comparison of two representative translations, NASB and NIV, both work with the MT, will partially reflect some of the difficulties with this verse.

NASB: The ostriches’ wings flap joyously with the pinions and plumage of love...
NIV: The wings of the ostrich flap joyfully but they cannot compare with the pinions and feathers of the stork.

There is not much difficulty with the first colon.

מַעֲנֵי מָחָה is literally “wings of piercing cries.” This is an epithet describing the ostrich; the normal way of referring to the ostrich in Hebrew is as בְּנֵי נֵס, “the daughters of song” or “those characterized by song,” i.e., “the singing birds.” This apparently refers “to the female ostrich’s wild flapping of its wings (while opening and shutting her beak) when responding to the male’s mating overtures or the similar fluttering of its wings (while hissing and screeching violently) when defending its chicks or eggs…. On the other hand, מַעֲנֵי as the name of the ostrich might denote the distinctive booming cry of the male ostrich (which could have been generalized as the name for any ostrich)” (Parsons [1980], p. 187, n. 139).

The difficulty comes with the second colon. It is quite clear that there is some kind of contrast between the ostrich and the מַעֲנֵי. Most of the other words are clear as both translations reflect. The term מַעֲנֵי is cognate with נְפָשֶׁי. נְפָשֶׁי is an adjective translated as the “faithful, godly” (HALOT, 1:337). מַעֲנֵי is a feminine noun rendered as “stork” in Leviticus 11:19, Deuteronomy 14:18, Psalm 104:17, Jeremiah 8:7, and Zechariah 5:9. In every place where מַעֲנֵי is found, it refers to the stork. In each case, when we do have a clear use of the noun, at least in five contexts, this does not
seem to be much of a problem. Against taking הָדְרֵשׁ as a reference to the “stork,” we should notice that BDB support this as being a feminine adjective from הָדָר, rather than as a noun (p. 339). A problem for following BDB, as is the case with NASB, KJV, and NKJV, is that most of the 32 uses of the adjective הָדְרֵשׁ are as a substantive referring to the “godly” or “godly ones,” and, of the strictly adjectival uses, none qualify anything other than human beings (note the uses in BDB, and see DCH, 3:282–83). Since הָדְרֵשׁ never qualifies animals, unless this is the exception, and the five uses of הָדְרֵשׁ are exclusively used to refer to the “stork” (BDB, p. 339; DCH, 3:283), we are best to conclude that הָדְרֵשׁ refers to a “stork,” and not a “kindly stork” or “plumage of love.”

Assuming then that הָדְרֵשׁ means “stork,” this still does not solve the problem associated with the translation of the remainder of this colon. A possible literal translation will demonstrate this problem, “if pinions of the stork and feathers.” There are two problems that we will consider. The first problem relates to how we are to understand the use of the hypothetical particle מָא. The NASB apparently read it as מָא, “with,” a rendering that is questionable. We should normally think of מָא as meaning “if” or as something within its semantic range, such as “but,” “though.” However, there are other translation options with מָא. For example, in constructions involving an oath or possibly an implied oath, it could function like an adverb. For example, in a positive oath, “if I will do,” is tantamount to “Surely I will not.” The particle מָא can also be taken as an interrogative as we have had done earlier in this section (BDB, pp. 49–50). While the semantics of מָא allow for other translation options, one option that is not involved is the translation as “with.”

The second problem is related to the syntax of this verse since there is no verb in this colon. However, if we take this as an elliptical construction, this verse could be translated: “but the wings and feathers of the stork do not flap joyfully.” This understanding poses few problems. If this context is clearly dealing with a comparison as seems to be the case, we are probably best to translate this with the NIV. “The wings of the ostrich flap joyfully but they cannot compare with the pinions and feathers of the stork.” A comparison is being made between the feathers of the ostrich which though beautiful cannot sustain flight and the less beautiful wings of the stork which enable it to fly. Though the NIV has had to add some words to its English translation, it may best reflect the thought of this verse.

Verses 14–15—these two verses appear to reflect upon the proverbial careless ostrich. The ostrich leaves her eggs to be warmed in the ground in order to hunt for food. While she is doing this, she never takes into account that a person or beast may destroy her eggs. Verse 14 could be translated like this: “For she leaves her eggs on the ground and she permits the dust to warm
them.” “Scholars have been greatly exercised by the fact that the actual behavior of the ostrich does not [precisely] coincide with the description given here. The ostrich does sit upon her eggs continually, though she leaves them frequently in the early period of incubation in order to go in search of food by day. She usually covers them with sand so that they are not fully exposed to the sun’s rays” (Gordis, p. 459). In v. 15 the ostrich is unmindful that harm may happen to her eggs. Yahweh’s point is that this is the way He has created the ostrich.

Verse 16—this verse pictures the ostrich as a cruel and indifferent mother. Because of some of the difficulties, we will examine each colon individually.

Verse 16a could be translated in one of two ways. First, “She treats her young (i.e., her eggs) harshly as not belonging to her”—an egg view. Second, “Her young (i.e., her chicks) are treated harshly as not belonging to her”—a chick view. The hiphil verb נָפַלְלָה is only used in the hiphil and means to “make hard” or “treat hardly” (BDB, p. 905). The verb appears to be 3ms hiphil perfect. The issue here relates to the identity of the subject, which most translations have suggested as the ostrich (so NIV, NASB, ESV, NRSV, NLT, NET Bible, and NKJV) and some commentators have seen it as her sons (so Gordis, p. 460). We will consider the two ways that the subject may be identified. First, if the subject of this colon is the ostrich, we need to explain the disparity between what appears to be the subject, “the ostrich” (עָנֵנָה נֶץ) as initially introduced in v. 13 and continued through v. 15 with 2fs verbal forms, and the masculine verb נָפַלְלָה. Some have emended נָפַלְלָה to something such as נָפַלְלַה or נָפַלְלִי in order to conform to the expected feminine agreement with the ostrich. However, another explanation of this syntactical difficulty is that Hebrew syntax allows for a lapse in gender agreement, as is sometimes the case when the verb precedes the subject (see Waltke & O’Connor, p. 109). The general explanation given for this grammatical tolerance is that Hebrew is a masculine oriented language reflecting the culture of its day (rightfully so I might add, given the headship of Adam). Second, if we take the subject as “her sons,” we would take the verb in an intransitive sense. This solves the gender disparity between the subject and verb. However, since “sons” is plural, how do we solve this problem of its number disagreement with the verb. There are other examples where we have the plural form of sons following a singular verb (see Genesis 9:23; 11:29; 21:32; and GKC, sec. 146, 2b). With this understanding, Gordis has translated as: “Her young ones grow strong without her.” As such, she is a cruel mother in raising her young. If we follow the previous understanding (the egg view), the ostrich also treats her young in egg form cruelly from man’s perspective. This may find some support from the last colon of this verse, which is presenting her as giving birth. This is a tough verse, and we must be cognizant of the difficulties that it presents.
Verse 16b could literally be translated as, “for her labor is in vain without fear.” The idea of “without fear” is having no concern. Since πυγίζα is similar to Isaiah 49:4, 65:23 where labor is a reference to childbirth (however, πυγίζα referred to “produce” in v. 11), this is probably referring to her giving birth. Perhaps, this is better translated with the NET Bible: “she is unconcerned about the uselessness of her labor.”

Verse 17—Yahweh is the one who did not endow the ostrich with some of the capabilities associated with intelligent mothering of her young. In the first colon, the causative use of the hiphil verb, πνψε, from πνψα, “to forget” (HALOT, s.v. “πψα” [1], 1:728–29), means to “cause to forget.” Because of the parallelism here, the semantics of forgetting should focus on God’s willfully neglecting to endow this animal with this type of instinct (see Reyburn, p. 729).

Verse 18—though Yahweh has pictured the ostrich as intellectually challenged along with its negative implications, this unit ends on a positive note. The ostrich has tremendous speed. The first colon is somewhat obscure because the hiphil verb ᾲρμ is a hapax. Furthermore, this verbal root has no cognates in biblical Hebrew. HALOT lists three different homonyms for ᾲρμ. In this lexicon, Job 39:18 is associated with their second homonym. While another option is presented, HALOT’s suggested sense is “to beat the air with her wings” or to “rush away” (1:630). Though there is some difficulty, the second line seems to indicate that the idea of the ostrich simply lifting up her wings is inadequate (as NASB has). The second colon would appear to reflect that the first colon is focusing on the ostrich’s running ability. The idea would appear to be something like this: “Yet when lifting her wings to run, she laughs at the horse and its rider” (see Reyburn, p. 729; NIV).

We have moved “from the sublime to the ridiculous. It is hard to argue that this hilarious sketch of the ostrich serves any solemn didactic purpose. It is what it is, a silly bird, because God made it so. Why? This comical account suggests that amid the profusion of creatures some were made to be useful to men, but some are there just for God’s entertainment and ours” (Andersen, p. 281).

vi) Horse, 39:19–25
“The horse is the only animal in this poem that is domestic. This unexpected feature still serves the Lord’s purpose, for only one kind of horse is viewed—the charger, the war-horse. The creatures of the wild in their proud freedom and curious behavior are obviously beyond Job’s control, but even a creature that man has tamed can display fearsome behavior that excites our imagination” (Smick, p. 1039).
Verse 19 — Yahweh again asks Job another rhetorical question. “Do you give the horse his strength, or clothe his neck with a ḥmâr?” In this context, it is clear that Yahweh is describing the undaunted strength. Yahweh was the one who gave the horse its intrepid vigor, and not Job. The noun ḥmâr is a *hapax legomenon* and has been rendered in the KJV and NKJV as “thunder.” Perhaps, as a metonym of effect, the LXX’s φόβον, “terror,” has some similarity with this rendering. This type of rendering is predicted upon the assumption that ḥmâr is semantically related to the noun ṧmâr, “thunder.” However, neither “thunder” nor “terror” seem apropos for our immediate context. Most modern versions have rendered this as “mane,” such as NASB, ESV, NIV, NET Bible, NLT, NRSV (both NIV and NLT further qualify this term with “flowing”: “flowing mane”). Gordis has related this to an Arabic phrase ʿumm riʿm, “mother of the mane” (p. 461; for further discussion, see HALOT, s.v. ḥmâr [II], 2:1268). The most fitting translation of ḥmâr for the immediate context would be as either “mane” or “flowing mane.”

Verse 20 — Yahweh next asks Job if he makes the war-horse jump about like a locust or causes him to have a majestic snorting that terrifies man. In the first colon the verb ḥeš, to “quake” (HALOT, 2:1271), is used in the hiphil in the sense of causing to “jump, spring” (ibid., 2:1271) or “leap” (so ESV, NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT, NET Bible). A nuance related to leaping is consistent with the simile, “as the locusts,” ḥmâr, which apparently refers to a locust plague. “A plague of locusts descending on crops makes the whole field appear to be shaking with their movement” (Gordis, p. 461).

Verse 21 — not only is the horse awesome both in appearance and strength, but he is ready for battle. In the first colon, the horse digs in the valley to get out to fight. The verb ṣ̂r̂j, exclusively used in the Qal, is normally translated as “digs” (HALOT, s.v. ṣ̂r̂j [I], 1:340); however, the sense of pawing more precisely relates to a horse. He is also poetically described as rejoicing, or exulting, in his strength. This is to say that the horse has the kind of strength that is necessary in war. In the final colon the term ṣ̂v,n<, “equipment, weapons,” “order of battle, battle” (HALOT, s.v. ṣ̂v,n< [I], 1:731), may be taken as “weapons” or “battle.” When ṣ̂v,n< is used with ṣ̂b̂q̂l̂, in a military context, a case may be made for ṣ̂v,n< being used as a metonym for that which is associated with war, namely, the “weapons” (see Dhorme, p. 608).

Verse 22 — The war-horse is so fearless in the face of battle, he laughs at fear and does not turn back at the sight of the sword. The point of the poetic imagery is that His Creator has designed him for this type of environment.

Verse 23 — as the horse goes to battle, the quiver rattles against his side. The verb ṣ̂b̂q̂l̂ is from the root ṣ̂b̂q̂l̂, to “rattle” (HALOT, 2:1246). As a hapax, its meaning is derived from the context. In the second colon, the word ṣ̂b̂q̂l̂, “flame, blade” (HALOT, 1:520), could be rendered as “flashing” since it is...
qualifying spear: “flashing spear.” The term translated as “spear” is a “pointed blade fixed on a long wooden shaft” (Reyburn, p. 732). The last word in this verse, יִדְיָק, is a noun that has often been translated as “javelin” (BDB, p. 475). However, this would not be the instrument that is identical with our modern-day javelin. Perhaps, it would be taken as a javelin-like instrument of war: “a light spear suited for throwing at the enemy while riding on a swiftly moving horse” (Reyburn, p. 732). Perhaps, this noun may be correlated with the Arab or Turkish sword with its curved blade that broadens out nears its point: scimitar (HALOT, 1:472).

Verse 24—the horse is running at top speed to engage the enemy when he hears the blast of the trumpet. There are two items that we will briefly look at in this verse.

יִדְיָק is from the root יָדַע, to “swallow” (HALOT, 1:196). It is only used twice in the OT, here, as a Piel—“to swallow,” and Genesis 24:17, as a Hiphil—to “give to drink” (ibid.). Gordis suggests that the form we have in Job is derived from a different Aramaic root יַדְע meaning “hole” or “pit.” This is common in rabbinic Hebrew, which means to “make holes in the ground” (p. 462). I do not think that this is warranted, since the Hebrew term may make good sense if we understand that יִדְיָק is used metaphorically of the horse. The horse is running so fast that we might speak of it as “swallowing up” the ground. We have a similar expression in English when we speak of eating up the track (Habel, p. 525).

Since יִדְיָק does not make much sense to have a horse not believing, some commentators have either focused on a less common nuance of יָדַע or emended it (for some of these, see Gordis, p. 462). Some of the different understandings of the Hebrew text include these: “he cannot stand still at the sound of the trumpet” (ESV, NRSV; NIV, NET Bible; Dhorme, pp. 609–10; and Hartley, p. 511); “[he] rushes forward into battle when the trumpet blows” (NLT); “[the horse races] unchecked by trumpet sound” (Pope, p. 305, 313). It should not take us by surprise that we have יִדְיָק used of the charger since it is also described as laughing (v. 22) and speaking (v. 25), to mention a few of the other human attributes that have been ascribed to him. This example of personification is not unique to the horse but was also used of some of Yahweh’s other creatures. Therefore, when we apply this to our verse, most of these different renderings are possible. The point here is that the horse becomes so excited when it hears the blast of the trumpet calling for war, it cannot believe it; i.e., it cannot stand still.

Verse 25—when the sounds and smells of war are sensed by the horse, he is ready for battle. It has been suggested by BDB that יִדְיָק from יִדְיוּק should be taken as יִדְיָק (s.v. “יִדְיָק,” p. 191, sec. 2a). With this understanding we should take this to mean “out of the abundance of” and consequently, “as
often as the trumpet sounds” (ibid.). There are three other alternatives that are preferable and still preserve the integrity of the MT. First, Pope has correlated יד with the Ugaritic term bd meaning “song.” As such we could read bad or baddé in place of יד. This would be taken in an adverbial sense, “at the call [i.e., song] of the trumpet” (p. 313). Second, Gordis has related this to an Arabic noun daway’u which means “the faint sound of a wind or a bird in flight.” This noun is cognate with “the verb daway ‘hum, rumble, rustle’; hence render ‘at the faint, distant sound of the trumpet.’ Both stichs now describe the excitement of the horse at the first intimations of battle from afar” (p. 463). Third, Dhorme has noted that the term יד denoting “‘a sufficiency of…’ is expletive after ב, just as in ונייראכ and בדריא ‘in fire’ of Jer 51:58. Consequently, יד means simply ‘at the trumpet’, i.e. at the sound of the trumpet” (p. 610). This final understanding demonstrates that this is explicable in Hebrew. Therefore, resorting to either emendatio or a cognate language seems to be unnecessary.

vii) Birds of prey, 39:26–30

Job had cited the birds of the heavens as witnesses to the unjust suffering brought upon him by God in 12:7 (Job mentions birds in other contexts such as 9:26 and 28:7). In the immediate context of Job 39, there is a contextual reason for discussing the birds of prey at this point. Since Yahweh has just described a battle scene in 39:19–25, it would be natural for him to turn to those who clean up after the battle, the birds of prey. Consequently, Job is asked if he was responsible for the migratory instincts of these birds of prey.

Verse 26—in this verse Yahweh asks Job if his wisdom is responsible for the hawk soaring and migrating to the south. There are a number of items that we will examine in this verse.

 Tb begins this unit. Like most of the subsections in Yahweh’s first speech, this verse is begun with the interrogative Tb. The preposition Tb is showing either the means or cause from which the hawk got his inherent nature to fly toward the south. Does the hawk have this nature by Job’s understanding (or because of Job’s understanding)?

 Tb is a hapax. It is a Hiphil denominative verb (to “soar”) derived from Tb, “wings” (HALOT, 1:9). We had its feminine cognate noun in v. 13, Tb, “pinions” (ibid.).

 Tb is a generic term denoting birds of prey which can refer to a number of species from the “hawk” or “falcon” family; it is only used three times in the OT. The two other places it is used in Leviticus 11:14 and Deuteronomy 14:15. Both of these list unclean birds (BDB, p. 665). The spreading of his wings in 26b southward apparently denotes his migratory habit of flying south. If this is the case, this appears to refer to the sparrow.
hawk. Though it is not an inhabitant of Palestine, it would be known because of its stops there during its flight south (see Smick, p. 1039).

Verse 27—Yahweh now asks Job if the vulture soars on high or makes his nest on high because of his wisdom.

— the word פָּנָא, “mouth,” is a metonym of cause for effect. As such, it denotes the words or commands which are produced by the mouth. An example of this is found in Genesis 45:21 where רֹאֶשׁ פָּנָא, “upon the mouth of Pharaoh,” means “at the command of Pharaoh”; and in Exodus 17:1 פָּנָא יְהוָה means “at the command of Yahweh.” The point here is that Yahweh is asking Job if it was by Job’s command that the eagle flies.

— “griffon-vulture” or “eagle.” Like גּוֹלֶם in v. 26, this is also a generic term. This term is used for any bird of prey that is characterized as flying high. It is used much more frequently in the OT than the גּוֹלֶם (BDB, pp. 676–77). Because of the nature of the description in these verses, the eagle is not what Yahweh had in mind. Rather, it appears to be the griffon vulture. It is difficult to know how to render this, since in the mind of English readers, we think of the majestic eagle when we use the term eagle; however, when vulture is used, we have a very negative impression in our mind. This destroys the picture of the griffon vulture which is a very majestic looking bird of prey. It is the largest bird in that area of the world. It has a wing span of approximately eight feet and is about four feet long (see George Cansdale, Animals of Bible Lands [Great Britain: Paternoster Press, 1970], pp. 142, 144).

Verses 28–29—in these two verses Yahweh describes how the vulture makes his fortified home on high and how from there he is able to detect food.

Verse 30—in this verse Yahweh notes the results of this bird’s investigation, viz., finding the slain in order to preserve its young ones through a blood feast.

, a 3mp Piel imperfect, is a hapax. The major problem with this verb relates to the verbal or nominal root from which it has been derived. A number of solutions have been proposed to solve this problem (for a discussion of these, see Grabbe, pp. 128–30). We will briefly examine three of these possibilities. First, this could be a denominative verb. The root form of the יְדוּ שֵׁלָשׁ is יְדוּשָׁלִי. Since there is no cognate Hebrew noun to draw upon, we must consult other Semitic languages. A possible noun from which this might have been derived is found in the Aramaic portion of Daniel. In Daniel 7:5 the Aramaic term for “rib” or “side” is found, יָדוּשָׁלִי. However, a problem with this is explaining the connection between “side” and our context in Job which required something such as drinking (Grabbe, pp. 129–30)? Second, this may reflect a textual problem.
Supposedly, the first ל has been lost from a quadriliteral ונלעתי. This was derived from either ל or ונלעתי, to “swallow” or “suck.” The verbal form would have been in the Pilpel stem (Gordis, p. 464). Third, the root ונלעתי may be secondarily derived from the verbal root ונלעתי. A few Hebrew triconsonantal verbs have identical first and third radicals. The Hebrew verb והנה may have developed from the root והנה. An intermediate step between this earlier form והנה and the latter form והנה is the quadriliteral והנה (BDB, p. 1057). If we take this view, then we have to see that והנה is a by-form of והנה. Consequently, the development here would be like this: והנה became והנה (or והנה) then והנה (Delitzsch, 2:347–48). In evaluating these alternatives, the data used to draw the respective conclusions is somewhat tenuous. We do not have enough information to draw a firm conclusion about its cognate. However, the context of Job 39 suggests something related to the young birds of prey eating the blood of their prey. This understanding is also suggested by a number of the early versions, as the following citations from Grabbe reflect (p. 128).

LXX: νεοσσοι δὲ αὐτοῦ φύρονται ἐν αἰματὶ, “And his young ones wallow in blood.”
Aquilla: ἐστομιομένοι, “taking with the mouth.”
Symmachus: καταρροφῶσιν αἷμα, “gulp down blood.”
Vulgate: pulli eius lambent sanguinem, “his young ones lick/lap up blood.”
Targum: אפרדים נמלים אים, “and his young ones swallow blood.”
Syriac: ἀσρόννυν ḫnān, “and his young ones lick up blood.”

This understanding of the young birds eating the blood of their prey is reflected in the following conservative modern translations:

ESV: His young ones suck up blood
NIV: His young ones feast on blood.
NET Bible: And its young ones devour the blood.

Any of these three translations accurately reflect the contextual sense of this verse. Since Job had used these animals to document that God had caused him to suffer unjustly, Yahweh uses them to demonstrate His omniscience and Job’s ignorance. “Thus, YHWH reminds Job of his words in 28:23–24 in which he concluded that wisdom was so hidden and remote that only YHWH could discover it. By using the birds of prey (which Job had already mentioned and had stated that they were unable to discover the source of wisdom, even with their keen eyesight—28:21–22), YHWH confirms Job’s statements of wisdom teaching in chapter 28. However, YHWH sought not only to confirm the legitimacy of this wisdom truth which Job had apparently begun to doubt, but also to demonstrate how inconsistent Job’s attitude of rivalry was, in light of his own lack of wisdom” (Parson [1980], p. 163).
In addition, there may be a polemical thrust here since the falcon was a sacred bird for the Egyptians. He symbolized Horus (see Parsons [1980], p. 140, n. 140). This may be further supported by the reference to the כנף. In Ugaritic, the goddess of war, Anat, acts like the vulture (nṣr). Also in Egypt the vulture is a symbol of royalty (ibid., n. 141). In Egypt, Assyria, and Persia since the כנף flies high, he was considered omnipresent, thus an appropriate symbol of royalty (ibid., pp. 191–92, n. 160).

4) Summary challenge, 40:1-2
Some have seen v. 1 as obtrusive (the LXX omits it) but in light of its formulaic use in the preceding part of the book this appears to be erroneous. This should not be taken as an introduction to another speech of Yahweh since the author introduces both of Yahweh speeches by saying that he spoke to Job “out of the storm” (38:1, 40:6). This prepositional phrase is missing in v. 1. It is best taken as transitional to emphasize that Yahweh had reached the climactic point of his first speech.

Verse 1—this is a prosaic introduction to the question that God will pose to Job in v. 2.

Verse 2—Yahweh questions Job about whether he will continue to find fault and desire to contend with Him. The challenge is that if Job wants to continue his argumentation, this is the time for him to respond.

יהו is made up of the interrogative particle followed by בָּרָד, which has been taken by some as a qal infinitive absolute from the root בָּרָד, to “strive, contend” (BDB, p. 936). However, Gordis suggests that this is an example of an archaic qal participle (from the same root בָּרָד) that appeared with medial waw verbs. The form would read בָּרֵד. As such, this is parallel with the participle מַלְכֵי מִרְכֶּבֶת in v. 2b (Gordis, p. 464). Both this participle and מַלְכֵי מִרְכֶּבֶת demonstrate the legal nature of Yahweh’s challenge.

רָצָר has been taken by some as an adjective or a noun meaning “reprover, fault-finder” (HALOT, 1:417–18). This is a hapax and, as such, has a certain level of ambiguity. A case may be made for taking רָצָר as a parallel with רָצָר. If this is so, רָצָר may be a Qal verb from the root רָצָר (I), “to instruct” (ibid., pp. 418–19; so Gordis, p. 465). Another option has been to emend רָצָר to רָצָר, a qal passive participle, from the root רָצָר, to “turn aside,” to “abandon.” In opposition to this emendation, Gordis has noted that there is no real support for this. He has suggested that רָצָר should be taken as a qal imperfect from the root רָצָר, to “instruct.” Though he recognizes certain liabilities with this since the Qal of רָצָר is rare, some support for this is found in that the Niphal is used often. Thus there should have been a Qal since the Niphal is its passive (Gordis, p. 465).
Yahweh has reversed the table on Job. Rather than Yahweh answering Job, Job is to respond to Yahweh.

c. Job’s first response, 40:3–5
Verse 3 serves as a prose introduction and vv. 4–5 give us Job’s first response to God.

Verse 3—in this prosaic verse we are informed that Job responded to God.

Verse 4—Job declares to God that he is insignificant and will keep his mouth shut.

_was often translated as “lo.” Apparently in old English this was a way of emphasizing what followed. In our translation, it is best not to retain this archaism. Linguists generally agree that this particle at times emphasizes the following material. As such, it could be translated as “behold,” “if,” or in some similar manner (see DCH, 2:572–73; HALOT, 1:251). When used with certain syntactic combinations, this particle may reflect subordination that is found in conditional clause (Waltke & O’Connor, p. 636, 38.2d). It may also be used in direct speech to introduce a fact upon which a following statement is based (ibid., pp. 676–77, 40.2.1c). This later use is the way _is used in v. 4 (see Newell [1983], pp. 148–61). If we take this as emphasizing the immediate clause, v. 4 could be translated as “Certainly, I am unworthy. How can I answer you?”

_qal perfect 1cs from , to “be slight, swift, trifling”; in the qal it can mean to be “slight” as of water; to be “swift” in reference to horses or warriors; or to be “trifling, i.e. of little account.” This last use is usually of people (BDB, p. 886). We could translate this as “insignificant.” As Job has seen God’s might and wisdom, he has been overwhelmed by his insignificance. “Job’s silence, which is symbolized by his placing his hand over (or ‘to’) his mouth, may indicate his admission that he can no longer stand before God defiantly as an equal (as in 31:35–37), but only respectfully as a subordinate” (Parsons [1980], p. 166). The issue here relates to whether Job is truly repentant or has simply acquiesced to the evidence presented by God himself (so Andersen, p. 285, Habel, p. 548; and Parsons [1980], p. 166). If Job has simply acquiesced, this explains why God needed to further address him. However, this is not explicitly stated nor is it necessarily implied by the fact that Yahweh had a second speech (especially if God had more to say about His administration of justice). Taken at face value Job’s response seems to be saying, “I submit.” By Job putting his hand over his mouth, he is saying that he acknowledges that what God has said is correct. Job is guilty; he recognizes his “creatureliness” (Newell [1983], p. 136).

Verse 5—the use of the x/x+1 pattern emphasizes that Job has said too much. He must not say any more.

d. Yahweh’s second speech, 40:6–41:26
In this speech Yahweh addresses the issues concerning His administration of justice and Job’s futile attempt at self-justification. In Job 21 and 24 Job had complained about God’s indifference to wickedness. In this context Yahweh reflects on His ability and His resolve to properly administer justice, something that Job could not do (40:8–13). Therefore, Job would have to leave his request for vindication completely in God’s control (see 40:14). To cogently demonstrate Job’s inability and God’s ability, God challenges Job whether he could control Behemoth and Leviathan. If Job could not do this, how would he hope to be able to administer justice. Since God could do this, he could properly administer justice. Therefore, Job must submit to Yahweh’s wishes.

1) Introduction, 40:6–7
Verse 6 serves as an introduction to Yahweh’s second speech and is essentially the same as 38:1, and 40:7 is the same as 38:3. The second colon in 40:7 is repeated by Job in 42:4b.

2) Opening challenge, 40:8–14
“Job is challenged to authenticate his challenge of YHWH’s moral basis of lordship by assuming the governance of the universe and the administration of justice” (Parson [1980], p. 196).

Verse 8—this verse summarizes Job’s basic problem. Job was willing to question God’s justice in order to justify himself.

חָשָׁה, from חָשַׁה with the interrogative particle יָני, is like בָּא, in that it is an emphatic particle. This is especially true with questions, and could be translated as “indeed” (Gordis, p. 474).

רָטְכָּכָי is a hiphil impf, 2ms, from רָטֲכָי (1). This verb is only used in the Hiphil and Hophal stems with nuances such as to “break, destroy, suspend, foil, make useless” (HALOT, s.v. “רָטֲכָי” (1), 2:974–75). For example, רָטֲכָי is found in the expression רָטֲכָי בָּרֱכְנָה, breaking a covenant. This is to say, a covenant has been made legally ineffective, annulled. The usage of רָטָכָי in this context could be understood as a delocutive use of the hiphil. Since Job was calling for an event that would declare Yahweh’s צוּכַת to be legally ineffective, this verb would be preferably translated as either “impugn” or “discredit” (Waltke & O’Connor, pp. 438–39, sec. 27.2e). It is was one thing for Job to defend his integrity, and Job was right in the defense of his integrity; however, Job has inadvertently gone to the opposite extreme in attempting to discredit Yahweh’s system of justice.

מַשְׁכֵּן is often translated as “judgment.” This noun is a nominal derivative of מָשַכְת, to “judge,” or “govern” (BDB, p. 1047). The verb מָשַכְת is used six times in Job as either a participle or a finite verb; and the noun מַשְׁכֵּן is used twenty-three times. Culver has suggested that the principal idea of this term is “to
exercise the process of government” (*TWOT*, s.v. “תַּחֲתוֹן,” 2:947). This would also include the idea of executing judgment. Bildad had initially claimed that God does not pervert מָלַשׁ (8:3). In 9:19 Job responded to this by saying that no one could summon God when it comes to the issue of his מָלַשׁ. However, Job becomes bolder as the dialogue develops further. The tension between Job and his three friends has revolved around whether or not God wisely executes justice, i.e., Job received what he deserved according to his friends; and Job maintained that if this was the case then God had denied him his מָלַשׁ (27:2). It is in response to this kind of claim by Job (also note Job’s legal claim in Job 31) that Yahweh has responded in this context. Yahweh’s point is that Job had discredited His administration of justice. The focal point of this speech is Yahweh’s just control of the universe.

Verse 9—we should notice in this verse how Yahweh forces Job to compare himself with Yahweh. This continues the thought of v. 8 in that Job has unwittingly set himself up as a rival to God. Job’s complaint that God had unjustly treated him in effect means that he could do a better job than God could in running the universe. Yahweh’s demonstration of power and authority are represented here by the use of the terms מִזְגָּל, “arm,” and קֹל, “voice.” Can Job verify his claims with such power and authority, through the use of his מִזְגָּל, “arm,” and קֹל, “voice”?

Verse 10—this is the answer to the question that Yahweh posed to Job in v. 9. Hartley has summarized v. 10 with this: “To demonstrate his rulership, Job must *adorn himself with majesty and grandeur* and *robe himself in glory and splendor*. The heaping up of words for incomparable majesty captures the grandeur that attends God’s manifestation of his kingship (cf. Ps. 93:1; 96:6). Even an earthly king displays his authority in regal dress and in the terribleness of his bearing (cf. Ps. 21:6 [Eng. 5]; 45:4 [Eng. 3])” (p. 520).

Verse 11—though Job had questioned the common understanding of a mechanical view of God’s governing the moral order of the world (24:21–25), he had
unwittingly held onto this view (27:2) by challenging God to a legal hearing. In this verse God commands Job to use his power to administer justice.

Verb 21 could be literally translated as “the overflow of your wrath” or “the anger of your wrath.” There are two genitive constructions in this phrase. The first genitive we will consider is the pronominal suffix on ָיִם, “your wrath.” This is a subjective genitive of agency. “Your” (Job), the genitive, is the agent producing the wrath (Waltke & O’Connor, p. 143, sec. 9.5.1b). The second genitive relationship is the connection between the construct ָיִם and its genitive ָיִם. Like the first genitive we considered, this is also a subjective genitive. It would appear to be a subjective genitive of agency. This is to say, Job’s wrath overflows on the wicked (ibid., p. 143). The two genitives taken together are an hendiadys. This could be translated as “the fury of your wrath.”

Verse 12—the first colon of this verse is essentially the same as v. 11b. In the last colon of this verse Job is challenged to immediately crush the wicked.

Verb 21, a masculine singular qal imperative, is only used here in the OT meaning to “cast or tread down” (BDB, 213). It is used in Arabic to denote the wrecking of a building. Here it is applied to wrecking the wicked. This verb is like Hebrew יְרָם which can be used of destroying men or buildings (Gordis, p. 474).

Verse 13—God continues to challenge Job to bury the wicked in the ground and to imprison them in the dark side of Sheol.

Verse 14—Yahweh here acknowledges that if Job did “clothe himself in kingly majesty and defeat the proud, God would laud him as the victor in the present contest. He would have proved his complaint that God rules without regard for justice. There is a strong ironic tone in Yahweh’s argument: if Job could do all of this, he would not need God. Job would have no need of pleading for a vindicator, for his own right hand could deliver him” (Hartley, p. 521).

3) Main body of speech, 40:15–41:26
In this climactic section, Yahweh’s argumentation revolves around two creatures which man cannot tame: Behemoth and Leviathan. There has been considerable debate as to whether these creatures are real or mythological. If they are real, what are they? If they are mythological, is this a vestige of polytheism? Or is it a reference to Satan and the forces of evil associated with him? Before we consider, each alternative, let’s first look at the Hebrew terms that have been transliterated as Behemoth and Leviathan.

a) Semantic considerations for בֵּהֵמֶת and לֵיִתָן
i) בֵּהֵמֶת (see 40:15)—this Hebrew term is a plural form of בֵּהֵמֶת, “beast, animal, cattle” (BDB, p. 96). In its plural form, בֵּהֵמֶת is used in Deuteronomy 32:24; Joel 1:20; 2:22; Micah 5:7; Habakkuk 2:17; Psalms 8:8; 49:13, 21; 50:10; 73:22; Job 12:7; 35:11 and 40:15. In Deuteronomy 32:24,
is used in reference to a “wild beast” (ibid., pp. 96–97; see also HALOT, 1:112; against this understanding of “wild beast,” this is the only passage that Gordis sees as possibly being a mythological context). Our immediate context in Job appears to be a context suggesting that this is a “hippopotamus” (HALOT, 1:112; Gordis maintains [p. 476] that there is one other passage that this term can refer to the hippopotamus, Isaiah 30:6). When we consider that this noun is a plural form and is used with a singular verb, לֶחְזִי, this would indicate that this is a large beast such as the hippopotamus (against this Tur-Sinai takes it simply as the plural “beasts,” p. 341). This is further supported by 40:15 where this animal eats grass like an ox. The hippo is the largest animal in Egypt, Palestine, and Syria. At its shoulders, it is five feet high and 15 feet long. It weighs up to five tons (see Parsons [1980], p. 216, n. 27). Rather than taking this as a hippopotamus, R. Laird Harris has suggested that this was an elephant (“The Book of Job,” pp. 20–21) and Henry Morris as a dinosaur (Record of Job, pp. 115–17). While it is possible that this could refer to a mythological creature, the immediate context gives good support for this being a real animal, whether it is a hippopotamus, elephant, or dinosaur.

ii) לתנ”ך (see 40:25)—as noted previously (see above at 3:8 for a discussion of this term), this term may fit in with a mythological interpretation, however, I am convinced that this passage is best taken as a literal creature possibly the crocodile. In this context, Leviathan has generally been regarded as real creature. Leviathan is most often taken as a crocodile (Gordis, pp. 571–72), though Morris again identifies this as a dinosaur (Record of Job, pp. 117–22).

As we have considered the lexical data for Behemoth and Leviathan, the evidence can be used to support either mythological creatures or real creatures. Possibly, both interpretations can be synthesized. The issue will have to be decided from their use in the context of Job 40–41 (for a helpful discussion of Behemoth and Leviathan, see Snoeberger, “Behemoth and Leviathan”). We will briefly examine each of these.

b) Support for mythological interpretation of בֹּהוֹמֶה and לֶחְזִי
There are four arguments that have been used to support a mythological interpretation.

i) The immediate context, in particular the introduction to this second speech from Yahweh (40:8–14), deals with more than what we had in the first speech of God. Since God is dealing with his moral order, Leviathan and Behemoth must have some type of moral connection and not just simply animals. Smick has stated that “the concentration on these two awesome creatures, placed as they are after the assertion of the Lord’s justice and maintenance of moral order, lends weight to the contention that they are symbolic though their features are drawn from animals like the hippopotamus and crocodile” (p. 1048).
ii) The terms לֶשֶׁת and בֵּהֵמֶת may be used symbolically. In particular, לֶשֶׁת is used to symbolize evil forces (Ps 74:12–14 and Isa 27:1). In addition, the book of Revelation may have allusions to this context when it mentions the beast and the dragon in chapters twelve and thirteen (Smick, pp. 1048–49).

iii) The context of Job 40–41 has these animals clearly doing some extraordinary things such as breathing firebrand (41:10–11, Eng 41:18–19) and he treats iron like it was straw (41:19, Eng 41:27) (see Smick, p. 1049).

iv) In later Jewish eschatological literature, Leviathan and Behemoth have been used together as mythological beasts. Leviathan was to dwell in the sea and Behemoth to dwell in the desert. In 4 Esdra 6:49–52 and the Apocalypse of Baruch 24:4, it is stated that they have been created together on the fifth day of creation in order to provide food for the righteous during the messianic era (Pope, p. 321).

c) Support for living animal interpretation of לֶשֶׁת and בֵּהֵמֶת
There are five arguments that have been used to support a real interpretation.

i) In Yahweh’s first speech (38:1–40:5), Yahweh has described real animals. Yahweh draws upon these to describe the nature of his world and man’s part in it. This is to say that the animal world was used to graphically portray truth about Yahweh’s moral order. “The same consideration supports the idea that Behemoth and Leviathan are also natural creatures, the existence of which heightens the impact of God’s argument” (Gordis, p. 571).

ii) A primary feature of Hebrew poetry is hyperbole. This is especially true in the book of Job and more specifically in Yahweh’s first speech. Hyperbole was used in the description of the ostrich, “she laughs at horse and rider” (39:18) and the horse, “he laughs at fear” (39:22).

iii) Looking past the use of hyperbole which is not as dominant as some make it, Leviathan and Behemoth are described as real zoological creatures. Behemoth is described as being herbivorous in 40:20, “lying in the shadow of the rushes of the river” in vv. 21–22, liable to capture by hunters in v. 24. Leviathan is described in 40:26 as “leisurely lapping up its waters.” In 40:31 Leviathan is not described as having heads but as a normal creature with a head. It can be taken captive by hunters in 41:25 and he can become supper for a mortal in vv. 30–31. “The poet then underscores the paradox that these massive beasts, ordinarily peaceful, are possessed of extraordinary strength” (Gordis, p. 571). In none of the texts used in a mythological context is Leviathan described in this extended physical manner.

iv) The Joban author is not describing cosmic events that occurred in the past such as is the case with the Babylonian and Ugaritic epics dealing with
creation. He has focused on creatures that Job could presently see and touch, even capture.

v) Some have seen a problem with understanding Behemoth as a reference to the hippopotamus and Leviathan as the crocodile since they are generally found in Egypt. However, this is not much of a problem in that Job appears as if he had been a cosmopolitan. We would, therefore, expect him to be acquainted with massive animals that were no doubt well known in the ancient Near East.

d) Combination of living animal and mythological interpretations of Behemoth and Leviathan

A mediating position conflates both interpretations. With this view real creatures are used who represent the cosmic forces. Hartley is representative of those who take this view. “Into the factual description the author skillfully blends fanciful metaphors drawn from mythic accounts of monsters in order that these beasts may represent both mighty terrestrial creatures and cosmic forces” (pp. 521–22; see also Parsons [1980], p. 199). A major problem with this view is that it is based on implied correlations with mythological texts. The burden of proof is on those supporting this view to prove that these implications are valid and not just simply assumed.

When we read Job 40–41, the text clearly comes across as an account describing two real creatures. God drives the massive natures of the hippopotamus and the crocodile home through His use of hyperbole.

e) Behemoth, 40:15–24

In Habel’s chart, what he identified as “A₁,” I have changed to “C,” with the result that Habel’s “A₂” has been changed to “A₁.” Perhaps, this chiastic arrangement, we could call a “pivotal chiasm.” In my understanding of this speech, v. 19 is a thread that preserves Yahweh’s primary theological thrust introduced in vv. 8–14 (see Habel, Book of Job, p. 559):

A  Topic statement: Behemoth and Job, v. 15
B  Description of Behemoth’s might and bodily form, vv. 16–18
   C  Pivot statement: Yahweh’s control of Behemoth, v. 19
   B¹ Description of Behemoth’s prominence and habits, vv. 20–23
A² Closing challenge: Who can control Behemoth?, v. 24

i) Topic statement: Behemoth and Job, v. 15

Job and Behemoth apparently the hippopotamus are on the same footing in that Yahweh created both of them.

るもの is probably best understood as “see” or “look” since this verse and what follows does not make sense unless we take this as an imperative denoting an observation process.
ii) Description of Behemoth’s might and bodily form, vv. 16–18

Verse 16—God tells Job to observe the strength in the hippo’s loins, the upper portion of his legs, and the muscles in the lower part of his body, his belly (Reyburn, p. 745).

ירא́י, another *hapax legomenon*, is a plural construct noun. Its singular form is ירַי which from the context means “sinews, muscle.” Though its verbal root is not extant in Biblical Hebrew, it is found in Aramaic which means “be firm, sound.” In Biblical Hebrew it has a cognate יְרָשׁ, “navel-string” and another ירַי, “firmness” (BDB, p. 1057). This apparently denotes that which supports his belly (Gordis, p. 476).

Verse 17—God expands on Behemoth’s strengths by noting the firmness of his tail and the tightly knit nature of his sinews.

ירַי is listed as the second homonym for the root יַרְשׁ (HALOT, 1:340); the first homonym’s gloss is “to desire” (ibid., 1:339–40). In BDB, the gloss of יַרְשׁ (II) is to “bend down” (BDB, p. 343). As is typical for NASB, its translation of the verb is consistent with BDB’s suggestion: “He bends his tail like a cedar.” However, the NIV has rendered it as “sways” and the NKJV has translated it in a similar way: “moves.” Both of these are essentially the same. To complicate the matter even more, Dhorme had translated this as “stiffens” (p. 620). This has also been followed by most other commentators such as Gordis (p. 468), Hartley (p. 523), and Parsons ([1980], p. 199). Habel’s translation as “erect” (p. 550) is essentially the same as “stiffens.” This is the manner in which the Septuagint and Vulgate understood this term. Dhorme has hypothesized that there is a connection between the first and second root for the homonym יַרְשׁ. “It may be that the root יַרְשׁ meant at first ‘to make taut, stiffen’, and ‘to will’, tension of the nerves and muscles suggesting tension of the will” (Dhorme, p. 620). Whether we accept Dhorme’s hypothesis or reject it (see Gordis’s caution, p. 476) is irrelevant, for if this is the hippopotamus—at least using this creature as a working hypothesis, then this explanation harmonizes with the short and firm tail that is characteristic of the hippopotamus when it is performing some of its activities. The point of comparison with the cedar is not related to the concepts of bending or height and probably not to swaying, but apparently related to strength and firmness (perhaps, “straightens” [NLT] or, perhaps somewhat more awkwardly for a hippopotamus, “stiff” [ESV, NET Bible]), as the context is describing its characteristics of strength (Reyburn, p. 746).

ירַי is the Kethib. The Qere has יַרְשׁ and thus clearly reflects that this is a plural. The term יַרְשֶׁה, “his thighs” (HALOT, s.v. “ירַשֶה” (II), 2:923), has been translated as “his testicles” in Syriac, Vulgate, and Onkelos. Pope
takes this as well as the whole verse in a sexual sense. This is based on his mythological understanding of this text (pp. 323–24). Habel also interprets this in the same manner (pp. 553, 559), and Gordis is also apparently sympathetic to this sexual interpretation (pp. 476–77). The point of the verse in this context is not Behemoth’s virility but his strength.

Verse 18—God further describes Behemoth’s strength by describing his bones and limbs.

is a masculine noun whose root is "bone, strength, self" (BDB, p. 175) is parallel with "his bones" in the first colon. This term could be translated as "limbs" to avoid redundancy with "his bones."

iii) Pivot statement: Yahweh’s control of Behemoth, v. 19
This verse interrupts the description of Behemoth and his surroundings. God describes this creature as His priority in terms of its strength, yet God has it completely under His control.

may denote “first in time.” If this is the case, this possibly refers back to Genesis 1:24. However, it can also denote priority in God’s created order in the animal kingdom, “chief” (so KJV or RV). In light of the hippo’s strength as described in this context, this is best understood in this latter sense. As far as strength Behemoth was the crown of God’s animal creation.

is translated by ESV as “Let him who made him bring near his sword!” However, commentators generally view this verse as virtually impossible to interpret: “it conveys little clear meaning” (Rowley, p. 256). Gordis has listed six common interpretations followed by his own. First, Driver and Gray have understood this as a reference to God giving Behemoth powerful teeth. In agreement with this understanding, the NET Bible has translated v. 19 in this manner: “It ranks first among the works of God, the One who made it has furnished it with a sword.” Second, God brings His sword near to attack Behemoth. This reflects the rendering of many translations, such as NASB, ESV, NIV, KJV, NKJV, and NRSV. Third, the hippo is played with by angels (Septuagint). Fourth, Behemoth was made to govern the dry land (Gunckel). Fifth, the hippopotamus was made to govern his fellows (Giesebrecht). Sixth, Duhme took this as a reference to Behemoth being made Lord over his comrades (for details, see Gordis, p. 477). The seventh view is the understanding of Gordis. “Only the one well-covered (with armour) may bring his sword near to attack him” (ibid.). He accomplishes this by emending the verb to and identifying the root with another root, to “cover.” Assuming that the semantic range of the verb, “approach” or “bring near,” includes the semantics of “giving” or
“furnishing,” the first view has possibilities (*NET Bible* calls this the safest interpretation, see the note associated with Job 40:19). The third interpretation is based on the Septuagint’s rendering of this verse which may reflect either a translator’s emendation of the Hebrew text or a Vorlage with a different reading that the Hebrew text. It is also possible that this reflects a translator’s creative interpretation. The fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh interpretations involve unnecessary emendation. About the various suggestions, Andersen has correctly noted, “the enumerable conflicting solutions offered do not encourage us to accept any of them” (p. 289).

While recognizing the difficult, though not impossible, nature of this verse, I would tentatively be in agreement with the second view. As noted previously, most translations are in agreement with this view. A “literal” translation of this colon would be like this: “The One who made him can approach him with his sword.” While in agreement with the majority of translations, the dynamic equivalent of the *NLT* is helpful in that it reflects the sense of this colon: “Only its Creator can threaten it.” As the *NLT* correctly reflects, the primary point of this colon is not simply taking a sword to attack Behemoth, as Gordis has imprecisely categorized this interpretation. Rather, this is a reference to God’s sovereign control of the beast. Hartley has captured the essence of this view. “Because Yahweh is its Maker, its power and greatness do not exist in opposition to him. In contrast to mythical thought Yahweh did not have to defeat Behemoth to gain control over the forces of chaos. Rather Behemoth obeyed him from the first moment of its origin. In addition, its imposing form bears witness to the majesty of its Creator. Unafraid, Yahweh can approach Behemoth with his sword. Such an act symbolizes his complete mastery of this beast” (p. 525). Habel’s understanding also correctly understands the significance of v. 19 and this is reflected in his structural arrangement (see above).

iv) Description of Behemoth’s prominence and habits, vv. 20–23

In v. 20 God describes how Behemoth grazes on low hills that were close to the water and in vv. 21–23 He describes its prominence and habits.

Verse 20—this verse reflects the herbivorous nature of Behemoth. Because of Behemoth’s nature, the beast of the field can play on these low hills without fear of becoming Behemoth’s supper.
The point of this is that the hills pay tribute to Behemoth. A third alternative is to interpret \( \text{בֵּית הָאֵל} \) as “animals of the hills.” Tur-Sinai has correlated this expression with the Akkadian \( \text{בּוּל סֵרִי} \) “the beasts of the field” (pp. 560–61; so also Pope, p. 325; and Cohen, p. 51). This last interpretation may also find support from the parallelism. If we look past some of Tur-Sinai’s excesses, this may be understood as Gordis has suggested: “The beasts of the hills sing for him and the animals of the field play there” (p. 478). However, after suggesting this as a possible interpretation, Gordis was not so convinced that he changed his understanding, and neither has Tur-Sinai’s understanding persuaded me since exact parallelism is not a biblical absolute in hermeneutics. In fact, precise synonymous parallelism occurs rarely in Old Testament poetry, though there are common examples of imprecise synonymous parallelism. I have preferred to take this with the first option since it makes good sense in Hebrew; however, the other two views in my understanding are certainly possible. In the final analysis, all three interpretations end up with Behemoth as lord of this domain.

Verse 21 — Behemoth lies under the thorn bush and hides himself in the tall grass of swampy areas.

\( \text{לְטִישׁ} \), “lotuses” (BDB, p. 838) or “bramble, bush” (HALOT, 2:992) is not generally understood as the Egyptian water lily, \( \text{Nymphae lotus} \). This is probably the thorny bush known as the \( \text{Zizyphus lotus} \) which is common in hot and damp areas such as is found between North Africa to Syria. This is very common in the area about the Sea of Galilee (Pope, p. 326).

Verse 22 — in this verse Behemoth finds shade under the lotus plant and the willows along the bank of the wadis surround it.

Verse 23 — Behemoth is secure even when a river rages against it.

It is interesting to observe that \( \text{יִרְמָי} \), Jordan, is not used with the article. \( \text{יִרְמָי} \) is used with the article over 200 times in the Old Testament, only twice is it used without it—here and Psalm 42:7. This is probably because this is in a poetical text and because of its parallel with \( \text{רוֹא} \) in the first colon of this verse. Because of this parallelism, Jordan is probably used as an example of other rivers as well. Our verse describes the hippos as being very secure in turbulent waters. This is because “hippos are excellent swimmers and can stay under water for as long as thirty minutes (their nostrils and ears being hermetically sealed while submerged), they are at home in the water no matter how turbulent and swift the current. They can even walk along the river bottom with surprising speed” (Parsons [1980], p. 219, n. 41).

v) Closing challenge: Who can control Behemoth?, v. 24
There are different ways that this verse has been translated.

- **NASB**
  Can anyone capture him when he is on watch
  With barbs can anyone pierce his nose?

- **ESV**
  Can one take him by his eyes,
  or pierce his nose with a snare?

- **NIV**
  Can anyone capture him by the eyes,
  or trap him and pierce his nose

- **NET Bible**
  Can anyone catch it by its eyes,
  or pierce its nose with a snare?

The rendering in the NASB is consistent with the understanding of the translator of the LXX (see Driver and Gray, 1:358). The idea is that none are able to capture Behemoth while he is on guard with barbs to pierce his nose. The translations in the NIV, ESV, and NET Bible uniformly make good sense of the MT. While NASB clearly reflects that none can capture Behemoth while he is watching, the other three versions may suggest not so much capturing Behemoth while watching, but disabling his eyes, perhaps through the use of spears. Thus, the first colon may reflect two options: capturing Behemoth while watching (so NASB) or disabling Behemoth through his eyes (so NIV, ESV, NET Bible).

The NASB’s translation suggests a tighter connection between the first colon and the second. This is to say the second colon completes the thought of the first colon: one cannot pierce Behemoth’s nose while he is awake. However, the translations of the other three versions may imply that God is suggesting that no one can capture Behemoth by either disabling the eye or piercing the nose. Therefore, there may be two different entrapments, one related to the eye and one to the nose. However, there is really no need for such a sharp dichotomy if the nature of the trap provides a connection between entrapment of the eye and of the nose. In this regards, Parsons has noted that a trap may have been set with spears above it, and these spears would pierce the animal when it hit the trap’s rope ([1980], p. 219, n. 43). In the final analysis, the translations of the NIV, ESV, and the NET Bible do not necessarily rule out the implication that God may have implied that no one can capture Behemoth while he is awake. May be the translators of the NLT have “captured” the sense of this verse: “No one can catch it [Behemoth] off guard or put a ring in its nose and lead it away.” At the end of the day, the point of the verse is that Job has no bona fide hope of approaching Behemoth to capture him.

When we compare v. 24 with v. 19, the point of this pericope is clear. Job cannot capture Behemoth (v. 24), yet God has him completely under his control (v. 19). If Job cannot govern Behemoth, how could he hope to humiliate all the proud ones of this earth (vv. 11–14). If Job cannot do either, how can he question God’s administration of justice (vv. 8–9). Thus Job
should forget his request for vindication and completely submit to Yahweh’s sovereign theocentric control of this world.

b) Leviathan, 40:25–41:26 (Engl. 41:1–34)

Habel has essentially set forth the scheme of this pericope in the following way (pp. 559–60):

A Challenge: Can you capture and domesticate Leviathan as other creatures?  40:25–32
B Divine Claim: Not even Leviathan can stand before Yahweh who has him under control  41:1–3
C Portrayal of Leviathan
   i He is impenetrable and surrounded by terror  41:4–9
   ii He is filled with fire and breathes forth flames  41:10–13
   iii He has impenetrable flesh  41:14–17
   iv He cannot be captured by man  41:18–21
   v He has great splendor in his abode  41:22–24
D Summation: Leviathan is king of the proud  41:25–26

i) Challenge: Can you capture and domesticate Leviathan as other creatures?, 40:25–32 (Eng., 41:1–8)

The chapter divisions in our Hebrew text is a poor division, the one preserved in our English texts more accurately reflect the content of this pericope.

Verse 25—though this does not begin with an interrogative particle, we can see by the tone that this is an interrogative sentence. The verb יתְאוֹנָא may be a paronomasia with the “Arabic name for ‘crocodile,’ timsa˙, Egyptian pemsa˙, Coptic temsa˙ (Gordis, p. 480). Yahweh’s question pertains to Job being able to capture the crocodile with a baited hook which was used for capturing this creature (see Reyburn, p. 751).

Verse 26—by passing a rope through one nostril of Leviathan and out the other, a person would be able in part to control this animal. Also needed would be the placement of a hook through its jaws.

תֹּאְשָׁא, “rush, bulrush” (BDB, p. 8), was a cord made from bulrush fibers.

חָרֶב, “brier, bramble,” is also used of a “hook” (BDB, p. 296). Hartley has summarized that Yahweh’s question here pertains to Job’s “ability to capture this creature and make it his perpetual servant. A baited hook was often used for hunting a crocodile. When the bait was swallowed and the hook lodged inside the mouth, the tongue was pressed down by the rope tied to the hook. After the animal was dragged alongside the
shore, the hunter smeared its eyes with mud in order to subdue it for the fatal blow” (Hartley, pp. 530–31). It is interesting to note that “Herodotus reports that crocodiles were caught by baiting hooks with sides of pork and beating pigs on the shore to attract the attention of the crocodile” (Habel, p. 569).

Verse 27—this verse could be translated in this manner: “Will he [Leviathan] make many supplications to you or will he speak gently to you?” This begins a string of verses that are ironic in tone. Suppose Job does capture Leviathan and then imprison him with ropes, would Leviathan then beg Job to deliver him. Yahweh uses the rhetoric device of personification to drive home his point that Job by himself with conventional methods of hunting could not capture and control Leviathan.

Verse 28—continuing his personification of Leviathan, Yahweh asks Job if Leviathan would seek to enter into a suzerain-vassal covenant relationship. The last colon of this verse reflects that Leviathan would have been the vassal and would be willing to serve his suzerain Job as a slave for life.

Verse 29—would Leviathan become Job’s plaything? This verse continues to ring with irony? The prepositional phrase יִתְנַשֶּׁב, “for your girls,” has presented a problem for some interpreters such as Gordis. He has seen a problem with the general understanding of taking this as a reference to Job’s daughters or even his servant girls since he had none at this time. Even if this was not case, why would he prefer girls to boys? Gordis suggests that instead of reading this as “girls,” we should understand that this is an archaic word referring to “sparrows.” This is derived from the Arabic nughartea (Gordis, p. 481). This seems unnecessary since God is simply drawing attention to the fact that crocodiles were not children’s playthings. “In the ancient Near East children loved to play with doves and sparrows, which were considered safe pets even for little children. Can Job turn Leviathan into such a docile pet? The picture of Job’s daughters playing with Leviathan as a small pet is absurd. In contrast to human fear, Yahweh has put Leviathan in the sea to play (sāḥaq) about (cf. Ps. 104:26) as evidence of his mastery over his creation” (Hartley, p. 531).

Verse 30—though this verse is not begun with an interrogative particle, the interrogative sense is picked up from the preceding verse. We had the same situation as here in 40:25 where this pericope was initiated.

יְרָשִׁי is a hapax legomenon with the singular form being יָרָשׁ, a masculine noun meaning “associate, partner in a trade or calling” (BDB, p. 289). This noun is related to the verb יָרָש, to “unite, be joined” (ibid., p. 287). Because יָרָש has a number of cognates as well
as the immediate context, the meaning of this *hapax* is “traders” or “merchants” (ibid., p. 289). יָרֹדֶר is the subject of this colon: “Will the traders bargain over him [Leviathan]?”

The construct noun יָרֹדֶר, in genitive phrase יָרֹדֶר יָרֹדֶר יָרֹדֶר, may have been read by the translator(s) of the LXX as יָרֹדֶר יָרֹדֶר, “sons,” though it is also possible that יָרֹדֶר may have been part of their Hebrew Vorlage. In any event, the LXX translator rendered his Vorlage as “the nations of the Phoenicians.” When used with the article, יָרֹדֶר יָרֹדֶר יָרֹדֶר refers to an ethnic designation and may be translated as “Canaanites” or “Phoenicians.” Because the Phoenicians were known as merchants, יָרֹדֶר יָרֹדֶר יָרֹדֶר became an appellative for “merchants” (Dhorme, pp. 627–28). In this colon, the subject of the verb יָרֹדֶר יָרֹדֶר יָרֹדֶר is carried over from the preceding colon. יָרֹדֶר יָרֹדֶר. We could translate this colon in this fashion: “Will they [the traders] divide him [Leviathan] among the merchants?” The two questions found in this verse create an absurd view of reality. The first question pictures “excited merchants arguing over the price of a captured Leviathan. Such a prize would bring them huge profits at an auction. The second question implies that Leviathan is too large for a single merchant to be able to sell” (Hartley, p. 531).

Verse 31—continuing the ironic tone, God points out that Leviathan is not like a fish that can be bartered over and then divided up.

יָרֹדֶר is a feminine plural noun whose absolute singular form is יָרֹדֶר, “barb, spear” (BDB, p. 968). It is also used only once in OT. It has one cognate which is also used only once (Num 33:55), יָרֹדֶר, “thorn” (ibid.). It appears to be related to the Arabic *sakka* IV which means to “pierce” (Gordis, p. 482). In light of it’s cognate and since in the immediate context Leviathan’s skin is being filled with something, the context demands something such as “harpoons” (so NASB, ESV, NIV, NRSV, NKJV and NET Bible).

יָרֹדֶר is a singular construct noun whose singular absolute form is יָרֹדֶר. As with the preceding noun, this also is a *hapax legomenon*. It has a cognate יָרֹדֶר, which is also a hapax (Isa 18:1) meaning “whirring, buzzing” (BDB, p. 852). The verb, to which BDB relate this *hapax* is יָרֹדֶר, to “tingle, quiver” (ibid.; see also HALOT, s.v. יָרֹדֶר [I], 2:1027). יָרֹדֶר has other cognates which semantically revolve around making a buzzing sound. The cognates do not offer much help to understand this term. As is always true, context is our key factor to interpret this term. The parallelism between יָרֹדֶר, “his skin” (v. 31a), is with יָרֹדֶר, “his head” (v. 31b). In addition, we have an elliptical construction in v. 31b, with the verb יָרֹדֶר, of v. 31a. In addition, יָרֹדֶר is in construct with the genitive יָרֹדֶר, “something of fish.”
Therefore, there must be a close semantic relationship between the prepositional phrase בֵּית הַלּוֹא, “with harpoons” in v. 31a and the prepositional phrase בֶּן מְלֹאָל, “and with something of fish” in v. 31b. Semantically this is apparently some type of spear used to penetrate the head of fish. Consequently, this may be a “fishing spear.” This is the way most versions have taken it. These fishing spears “were quite different from the harpoons used in hunting hippos. The heads were not detachable and usually had no barbed ends (since the spear head must come out easily from the speared fish), although the ends were, of course, quite pointed and sharp” (Parsons [1980], p. 221, n. 55). Yahweh here challenges Job to singlehandedly attempt to capture Leviathan with conventional fishing equipment. This is an impossibility for Job and as such it would be foolish for Job to even attempt this as Job undoubtedly realized.

Verse 32—Yahweh now returns to the issue of Job’s inability to capture Leviathan.

 Verse 32—Yahweh now returns to the issue of Job’s inability to capture Leviathan.

There are three imperatives: מָכַה, רָכַב, and מְלֹאָל (a jussive form with the negative particle). The first imperative, מָכַה, is best categorized as a hypothetical imperative (see GKC, sec. 110f). This obviously has to be hypothetical since it is simply rhetorical to drive home Yahweh’s point. The hypothetical imperative is best rendered with a protasis type of construction. The apodosis is reflected in the last two clauses. As such I would translate this in essential agreement with the NIV, “If you lay your hand on him, you will remember the struggle and never do it again!” Yahweh’s point is that before Job “attempts to capture Leviathan, he needs to take account of the mighty battle that would ensue. Should he fight this creature once, he would not do so again” (Hartley, p. 531).

ii) Divine claim: Not even Leviathan can stand before Yahweh who has him under His sovereign control, 41:1–3 (Eng., 41:9–11)

Verses 1–3 are very important in understanding the point of this speech by God. “The purpose of YWHH’s citing Job’s incompetence to stand before the mighty and awesome Leviathan is to contrast Job’s relationship to Leviathan with that of YHWH’s sovereign control of this creature. If it is absurd for Job to attempt to confront Leviathan, how much more so is it for Job to confront God (as a rival) with his defiant claims that YHWH is obligated to justify him (41:2[b]–3)” (Parsons [1980], p. 202).

Verse 1—in our English text this is 41:9. The point of this verse is that Job does not have hope in subdued Leviathan. The term בֵּית הַלּוֹא, “his hope,” has reference to subdued Leviathan. The major problem with בֵּית הַלּוֹא is that there
is no clear antecedent for its suffix. A few manuscripts have יַעֲשָׂה יְהֹוָה, “my hope.” If we follow this, it would no doubt be an interrogative expecting a negative reply. “Is my [Yahweh’s] hope false? [No it is not false.]” This has no real substantive support. A more common emendation is to read this as יַעֲשָׂה יְהוָה, “your hope.” As such, the antecedent of “your” is Job. This is to say that Job’s hope in subduing him is false. One Manuscript and the Syriac Version support this. NASB follows this rendering. The problem with this is that לֹא, found in the next colon, should also be emended, at least for the sake of consistency, to לֹא, or something else in the verse would need to be changed. “This emendation, however, is not necessary. It is characteristic of the poet’s style to introduce a new subject through a pronoun without an explicit antecedent, thus creating a challenge for the reader to discover from the context who is intended” (Gordis, p. 482; see his commentary for support at 8:16; 13:21; 24:3; etc.). Following this, the point of this verse is that any person who expects to capture Leviathan, especially Job, would lose hope when he sees Leviathan. The NIV has rendered it, “Any hope of subduing him is false; the mere sight of him is overpowering.” In a similar way, the NET Bible translates: “See, his expectation [the assailant who expects to capture Leviathan] is wrong, he is laid low even at the sight of it.”

Verse 2—while Yahweh continues to focus on the issue of Job’s inability to capture Leviathan in the first colon, he apparently shifts his focus to himself in the last colon of this verse, assuming the accuracy of the MT’s preservation of יָנָחֵל. The prepositional phrase יָנָחֵל is not free of textual difficulty. The Septuagint, Targum and a number of Hebrew Manuscripts (Kissane mentions 27, see p. 289) read this as יָנָח, “before him [Leviathan].” If this is correct, v. 2b retains its focus on Leviathan. Because of the parallelism in this verse, Gordis has preferred this emendation (p. 483; so also NET Bible and NRSV). However, the stability of the MT’s textual tradition and v. 3 tends to support the reading of the MT as יָנָח “before me [Yahweh].” The MT is followed in the KJV, NKJV, NASB, ESV, NIV, and NLT. If we retain the reading in the MT, the flow of thought in verse apparently reflects an a fortiori argument that is something like this: No one can subdue Leviathan; in fact, they are overwhelmed at the mere sight of him. No one is fierce enough to rouse him. If the bravest of men cannot approach Leviathan, then who can stand before Leviathan’s Creator and Owner? Whether one follows the reading of the MT, יָנָח (“before Me”), or the variant, יָנָח (“before Him”), this makes little difference since the thread preserving Yahweh’s focus on the impropriety of discrediting his justice is clearly the emphasis of v. 3.

Verse 3—since Yahweh owns everything, no one has a claim against Yahweh that He must repay.

יָנָח is the hiphil perfect 3ms with 1cs object suffix from יָנָח, to “come or be in front, meet”; BDB suggest that this should be translated
here as “who has anticipated me?” (BDB, pp. 869–70). However, the idea seems to be stronger. The verb יָנוּמַיָּד is used in the sense of confronting God as in a court. In Job 31:37 this is exactly Job’s demand, “I would declare to Him my every step; like a prince I would come before Him [ברך, an apparent synonym at times with ברך].” Yahweh has picked up on Job’s recalcitrant challenge and is now showing Job that he had a wrong attitude.

Could be translated as “that I must pay.” Job had wanted to take God to court in order to charge Yahweh “with unlawfully removing his property (מִשָּׁמָּה — 10:3). Thus, Job apparently believed that God was obligated to make restitution for the stolen good (cf. Bildad’s assertion that Job’s rightful estate would be restored (שלט) if he would become pure and upright—8:6)” (Parsons [1980], p. 202).

is literally translated, “under all the heavens, he[/it] is mine.” Gordis has maintained that this is a meaningless statement. In agreement with some of his emendations, he has interpreted this verse as a reference to Leviathan, “Who has confronted him [Leviathan] and emerged unscathed? Under all the heavens—no one” (p. 470). I would agree that with his emendations, the translation of v. 3b with the extant MT would have been meaningless. However, if we do not resort to emendation in this verse or the preceding verses and if we let the Hebrew text speak for itself, Yahweh is pointing out his theocratic control of the earth. The key issue here is what is the antecedent of אֲדֹנֵי? The subject does not appear to be Leviathan but דֹּלֶת יָנָיָד. How should we interpret this expression? I have followed Dhorme at this point. He has noted that this phrase is also used in 28:24 and 37:3 in reference to the whole world (p. 632). Therefore, the antecedent of אֲדֹנֵי is “everything under the heavens.” The point of this verse as it fits in with vv. 1–2 is this: Who could ever stand before the Sovereign; that is in the sense of advancing one’s self “before God, and expect God to concede to a complaint against himself? It is impossible for anyone to win a judgment against God, for everything under heaven is subject to him. Unequivocally Yahweh confronts Job with the audacity of his plan to argue his case with God himself” (Hartley, p. 532). As Parsons has stated it: “Thus, YHWH’s implicit teaching in 41:3 is that YHWH is not obligated to any claim (whether a business contract or loan or any other juridical claim) that any might make against him. Because YHWH owns everything in the universe (41:3[b]—cf Psalm 24:1; 50:9–12), he is not obligated to return ‘stolen goods’ or to reward man for his good works. All that man has or does comes from God, the sovereign and benevolent master of the cosmos. Thus, 41:3 is an indictment of all ritualistic or moralistic attempts to force the hand of God” ([1980], p. 203).

iii) Portrayal of Leviathan, 41:4–24 (English, 41:12–32)
After his initial challenge about capturing Leviathan and most significantly Yahweh’s claim that not even Leviathan is outside of his sovereign control, Yahweh presently gives a detailed portrayal of Leviathan’s essentially invincible bodily design with its attendant splendor. By detailing Leviathan’s superiority over Job and all the proud (see 41:26), this cogently develops Yahweh’s *a fortiori* argument developed in 40:25–41:3. As we have noted earlier, this section can be broken down into five units (see above).

**a) Description of Leviathan’s impenetrable frame, vv. 4–9 (English, vv. 12–17)**

Yahweh describes in these six verses Leviathan’s impregnable outer design (vv. 4–5), his mouth (v. 6), and his back (vv. 7–9).

Verse 4—God begins a description of Leviathan’s outer design. In this Yahweh calls attention to Leviathan’s limbs, great strength, and solid frame.

אֵין is a negative particle that begins this verse. In the critical apparatus of BHS, the editors note that the Qere reads הָע, however, there is no version that follows this and it seems to violate the sense of this verse (Dhorme, p. 632). This verse may be translated as “I shall not keep silent about his limbs, his mighty power, or his well-arranged frame.” As we compare this verse with its immediate context, it introduces us to the motifs of Leviathan’s “power and invincibility and the description of its bodily structure” (Gordis, p. 483). This verse serves as an introduction to vv. 5–24.

בֵית, “parts,” more specifically of “members” (*HALOT*, s.v. “בֵית,” [1], 1:172–73) or “limbs” (*BDB*, p. 94). The sense of limbs was also present in 18:13 (Gordis, p. 484).

בֵית וְהָע is a genitive construction. The feminine genitive בֵית וְהָע is the plural form of בֵית וְהָע, “strength” (*HALOT*, 1:172–73). We generally think of the meaning of מַע as “word” (*HALOT*, 1:172–73). Because of its relationship as a construct noun followed by its genitive מַע, we could think of its semantic domain more in the area of “matter” and thus this would be “the matter of his might” or “the extent of its might” with the *NET Bible*. The sense of this would be, “I will not keep silent about the extent of its might.” Since this genitive phrase places an emphasis on Leviathan’s might, we could also treat the genitive phrase as an adjectival construction: “mighty strength” or “mighty power” (see *NASB* and *NKJV*).

The genitive מַע, “layer, row” (*HALOT*, 1:885), in the genitive construction מַע וְבֵית, is derived from the verb מַע, to “lay out, set in...
rows.” This verb is semantically used to describe battle arrangements: “to draw up in battle formation” (ibid., 1:884–85). One of this verb’s cognate derivatives is כְּלָי דַג, “line of battle” (ibid., 1:616). The use of this verb is illustrative of the significance it has when being used to describe a well-configured frame. The real problem with this genitive-construct phrase is the term יָהָד. This term is another hapax. The easiest solution followed by most translations is to relate this to יָד, “grace, favour” (HALOT, 1:332). The difference in orthography is that יָד is written plene (for other examples of this type of plene writing, see Gordis, p. 484). Many critical commentators resort to emendation since they see this as problematic for the correlation between grace and the crocodile seems dubious (Rowley, p. 261). Though this may seem doubtful to some, this is a poetic text and God’s point is to describe the well-arranged body of Leviathan (see Gordis’s helpful discussion, p. 484).

Verse 5—no one can strip off Leviathan’s outer coat or approach him with a bridle.

may be literally translated as “who can uncover the face of his clothes?” “The face of his garment” is a poetic reference to Leviathan’s outer garment which most commentators (at least those who take Leviathan to be the crocodile) interpret as the scales of the crocodile (Habel, p. 555). If this identification be accepted, the idea is of “removing the scales that constitute his outer garment” (Gordis, p. 484).

, “double of his jaw/halter,” is apparently a way of referring to his bridle. The point of vv. 5–6 is that Leviathan is virtually impregnable. Not only can no one remove his outer layer of skin, but if someone could, then no one could even begin get a bridle on him as an initial attempt to subdue him. In fact, according to v. 6, no one would want to open his mouth which is surrounded by awesome teeth. In contemplating whether or not to take God on in court, Job has mentioned that he would have been overcome with terror (9:32–35; 13:20–21). “Now Yahweh is showing Job that his apprehensions were on target. If he would have to retreat in terror before leviathan, surely he could not stand before God at court” (Hartley, p. 532).

Verse 6—no one can open Leviathan’s jaws with its surrounding teeth.

is literally translated “the doors of his face.” This is a graphic metaphor to refer to the crocodile’s jaws. A common emendation is to change יָמִן, “his face,” to יָמֵי, “his mouth” (Dhorme,
p. 634). This emendation is unnecessary since this is a clear metaphor referring to his jaws.

Verses 7–9—in these three verses Yahweh gives a description of Leviathan’s back. Its back is covered with scales that are tightly sealed together.

In v. 7 the \( \text{יִתְנָשָׁן} \) “majesty, pride” (BDB, p. 144), appears to be a pleonastic use of it. If this is the case, then with the elimination of the redundancy, the word would be spelled as \( \text{יֵתְנָשָׁן} \), “back” (BDB, p. 156). What makes this appealing is that the Septuagint and the Vulgate support this. In addition, this fits the context better than pride, especially is this noticeable in v. 7. Furthermore, we have seen other uses of the pleonastic \( \text{יִתְנָשָׁן} \) in Job 39:9, 10 where \( \text{יֵתְנָשָׁן} \), “wild ox” is usually written as \( \text{יֵתְנָשָׁן} \). As the thought continues in vv. 8–9, “beneath the glistening sun Leviathan’s back looks like rows of shields. Nothing can penetrate its tightly sealed hide” (Hartley, p. 532).

β) Description of Leviathan’s awesome splendor, vv. 10–13 (Eng., vv. 18–21)

In this unit Yahweh portrays with graphic hyperbole Leviathan’s eyes and what emanates from his nose and mouth. It is possible that the hyperbolic language may have been drawn from the mythological texts used to describe Leviathan. The point is that the awesome description of this creature in mythology is used as hyperbole here to describe the real crocodile.

Verse 10—God describes the effects of the sneezing produced by the crocodile. The word \( \text{יִתְנָשָׁן} \), “sneezing” (BDB, p. 743), is only used once in the OT. This root is found in Aramaic, Ethiopic, Arabic, mishnaic and modern Hebrew with the sense of sneezing. Perhaps, a translation as “snorting” may be more precise. In this verse Leviathan’s eyes are compared to the rays of dawn. The vivid imagery that Yahweh uses in this verse portrays the crocodile through the use of poetic hyperbole. “When the animal sneezed it scattered a shower of spray which sparkled in the sun…. The parallelism shows that the reference is to the flashing of the eyes as they appear over the water” (Kissane, p. 290).

Verses 11–12—when the crocodile breaks the surface of the water, he forcefully expels his breath through his nose and mouth. In the first colon the word \( \text{יִתְנָשָׁן} \), “torches” (HALOT, 1:533), is parallel with \( \text{יֵתְנָשָׁן} \), “sparks of fire,” in the second colon. The construct term \( \text{יֵתְנָשָׁן} \) is a hapax. The context would appear to suggest that \( \text{יֵתְנָשָׁן} \) have some relationship to “sparks” (for a discussion of this term, see Dhorme, p. 636 and Gordis, p. 485). The same type of figures are used as well in v. 12. The difference between v. 11 and v. 12 is that v. 11 describes what comes
out of Leviathan’s mouth and v. 12 what comes out of his nose. This appears to describe the crocodile coming out of the water and spewing out his “pent-up breath in a streaming spray that appears like sparks of fire or like smoke from a boiling pot” (Hartley, p. 532).

Verse 13—the crocodile’s breath is the cause of the water being expelled mixed with his breath. As it is expelled it is thick, warm stream as if a fire was kindling it.

g) Description of Leviathan’s impenetrable flesh, vv. 14–17 (Eng., vv. 22–25)

Yahweh further describes Leviathan’s invincible body. Because of Leviathan’s strong neck (v. 14), hard and immovable flesh (v. 15), and firm chest (v. 16), even the mighty are terrified at his appearance (v. 17).

Verse 14—the neck of Leviathan is powerful. His terrifying appearance produces fear in those who meet him.

Verse 15—the folds of Leviathan’s flesh are solid. This may give the picture of a fat creature; however, God’s point is that even this portion of his underbelly is solid.

describe the firmness of the “folds of his flesh” (v. 15b) and his chest (twice in v. 16).

Verse 16—/לב, “his heart,” is normally used in the OT to refer to the metaphysical part of man (i.e., that aspect of the inner man which may include his emotional, intellectual, or volitional aspects). As a metonym, לב may also be used as a reference to that which encloses the heart, the “chest” (see examples cited in DCH, 4:499, sec. 4). Because the immediate context of/of לב characterizes לב as being “hard as a stone” and “hard as a lower millstone,” this term is preferably taken as Leviathan’s chest, rather than his physiological organ known as the “heart” (see Parsons [1980], p. 225, n. 86). After comparing the hardness of Leviathan’s chest with a “hard stone,” God advances his thought by moving from the stone in the first colon to the millstone in second colon. The upper stone was turned “so that grain between the stones is ground to flour. The lower millstone was larger and harder than the upper stone which ground against it” (Reyburn, p. 763).

Verse 17—when the crocodile raises himself, even mighty ones are frightened.

/tכֵּשִׁמִּי is a combination of the prefix preposition כֵּּ and either a noun or an infinitive construct, כֵּּ. This form appears to be the defective writing for כֵּשׁ. If this is a noun, the lexical form is כֵּשׁ, “elevation, exaltation” “raising, lifting up” (HALOT, s.v. “כֵּשׁ” [1], 2:1301). The prepositional phrase, כֵּּ, would then mean either “before his exaltation” or “at his uprising.” The former use would be referring to Leviathan’s exalted position over the proud (see 41:26); however, the latter would be a reference to Leviathan physically rising out of the water. If this is the infinitive construct of the qal form כָּשִׁים, it is written in an identical fashion as the noun כָּשׁ. This infinitive phrase would consequently mean, “When he rises up.” Taking the nominal form as a reference to Leviathan physically rising, there is not any substantive difference in meaning between the noun and the infinitive construct (see Dhorme, p. 639; and Gordis, p. 487). The immediate context favors this phrase as a reference to Leviathan’s physical rising.

/לאֵּי may be taken as a reference to “gods” or “mighty ones.” Gordis has opted for the former rendering. He has noted that “as an epithet for the waves, the meaning ‘gods’ is preferable, Yam being the chief god and the waves his attendants” (Gordis, p. 487). In order to adopt his preferred understanding, it is necessary for him to revocalize/ל, “because of the crashing,” in the second colon to כֵּשׁ, “waves” (ibid.). However, to follow Gordis’ view, one does not necessarily have to resort to this sort of emendation. If we defend this view, God
may have used this for his own polemical purposes. Against Gordis, I feel that the second option as “mighty ones” is to be preferred. If we take this view, מַלְּיָה is written defectively for מַלְּיָה (see Ezek 17:13; 32:21). Aquila, Symmachus, Targum, Syriac, and the Vulgate support this understanding (see Pope, p. 344). With this understanding even the mighty men are fearful when Leviathan rises up from the water (see Hartley, p. 529).

The verbal root for סָמִים is סָמִים. In the Hithpael, the nuances of סָמִים include to “purify oneself” and “to withdraw” (HALOT, 1:305–6). Since it seems unlikely to have the mighty purifying themselves when Leviathan forcefully rises and effects the waters, a more appropriate response is to “withdraw.” This understanding is coordinate with the use of רָגַז (“[the mighty] are terrified”) in the first colon of this verse.

δ) Description of Leviathan’s invincibility to man, vv. 18–21 (Eng., vv. 26–29)
The focus of this stanza is on the ineffectiveness of man’s weapons of war to slay Leviathan. If Job were to use conventional weapons of war in attempting to subdue Leviathan, they would be of little assistance.

Verse 18—though a sword, spear, dart, or javelin strikes Leviathan, they are ineffective in subduing him.

סָמִים is used twice in the Old Testament. In 1 Kings 6:7 its syntactical context is dealing with unhewn stones from the סָמִים, “quarry” (HALOT, 1:607). In the immediate context of Job 41:18, סָמִים is part of a triad of terms focusing on weapons. The term before it is הֵנֵי (“spear”) and the term after it is חֵי (“javelin”). As such, the semantic domain of סָמִים focuses on some sort of weapon (HALOT, 1:607). BDB assigned to סָמִים a gloss of “dart” (p. 652). In support of this type of gloss, Gordis has related סָמִים to an Arabic word nasagha, “strike, hit” (Gordis, p. 488). The LXX appears to translate סָמִים with δόρυ, “spear.” Though the use of סָמִים as a weapon is unique to this context of Job, the context clearly relates this to a weapon used for individual combat.

חֵי, “lance, javelin” (BDB, p. 1056), is a hapax. This may be related to a number of Arabic terms such as sirweh, “little arrow” (Dhorme, p. 640; see HALOT, 2:1654); sirwat, “short arrow”; or siryat, “arrowhead” (Gordis, p. 488). These terms point in the direction of some weapon such as a javelin. This understanding is also supported by the fact that offensive weapons are being described in this verse and the javelin is one of the weapons that is left that fit into this category (ibid.).
Verse 19—Leviathan regards iron and bronze weapons as weak.

Verse 20—in contrast with the two preceding verses where the weapons were thrown or held in the hand, the weapons in this verse are launched from a string (Reyburn, p. 765). Even these weapons have no effect on Leviathan. The construct genitive phrase בֶּן־חֵטָא, “son of bow,” is an idiom for “arrow.”

Verse 21—clubs are also insignificant to Leviathan. He also laughs at the sound of the javelin. Once again his actions are being personified. This is nothing new to Yahweh’s rhetoric since he also had Leviathan thinking of iron as straw in v. 19. Many other examples of personification could be cited; however, Yahweh’s use of laughing provides a thread in Yahweh’s descriptions of animals. “The ostrich laughs at the horse and its rider (39:18), the horse laughs at fear (39:22), the wild animals play (laughingly) near Behemoth (40:20), and no one can play (laughingly) with Leviathan (40:29 [Eng. 41:5]). The one in control laughs at what others admire or fear. This motif further indicates that God in wisdom has created a world of creatures that enjoy play” (Hartley, p. 533; see also Habel, p. 573).

e) Description of Leviathan’s splendor in his abode, vv. 22–24 (Eng., vv. 30–32)
Moving past Yahweh’s hyperbolic description of the ineffectiveness of the instruments of war on Leviathan, He now brings His portrayal of Leviathan to a transitional stage for His conclusion in vv. 25–26. Yahweh describes the sketch that Leviathan’s body leaves in the mud (v. 22) and the movement of the water as he swims in it, vv. 23–24.

Verse 22—the belly of Leviathan is covered with scales. Like a threshing sledge, Leviathan’s belly of scales would leave marks in the muddy ground.

גֶּפֶן, instead of being used as a preposition, this is used as a substantive. That which is under him is “his underparts.”

גֶּפֶן is used in reference to a “threshing sledge” (HALOT, s.v. “גֶּפֶן”) [3], 1:352). “The scales on the under part of his [Leviathan’s] body are smaller than those on the back, but sharp, so that the surface is like that of the threshing-sledge. This [threshing-sledge] consists of a flat wooden implement studded with sharp pieces of basalt or iron. The driver stands upon it, and it is drawn over the corn in the threshing-floor by oxen or a horse (cf. 2 Sam. xii. 31; Am. i. 3; Is xxviii. 27). The Leviathan makes the same impression on the soft mud of the river-bank as a threshing-sledge” (Kissane, p. 291).
Verse 23—As Leviathan swims, he churns the water so that it looks like it is a pot of boiling water or boiling perfume.

יִיבֶלָה is a Hiphil imperfect 3ms from יָבַל, to “boil” (HALOT, 2:1299). It is used three times in the Old Testament, with Job 38:23 being the only use of the Hiphil. Here it has the idea of causing the water to boil, a metaphor for making the water churn (Gordis, p. 489).

יָעַקְרָמ (“like a pot of ointment”) in its base form is יָעַקְרָם is a hapax (HALOT, 1:638). Because of its many Hebrew cognates, its meaning is well established. The imagery here is of Leviathan stirring up the water and leaving an odor while he is swimming. Yahweh apparently used the perfume pot because in it “the various ingredients used in making perfume were boiled. The disturbance of the water by the animal is like the perfume as it boils. The image may have been chosen because the crocodile actually diffuses a musk-like scent” (Kissane, p. 291).

Verse 24—This continues the description of Leviathan swimming in the water. As he swims, he leaves a glistening wake, a path of shining foam.

יָדְלָה is a hiphil imperfect 3ms from יָדָל, to “be dawn” or “become light” (HALOT, 1:24). The hiphil is used in the sense of giving light or making light (ibid.). In this verse Yahweh describes the wake of Leviathan left behind him as he swims. We could literally translate this, “behind him he causes the path to become light.” A better English translation of this is provided by the NIV: “Behind him he leaves a glistening wake” (The NET Bible and ESV is similar). This translation provides a good correspondence with Yahweh’s point.

לֹא כַּיּוֹם, “gray haired,” is “a superb figure for the white foam left by the passage of the animal” (Gordis, p. 489). As the crocodile “moves through the water, it leaves a glistening wake of white water as beautiful as the prized, silver white hair of an elder” (Hartley, p. 533).

iv) Summation, 41:25–26 (Eng., 41:33–34)
These two verses summarize and bring Yahweh’s speech to a conclusion. Leviathan is king of the proud. As a unique creature of God, Leviathan had no equal on earth. Being fearless, no creature could intimidate Leviathan. “Even all who are high i.e., the great rulers, fear it. Leviathan is the king over all that are proud. Yahweh’s argument is that since no human being can subject Leviathan, surely then no person can ever be so mighty or exalted as to challenge successfully Yahweh’s rule” (Hartley, p. 533).
Verse 25—as a unique creation of God, Leviathan has no equal on earth, that is a creature as fearless as him.

upon the dust,” is a reference to “on the earth.” The use of נָשָׁא was probably intentionally used by Yahweh to remind Job of what He had said in 40:13, viz., Yahweh challenged Job to bury the proud and wicked in the dust, נָשָׁא (Parsons [1980], p. 226, n. 95).

is a singular noun with a 3ms pronominal suffix. Its base noun is מֵאש, “similarity” (HALOT, s.v. מֵאש [1], 1:648). could be translated as “his likeness” or “his equal.” This colon could be then translated something like one of these options: “Nothing on earth is his equal” (NIV), “On earth it has no equal” (NRSV), “The likes of it is not on earth” (NET Bible), “On earth there is not his like” (ESV).

is an archaic qal passive participle with article from הָשָׁא, to “do, make.” We would more commonly see it written as שָׁא. Like Behemoth (40:15, 19), he was one who was created without fear.

Verse 26—using personification, God further describes Leviathan as looking down on all other creatures. As such, he is king over all the haughty including Job since Job could not approach him with a bridle (41:5 [Heb. 40:29]). The a fortiori argument is this, if Leviathan is king over all the proud including Job, how much more so is his Creator, the Sovereign Lord of the Universe.

e. Job’s Second Response, 42:1–6
Job clearly reflects his sinful creaturely state in response to the omniscient and omnipotent Creator and Ruler of all. Andersen has summarized the thought of the Job’s second response with this: “Job is satisfied. His vision of God has been expanded beyond all previous bounds. He has a new appreciation of the scope and harmony of God’s world, of which he is but a small part. But this discovery does not make him feel insignificant. Just by looking at ordinary things, he realizes that he cannot even begin to imagine what it must be like to be God. The world is beautiful and terrifying, wise, and more mysterious when He is known than when He is but dimly discerned. The Lord has spoken to Job. That fact alone is marvelous beyond all wonder. Job has grown in wisdom. He is at once delighted and ashamed” (p. 291).

1) Introduction, v. 1
The author’s introduction to Job’s response is identical with his first introduction to Job’s response in 40:3.

2) Job’s confession of speaking ignorantly, vv. 2–3

a) Job’s acknowledgment of Yahweh’s sovereign rule, v. 2
Job willfully submits to Yahweh’s sovereign and all-wise administration of justice.

The Kethib for רַשׁות, נ, represents רַשׁות לְשׁוֹנֹת, נ. The reading of the Qere is supported by the Versions.

Job now recognizes that God “can do all things,” כַּדָּלֶל הָאֲדָמָה. “Confessing that God can do all things, Job accepts Yahweh’s argument as the answer to his complaint and his avowal of innocence. . . . Throughout his speeches Job has held firmly to his conviction that God is all-powerful. In his lamenting, however, he has questioned God’s consistent execution of justice in the face of numerous examples that seem to contradict the standard of justice. Nevertheless, Yahweh’s words have reaffirmed Job’s conviction of his wise and judicious governance of the world” (Hartley, p. 535).

רהט, “project, plan” (HALOT, 1:566), is used of God’s purposes in punishment in Jeremiah 23:20; 30:24; and 51:11. In with God’s plans or purposes, Job “with an enhanced awareness of Yahweh’s lordship, Job concedes that no purpose of Yahweh’s can be foiled or thwarted. Job’s concession means that he believes that everything occurring on earth takes place within the framework of divine wisdom” (Hartley, p. 535). Job is agreeing with the implications of what Yahweh had stated in 40:8 that nothing can keep God from carrying out His plan that includes the moral implications of His all-wise and absolutely just moral governance.

b) Job’s quotation of Yahweh, v. 3a

Job is quoting what Yahweh had asked him in 38:2. In light of the next colon, Job cited this to prove he was totally wrong and God totally right.

c) Job’s confession of speaking ignorantly, v. 3b

“In v 3a Job repeats the question that the Lord had asked him in 38:2. Now he answers it. He admits that he spoke out of limited knowledge, speaking too confidently about things too wonderful for him to understand” (Andersen, p. 291). The fact that Job has taken 38:2 and put it into a self-judgment indicates that “Job is responding to Yahweh’s speeches. In his complaints that God rules unjustly he admits that he has spoken beyond his knowledge and insight. He has approached the sin of hubris by claiming to have better insight than God into matters on earth” (Hartley, p. 536).

3) Job’s submission to God, vv. 4–6

a) Job’s Quotation of Yahweh, v. 4

Job is quoting what Yahweh had asked him in 38:3 and 40:7. These word encapsulate what Yahweh had said to Job. It is ironic that Job was going to have God respond to his challenge; but instead it was God who challenged him. Job
appears to be saying, “Here is my response to your command.” This prepares for his answer in vv. 5–6.

b) Job’s acknowledgment of seeing Yahweh, v. 5
“I have become still more firmly convinced of God’s omnipotence. *Hearing of the ear.* My belief was formerly founded on hearsay evidence; now it is founded on personal knowledge” (Kissane, p. 292). “His presence, however, was so unmistakably real that Job could say *now my eyes have seen you.* . . . The vision of Yahweh overwhelms him, filling him with a sense of wonder and awe and reducing all his complaints to insignificance. In appearing to his servant, Yahweh vindicates Job’s integrity” (Hartley, p. 537).

c) Job’s submission to the God who is sovereign, v. 6
In the qal לָשֵׁם means to “reject, refuse” and to “despise” (BDB, p. 549). It is used seventy–six times in OT (Even-Shoshan, p. 617). In most cases it means to “reject” or “refuse”; however, in approximately ten cases, it means to “despise” (BDB, p. 549). Since the verb is transitive, it requires a direct object. However, there are four instances in which the object is not directly stated. These are all found in the Book of Job, 7:16; 34:33; 36:5; and in this verse. In each use the context reflects the object of rejection. In 7:16 Job despised the life of turmoil and suffering which he had described in the preceding verses. Job’s rejection in 34:33 was a refusal to repent as described in the preceding verses (34:31–32). In Job 36:5 the object is supplied from the following verses. God does not reject the righteous who is described in vv. 6–7. In 42:6 Job despises and rejects the sin of which God had accused Job in His preceding speech. This sin was speaking ignorantly (words without knowledge, v. 3); that is, he accused and condemned God of things that were beyond his comprehension.

is a 1cs Niphal perfect from לָשֵׁם. In the Niphal it means to “reject,” “be sorry,” “console oneself” (*HALOT*, 1:688–89). The Niphal is used 48 times in the OT (Even-Shoshan, p. 754). Most of the uses are in reference to God. Fourteen uses have man as the subject. Since eight of these deal with being comforted after the loss of a loved one, they are not significant to our context. In Exodus 13:17 לָשֵׁם has Israel as its subject and it relates to them changing their minds if they had to fight the Philistines and then returning to Egypt. In Judges 21:6, 15 לָשֵׁם indicates a sorrow that resulted in action to change Benjamin’s state of having few men. In Jeremiah 8:6 and 31:19 לָשֵׁם is a sorrow that includes a turning away from wickedness. Thus in this aspect of the semantic range for לָשֵׁם, we should understand it as being tantamount to repentance (see Newell [1984], pp. 313–14).

לָשֵׁם, “in dust and ashes”; this further supports that לָשֵׁם is talking about a genuine repentance of Job since dust and ashes is often used to denote mourning or humbling of one’s self (see 2:8, 12; Josh 7:6; 2 Sam 13:19; Esth 4:1, 3; Ps 102:10 (Eng., v. 9); Isa 58:5; 61:3; Jer 6:26; Lam 2:10; Dan 9:3; and Jon 3:6).
3. The Outcome, 42:7–9
   a. Introduction, v. 7a
   b. Yahweh’s words to Eliphaz, vv. 7b–9
      1) Yahweh’s anger and his reason for it, v. 7b
      2) Commands for sacrifice and intercession by Job, v. 8
      3) Commands carried out and the anticipated result, v. 9

4. The Conclusion, 42:10–17
   To see the chiastic arrangement formed between the introduction, 1:1–5, and this conclusion, see above.
PART IV: THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF JOB

I. Summation of the Message of the Book of Job
Because of God’s incomprehensible wisdom and incomparable power as reflected by His creating and sustaining the world and its inhabitants, He is its sovereign whom freely administers justice correctly. Because this is a theocentric world, man must fearfully submit to Yahweh and His sovereign will.

II. The Biblical Theology of the Book of Job
In this brief synopsis of Joban theology, we will consider what this book presents about God, man, and God’s relationship to man.

A. God
The book of Job is immensely rich in its doctrine of God. We will examine the attributes of God, His relationship to the universe, and His sovereignty.

1. God’s Attributes
   We will divide God’s attributes into that of His greatness and His goodness.

   a. God’s Attributes of Greatness
      The attributes of God’s greatness that we will examine from Job are His spirituality, personality, life, infinity, and incomprehensibility.

      1) Spirituality
         As Jesus asserted in John 4:24, God is spirit. By this we mean that God is a spiritual being not having a physical nature. As such, God is not bound by the limitation of a body. Job in 10:4 recognizes this where he asserted that God does not have eyes of flesh. Because God is spirit, He is not bound by the same limitations that one with a physical body has. The Spirit of God can originate life as well as sustain it. Job recognized this in 27:3 and Elihu in 33:4; 34:14–15. By implication, this would mean that God is actively present in His creation and in the unfolding of its history (immanence).

      2) Personality
         God is not a force, but a personal being. He has a moral nature, intelligence, self-consciousness, will, and emotion. God’s creation and providential control reflected in Job 38–41 demonstrates His personal nature. As a personal being, God was to be loved for who He is rather than what He had done for Job. God demonstrates this to Satan by allowing him to afflict Job. Though Job did not understand why God allowed him to encounter so many difficulties, Job clung to his faith and would not acquiesce to the friends’ demand to confess his sin. He passed the test, he demonstrated that someone could go through extreme suffering and still worship God for who He is rather than for what He gave.

      3) Life
God is a living being. When God raised His first set of rhetorical questions in 38:4–7, the point was that Job was not alive at creation. What these reflect is that God was alive at that time and that He created everything. Since God is the Creator, no one created Him. Unlike His creation that drew its existence from God, He was not derived from any other person or thing. Since it is impossible to have anything creating itself, God could not have created Himself. Consequently, God is self-existent and eternal.

4) Infinite
By God’s infinity, we should understand that this means He is unlimited and cannot be limited. Other attributes associated with God’s infinity include His omnipresence, omniscience, wisdom, omnipotence, and freedom.

a) Omnipresence
God is unlimited in terms of space. Finite objects are localized; however, God is not located in any space. Since God is spirit, He has no physical characteristics that can take up space. As such, God is present everywhere. To this, we should also notice that God is fully present everywhere. This is His immensity. Zophar recognized this truth in 11:7–9.

b) Omniscience
God’s knowledge is also unlimited. He is not growing or learning new items. Job recognized this truth. He used this truth negatively when he said that God was always watching him to find some fault in him (7:19–20; 10:14; 30:20). However, he also recognized positively that God knew that he was innocent (23:10; 31:4, 6). In fact, Job maintained in 28:24 that God knew everything under the heavens (Zuck, “Theology,” p. 222).

c) Wisdom
By wisdom we mean “that God acts in the light of all of the facts and in light of correct values” (Erickson, 1:275). Job, or perhaps the Joban author, recognized God’s wisdom in his speech on wisdom in chapter 28. God’s wisdom is a dominant motif in His first speech in 38:4–39:30. In wisdom God created the universe (38:4–11), manages the world (38:12–38) and the wild animals (38:39–39:30).

d) Omnipotence
When we say God’s power is unlimited, what we mean is that God can do anything that is consistent with His person and plan. “God holds all power over His creation. No part of creation stands outside the scope of His sovereign control” (Sproul, Essential Truths of the Christian Faith, p. 39). God’s absolute power was demonstrated in His creation, “including making the earth (38:4–7), separating the land from the sea (vv. 8–11), and establishing day and night (vv. 12–15, 19–21). He made the oceans (v. 16), and various atmospheric elements including snow, hail, lightning, wind, rain, thunder, dew, and ice (vv. 22–30, 34–35, 37–38). He is also the Creator of the stars (vv. 31–33), of man, giving
him wisdom (v. 36), and of animals including beasts and birds (38:39–39:30; 40:15–41:34). He gives strength to the wild ox (39:9–12), unusual speed to the seemingly stupid ostrich (vv. 13–18), strength and animation to the horse (vv. 19–25), instinct to the hawk and the eagle (vv. 26–30), unusual physical strength to the behemoth (40:15–19), and fierceness and strength to the leviathan (41:1, 9, 12, 22, 25)" (Zuck, “Theology,” p. 224).

e) Freedom
The book of Job strongly affirms the freedom of God. God’s freedom means that God’s will is not bound by anything outside of Himself. God is only limited by His nature and will. “God’s decisions and actions are not determined by consideration of any factors outside himself. They are simply a matter of his own free choice” (Erickson, 1:278).

It might seem on the surface that the so-called “wager” between God and Satan might be a denial of God’s freedom. However, the Joban author is quite clear that God was responsible for prompting this account when He said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil” (1:8). God clearly prompted this heavenly encounter. God freely chose to allow this to happen to Job even though he was so genuine in his faith. Job never was told, according to this book, that God permitted Satan to do this to him. For whatever purposes which neither Job nor we fully comprehend, we must recognize that this was part of God’s freely designed will for Job’s life.

In addition, we should notice that the defense of God’s administration of justice by Job’s friends was a basic denial of God’s freedom. His friends had maintained that there was a strict cause and effect relationship between one’s actions and consequences. Though the friends were certain that they knew the reason for Job’s suffering, Job was convinced that he could not conceive of any reason that the Almighty would have brought this about in his life. Job was convinced that this simplistic understanding of retribution theology was incorrect. In agreement with this, God was teaching that a simplistic understanding of retribution theology was not a part of His agenda.

God “was free to enter into Satan’s test and tell none of the participants about it, to time his intervention and determine its agenda. He was free not to answer Job’s goading questions nor agree with the friends’ high-sounding doctrines. Above all, he was free to care enough to confront Job and to forgive the friends” (LaSor, Hubbard, and Bush, p. 583).

5) Incomprehensibility
Man’s inability to comprehensively know the mind of God is the attribute of incomprehensibility. Though what we do know by special revelation is accurate, it is not a full knowledge about all the truth of God. This is strongly emphasized in the book of Job. Though we know more details about the heavenly encounter
initiated by God between Himself and Satan, we do not fully comprehend why God allowed this to take place. This book strongly affirms the mystery of God’s will. Elihu recognized this in 36:26; 37:5, 15–16. God’s rhetorical questions directed to Job clearly affirm this truth.

b. God’s Attributes of Goodness
The attributes of God’s goodness that we will examine from Job are His love, faithfulness, and justice.

1) Love
God’s love is the eternal giving of Himself. This was true of the members of the Godhead before time ever began. Love is shown in Job by God’s benevolence towards His creatures. God demonstrated His concern for the welfare of them both in His creating and sustaining them (38:4–41:26). This also demonstrates God’s mercy. God’s loving compassion was demonstrated to Job by speaking to him and toward the friends by forgiving them.

2) Faithfulness
By faithfulness we understand that God keeps His commitments. The fact that the book of Job has a good ending, as demonstrated by speaking to Job and graciously blessing his latter life, indicates that God proves Himself true in taking care of His own.

3) Justice
This work strongly emphasizes God’s justice. As noted in our discussion of the book’s message (see above), the central concern of the book is to explore God’s administration of justice as a part of the moral order of this world. This is also reflected by God’s question to Job in 40:8, “Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself?” Before examining this further, let’s look at how God’s justice relates to His holiness and righteousness.

God’s moral purity, His complete freedom from anything sinful, focuses on His holiness, righteousness, and justice. Holiness deals with God’s separation. God’s separation is from all that has been created, His majestic transcendence, and from anything sinful, His moral purity. “Holiness creates a perfect standard of right. Righteousness is conformity to the perfectly right standard. God is righteous because His actions always conform to His holiness. Man is righteous when he conforms to God’s standard of righteousness” (McCune, “Systematic Theology I,” p. 101).

Justice relates to God’s fairness in His “administration of the absolutely right standard of His holiness. Justice is an expression of God’s holiness in its judicial activity, giving everyone his just due and treating him according to his deserts” (ibid.). God’s blessing on a person for living righteously is known as remunerative justice and his judging a person for living wickedly is called retributive justice.
The friends’ of Job held to a simplistic form of this dogma. The corollary of this is that if a person is suffering, he must to have sinned and the degree to which he was suffering reflected the extent of his sinfulness. Job questioned this simplistic understanding because of his experience. He also noted how the wicked prospered and the humble suffered. Because of his observations, Job began questioning God’s justice. He challenged God to give him an account of why He persecuted him. He thus was putting himself up on a plain equal with God. This is the point of God’s challenging of Job in 38:2 and 40:2. Job’s sin became one of arrogance after his suffering. This is what he needed to repent of. He was questioning God’s moral order in administering justice. The point of God’s interrogation of Job is that if he did not understand God’s creating and sustaining the earth and if he could not subdue Behemoth and Leviathan, how could he ever think of assuming a position equal to God in the moral realm? The book of Job is thus correcting this misunderstanding of God’s justice.

Since the book of Job is correcting a simplistic understanding of retributive and remunerative justice, does this mean it is completely invalid? The author’s conclusion in 42:7–17 affirms that there is a valid use of this doctrine. God in His freedom administers justice when He sees fit. Clines’ conclusion is germane: “It must be admitted that the ending of the book undercuts to some extent the divine speeches of chaps. 38–41. For although the Lord has implied that questions of justice and retribution are not central ones, the narrator’s concluding word is that after all the principle of retribution stands almost unscathed by the experience of Job. By rights, according to the principle, the innocent Job should never have suffered at all; so the principle was partially defective. Yet in the end the principle becomes enshrined in the history of Job, and he functions as a prime witness to its general validity. Even if in every instance it does not explain human fates, in the main it is affirmed by the Book of Job as the truth about the moral universe” (Job, p. xlvii).

2. God’s Relationship to the Universe
   Job reflects God’s relationship to the universe in four areas: His plan, creation, preservation, and providence.

   a. His Plan for the Universe
      Though the book of Job does not specifically refer to God having a foreordained plan, the nature of His creation and sustaining of it assume it. This implies a master architect. This is further reflected in 38:2 when God challenges Job with the question, “Who is this darkens my counsel?” This is also implied from when Job reflects in 42:2 that none of God’s purposes can be thwarted. This is further suggested in 14:5 when Job indicates that man’s days are determined. In 36:32 Elihu stated that lightning strikes where God directs. This world is based upon a theocentric plan.

   b. His Creation of the Universe
      According to His plan, God created the universe with a systematic plan in 38:4–11. God also created the animals mentioned in the His speeches. Yahweh created
Behemoth in 40:15, 19 and Leviathan in 41:25. In 40:15, God indicates by implication that he also creates man.

c. His Preservation of the Universe
Preservation involves God’s protection of His creation from all harm and destruction; and provision for every need of His creation. Charles Hodges defined it as “all things out of God owe the continuance of their existence, with all their properties and powers, to the will of God” (1:575). In Job God’s sustaining of the universe, the laws and processes of nature such as storms and lightning, animals, and man are all part of God’s preservation of His good world.

d. His Providence for the Universe
Providence relates to God’s governing and guiding all creation to its appointed end. God’s direction is seen in His managing the world in 38:12–38 and in His providing for wild animals in 38:39–41:26.

3. God’s Sovereign Control of the Universe
God’s sovereignty is not an attribute per se but a prerogative that is an outgrowth of the absolute perfection of His Superior Being. As Charles Hodges summarizes with this: “If God be a Spirit, and therefore a person, infinite, eternal, and immutable in his being and perfections, the Creator and Preserver of the universe, He is of right its absolute sovereign. . . . This sovereignty of God is the ground of peace and confidence to all his people. They rejoice that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth; that neither necessity, nor chance, nor the folly of man, nor the malice of Satan controls the sequence of events and all their issues. Infinite wisdom, love, and power, belong to Him, our great God and Saviour, into whose hands all power in heaven and earth has been committed” (1:440–41).

Yahweh’s kingship is reflect by His creating the world in 38:4–11, by His managing the world in 38:12–38 the animal kingdom in 38:39–41:26. Job also assumes Yahweh’s kingship by questioning His rulership (40:8). God also reflects this when He challenges Job to put on the robes of divine royalty in 40:9–14. Furthermore, God told Job in 41:3 that everything under heaven belonged to Him. Also, God had set up Behemoth and Leviathan as underlords in his animal world (40:19–20; 41:25–26). “God’s many references to creation are highly appropriate because by them He was addressing His ownership of the universe while at the same time refuting Job’s accusation of deprivation. God did not actually deprive Job of anything, because He, as Creator, owns all that is in the universe. The Founder is the Owner; the Creator is the Ruler” (Zuck, “Theology” p. 225).

B. Man
Man is presented as being finite. As such we should notice four of man’s limitations as pictured in Job.

1. Sinfulness
Man is pictured in Job as inherently wicked. As a believer, Job is pictured as one who still struggled with his sinfulness, Job 3.

2. Temporal limitations
   Man was not present at creation. This implies a temporal limitation. Man’s knowledge of creation is based on information outside of himself. Job had acknowledged his temporal limitations in 7:7–9; 10:20; 21:21; 30:16.

3. Spatial limitations
   God sees the whole earth at one time since He is omnipresent. Man does not have this capacity since he is limited by his nature. This is clearly reflected in 38:26 since there are places on this earth that man have never lived.

4. Lack of knowledge
   God’s barrage of rhetorical questions to Job pointed out his lack of knowledge. Job had an anthropocentric view of life; however, God had a theocentric view of life. God knows everything.

5. Lack of strength
   Since Job could not hold the constellations together or control wild animals, he certainly lacked strength. His lack of strength is also suggested by his personal suffering (13:25; 16:6; 30:17).

C. The Relationship Between God and Man
   There are four items that we should notice.

1. It is not a business contract.
   Man and God did not have a business contract where God would be obligated to him (41:3).

2. Man has no bargaining rights with God.
   If there is no business contract between God and man, then Job had no bargaining rights with God.

3. It is not based on a simplistic dogma of divine retribution.
   The point of the book is to correct a simplistic dogma of divine retribution; there is a pattern of divine retribution and remuneration but God is the One who determines when and how it works out.

4. It is based solely on God’s love for his own and man’s proper response of submission to the Sovereign Lord.
   Since God is the Sovereign Lord, Job had to submit to God’s sovereign will. Job had heard of God but when he saw God he developed a deeper commitment to him (42:5). In 42:3 Job acknowledged that he had spoken of things he did not understand. God’s ways were too complicated for Job to understand. He submitted to an absolutely Sovereign Lord.