

JOB

ANGUISH
ARGUMENTS
AND
ANSWERS

FALL 2022



1-2 PROLOGUE

3 JOB'S OPENING LAMENT

4-14 FIRST DISPUTE CYCLE

15-21 SECOND DISPUTE CYCLE

22-26 THIRD DISPUTE CYCLE

27 JOB'S CLOSING DISCOURSE

28 INTERLUDE ON WISDOM

29-31 MONOLOGUE BY JOB

32-37 MONOLOGUE BY ELIHU

38-42 MONOLOGUE BY GOD

40, 42 JOB'S CLOSING CONTRITION

42 EPILOGUE

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

JOB

GOD

SATAN

MRS. JOB

THREE FRIENDS (ELIPHAZ, BILDAD, ZOPHAR)

ELIHU

FAMILY

SERVANTS

BAD GUYS

THEODICY

HOW CAN GOD BE SOVEREIGN AND GOOD
WHEN THE INNOCENT SUFFER
AND THE WICKED PROSPER?

THEOLOGICAL ECONOMY

ACT = RESPONSE

ACT  RESPONSE

ACT  RESPONSE

ACT || RESPONSE

1-2 PROLOGUE

SATAN ASSAILS GOD AND CLAIMS JOB LOVES GOD BECAUSE OF BLESSINGS.
GOD ALLOWS SATAN TO ATTACK JOB, WITHIN LIMITS.

JOB IS NOT AWARE OF THIS INTERACTION.

SATAN BATTERS JOB IN 2 PHASES; POSSESSIONS, THEN CHILDREN AND BODY.
JOB GLORIFIES GOD THE FIRST ROUND, WHEN IT'S ONLY POSSESSIONS.
THE SECOND ROUND BRINGS INTENSE PAIN, AND JOB REACTS.

3 JOB'S OPENING LAMENT

IN INTENSE PAIN, JOB CRIES OUT. (WHEN DOES PAIN AFFECT FAITH?)

JOB SAYS, GOD IS GOOD, BUT HE HAS IT IN FOR ME.

JOB DOESN'T KNOW THE "WHY," AND MAKES A FALSE ASSUMPTION.

HIS FRIENDS WILL JUMP ON HIS CRY, AND DRAW THEIR OWN ASSUMPTIONS.
(HOW OFTEN DO WE MAKE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT WHAT GOD IS DOING?)

HABAKKUK

1:13

2:1-3

3:17-19

4-14 FIRST DISPUTE CYCLE

4-5 ELIPHAZ GIVES HIS ASSESSMENT

MEASURED, DIGNIFIED SPEECH. RIGHT IN CONCEPT, WRONG IN APPLICATION. CAN'T RESIST LECTURING JOB. PATRONIZING.

JOB, YOU WERE UPRIGHT AND AN ENCOURAGER, BUT NOW YOU DESPAIR. MORTALS HAVE NO STANDING BEFORE GOD; WE DESERVE PUNISHMENT. SO BE PATIENT AND DON'T BE A FOOL. DON'T DESPISE GOD'S DISCIPLINE. IMPLICATION: YOU'RE GETTING WHAT YOU DESERVE.

6-7 JOB RESPONDS

IN GREAT PAIN. COMPLAINS IN AGONY. A BIT SELF-RIGHTEOUS.

GOD'S ARROWS HAVE MADE ME MISERABLE. PUT ME OUT OF MY MISERY. THE WORDS OF MY FRIENDS ARE CRUEL AND UNHELPFUL. I NEED KINDNESS. BE SPECIFIC: HOW HAVE I SINNED IN A WAY THAT DESERVES JUDGMENT? EXAGGERATES: GOD WON'T RELENT FROM TORMENTING ME. I HAVE NO HOPE.

4-14 FIRST DISPUTE CYCLE

8 BILDAD SPEWS HIS ASSESSMENT

IS ARROGANT/CONDESCENDING/CALLOUS. ASSUMES MUCH IN JUDGMENT.
JOB, YOUR CHILDREN GOT WHAT THEY DESERVED.
YOU'RE A BLOWHARD. GOD'S ON YOU BECAUSE YOU SINNED. REPENT.

9-10 JOB RESPONDS

DOES NOT MOCK GOD, BUT SAYS THERE IS NO WAY TO ARGUE WITH GOD.
GOD WILL NOT LET UP ON ME, BUT "FILLS ME WITH BITTERNESS."
GOD DESTROYS BLAMELESS AND WICKED BOTH. IF NOT GOD, WHO?
EVEN IF I ACT CHEERFUL, I KNOW I'M STILL DAMNED BY YOU. [ASSUMPTIONS]
DREAD OF GOD TERRIFIES ME. I LOATHE MY LIFE.
YOU KNOW I'M INNOCENT; YOU MADE ME; BUT YOU WANT TO DESTROY ME.
I SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN BORN. LEAVE ME IN PEACE FOR THE FEW DAYS I HAVE
LEFT IN MY LIFE. JOB IS INTENSELY DEPRESSED. WANTS "SUICIDE BY GOD."

4-14 FIRST DISPUTE CYCLE

11 ZOPHAR

CRUEL, SEVERE, MONSTROUSLY JUDGMENTAL.

THOUGHT JOB WAS GETTING MUCH *LESS* THAN HE DESERVED.

JOB HAS SECRET SIN, PRIDE, HARDNESS OF HEART. GOD IS EXPOSING HIM.

JOB IS SINFUL, WORTHLESS, STUPID; ONLY HOPE IS TO BREATHE HIS LAST.

BUT—PUT AWAY WICKEDNESS AND IT WILL BE RAINBOWS AND DAISIES.

4-14 FIRST DISPUTE CYCLE

12-14 JOB'S RESPONSE

MATCHES ZOPHAR'S HARSHNESS WITH SARCASM.

IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE WHETHER PEOPLE ARE GOOD OR BAD.

GOD DOES WHATEVER HE WISHES—AND CANNOT BE PUT IN A BOX.

WHY DOES A GOOD GOD ALLOW EVIL? (FRIENDS WERE SUPERFICIAL ON THIS)

THE FRIENDS ARGUE GOD'S CASE WITH FLATTERY/DECEIT.

JOB'S MOOD SWINGS WILDLY, SO DON'T LOOK FOR CONSISTENCY. HIS CONFIDENCE WAVERS.

[ISN'T THIS HOW WE ARE, UNDER STRESS? FAITH TAKES A BEATING.]

MY ONLY WAY OUT IS DEATH (BUT I COULD BE RESURRECTED...)

BUT GOD PREFERS TO DESTROY ME.

15-21 SECOND DISPUTE CYCLE

15 ELIPHAZ

OUT OF PATIENCE AND POLITENESS.

HAMMERS JOB WITH RHETORICAL QUESTIONS.

JOB'S WORDS EMPTY, DECEITFUL, IRREVERENT. CAME FROM HIS SIN.

JOB IS ARROGANT, SINFUL, AND UNWISE.

THE WICKED MAN DOES NOT PROSPER. NOR DO THE INNOCENT SUFFER.

ABSOLUTE: LAW OF NATURE BLESSED THE RIGHTEOUS; NO MERCY FOR SINNERS.

GOD IS MECHANICAL AND TRANSACTIONAL. THE WICKED ALWAYS SUFFER.

THE THINGS DESCRIBED IN THE LAST HALF OF CHAPTER DID HAPPEN TO JOB,
SO ELIPHAZ IS GIVING JOB A REBUKE FILLED WITH ACID.

15-21 SECOND DISPUTE CYCLE

16-17 JOB'S RESPONSE

MATCHES THE WORDS OF ELIPHAZ, BUT CONTRADICTS THEM.

CONTRADICTS THE OPENING WORDS OF ALL 3 FRIENDS.

ALL MEN ARE VILE, YOU SAY? I AM UPRIGHT.

HOW TO COUNSEL (OR NOT) IS SEEN IN 16:4-5.

GOD BLAMES HIS "ENEMY" (THE ONE HE HAS MANUFACTURED IN HIS MIND).

"GOD HAS WORN ME OUT."

IS GOD ATTACKING JOB, OR JOB ATTACKING GOD?

THOUGHT HE WOULD DIE BEFORE VINDICATION (16:18, 17:1).

NOT TOTALLY LOST HOPE (16:19).

GOD IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN GUARANTEE HIS INNOCENCE (17:3). BUT NO, GOD WON'T.

JOB ENDS THIS SECTION AS HE BEGAN IT—WITH DESPAIR OF THE GRAVE.

15-21 SECOND DISPUTE CYCLE

18 BILDAD

OPENING LINES (ONLY) ARE AIMED AT JOB. WHO ARE YOU TO MAINTAIN YOUR INNOCENCE AND CRITICIZE YOUR FRIENDS?

THEN A BRUTAL DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE WICKED WILL DIE.

IT IS ALSO A THIRD PERSON PASSIVE/AGGRESSIVE OBLITERATION OF JOB.

JOB BELITTLES US BUT IS SELF-ABSORBED.

JOB, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW GOD JUDGES THE WICKED. WHAT YOU DESCRIBE AS GOD TEARING YOU APART IS ACTUALLY YOU EXPERIENCING THE CONSEQUENCES OF YOUR OWN SIN.

GETS VERY PERSONAL—THE SKIN DISEASE, THE LOSS OF CHILDREN.

THE MEMORY OF THE WICKED (I.E., JOB) WILL PERISH.

EVERYONE IS APPALLED BY JOB.

HE KNOWS NOT GOD.

15-21 SECOND DISPUTE CYCLE

19 JOB'S RESPONSE

WITH ALL FOUR MEN, THE ARGUMENTS LOCK IN AT THE EXTREMITIES. YOU CAN BE STUBBORN AND CONVINCED OF YOUR RIGHTNESS... AND BE WRONG...

HE IS INCREASINGLY IRRITATED BY HIS FRIENDS' ATTACKS AND ARROGANCE.

HE FEELS ABANDONED AND WRONGED BY GOD.

HE BLAMES GOD FOR ESTRANGING HIS RELATIONSHIPS.

HE SEES HIS FRIENDS JOINING GOD IN PURSUING (TORMENTING) HIM.

AND YET, HE FINISHES WITH A REMARKABLE EXPRESSION OF FAITH AND HOPE.

HE WARNS HIS FRIENDS THAT GOD WILL JUDGE THEIR FALSE ACCUSATIONS.

HIS REDEEMER LIVES, AND JOB WILL SEE HIM.

HE HAS A FIRM CONVICTION IN GOD, AND GOD WILL BE HIS ADVOCATE.

A MOOD SWING FROM A FAITH STEP: HE GETS PERSPECTIVE; GOD WILL INDEED VINDICATE THE INNOCENT WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE.

15-21 SECOND DISPUTE CYCLE

20 ZOPHAR

ANOTHER POEM ON THE GHASTLY FATE OF THE WICKED.

BEAUTIFUL LITERATURE, GROSSLY MISAPPLIED.

HE DEFENDS MAN'S FAITH IN A MORAL UNIVERSE (ONE GOVERNED BY JUSTICE).

BEAUTIFULLY POETIC RHAPSODY ON THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WICKED.

15-21 SECOND DISPUTE CYCLE

21 JOB'S RESPONSE

JOB PROVES HE HAS BEEN LISTENING TO HIS FRIENDS.

BUT ARE THEY EVEN LISTENING TO HIM ANY MORE?

IT'S A FEARSOME THING TO COMPLAIN AGAINST GOD, BUT WHAT DO I DO?

BETTER TO COMPLAIN THAN BE INDIFFERENT OR FULL OF VAPID CLICHE.

JOB ANGUISHED OVER NOT UNDERSTANDING WHAT GOD WAS DOING, BUT AT LEAST JOB TRIED TO. HIS FRIENDS ARROGANTLY ASSUMED THEY KNEW.

HE FLATLY DENIED THEIR ASSERTIONS ABOUT THE WICKED.

THE LOGIC—TO SPEAK OF THE HORRIBLE FATE OF THE WICKED, WHEN JOB SAYS THAT THE WICKED OFTEN PROSPER, IS NOT TO PROVE THAT JOB IS WICKED.

IT'S AN ENIGMA, REALLY: WHY *DO* THE WICKED PROSPER???!!! IT'S JOB'S VERY HIGH VIEW OF GOD THAT MAKES IT SUCH A DILEMMA!

THE ANSWER, THOUSANDS OF YEARS LATER, STILL ESCAPES US. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DEFINE JUST RETRIBUTION BY WHAT WE SEE IN OUR WORLD. ONLY GOD...

22-26 THIRD DISPUTE CYCLE

22 ELIPHAZ

ELIPHAZ REACTS TO JOB SAYING GOD ALLOWED WICKEDNESS TO GO UNPUNISHED.

MAN CAN DO NOTHING TO BENEFIT GOD.

OVERBOARD ON DIVINE TRANSCENDENCE;

MAN IS NOTHING IN GOD'S EYES. EVEN MAN'S VIRTUE IS WORTHLESS.

ELIPHAZ HAS COME TO AGREE WITH THE OTHER TWO "FRIENDS"—JOB IS A WRETCHED SINNER BEING PUNISHED. NO VINDICATION POSSIBLE.

JOB HAS DECEIVED HIMSELF. "ARE NOT YOUR SINS ENDLESS?"

USES JOB'S OWN WORDS TO REFUTE HIM.

COULD NOT PROCESS HOW JOB COULD WRESTLE WITH GOD.

NO FLEXIBILITY.

"ONLY" CONCLUSION: HE CALLS JOB TO REPENTANCE, QUITE ELOQUENTLY.

IRONY: GOD WILL HAVE THE "IMPIOUS" JOB PRAY FOR THE THREE: JOB 42:8.

22-26 THIRD DISPUTE CYCLE

23-24 JOB'S RESPONSE

DEBATE ABOUT WHOSE WORDS THESE ARE.

JOB—I WAS TERRIFIED BY GOD, AND DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT HE WAS DOING.

GOD IS ABSENT; I WANT TO FIND HIM, BUT CAN'T. (SOUND FAMILIAR?)

WHAT IS HIS PLAN FOR ME? I'M SCARED.

WHY DOESN'T GOD MAKE THINGS JUST AND RIGHT?

WHY ARE THE NEEDY ABUSED? WHY DOESN'T GOD DO SOMETHING?
(DOES NOT SAY THAT THE WICKED ARE NEVER PUNISHED.)

22-26 THIRD DISPUTE CYCLE

25 BILDAD

THIS IS THE LAST STATEMENT BY THE THREE COUNSELORS.

REGARDING GOD'S POWER:

JOB SAID THAT GOD'S POWER WAS ARBITRARY.

FRIENDS SAID THAT GOD'S POWER WAS JUSTICE.

GOD SAID THAT HIS POWER WAS MYSTERY AND LOVE.

BILDAD SAID THAT GOD'S POWER IS EVERYWHERE, SO MAN IS A MAGGOT.

JOB, YOU CAN'T REACH GOD BECAUSE YOU ARE A WORM (MAGGOT).

JOB, YOU CAN'T BE MADE—OR SHOWN TO BE—BLAMELESS.

22-26 THIRD DISPUTE CYCLE

26 JOB'S RESPONSE

YOU'RE AN IGNORANT MORON, WITH A LIMITED VIEW OF GOD.

SPEAKING OF HOPELESS, YOU ARE HOPELESS AS COUNSELORS.

MAN MAY NOT GET THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S POWER, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN
MAN IS A MAGGOT.

GOD'S CREATION SHOULD MAKE US STAND IN AWE; NOT FEEL MAGGOTY.

HOW CAN WE COMPREHEND GOD'S GREATNESS AND POWER?

27 JOB'S CLOSING DISCOURSE

HE USES IMPRECATORY RHETORIC TO SAY THAT WHAT HIS COUNSELORS
ACCUSE HIM OF WILL ACTUALLY COME DOWN ON THEIR HEADS.
THE WICKED DESERVE GOD'S WRATH—BUT I AM NOT ONE OF THEM.
GOD MOCKS YOU FROM HEAVEN.

28 INTERLUDE ON WISDOM

(THE DEBATE HAS REACHED AN IMPASSE. IT CAN GO NO FURTHER.)
AUTHOR MAY NOT HAVE BEEN JOB. AUTHOR IS COOL/CALM, JOB IS HOT.

MAN CAN FIND GOLD, BUT HE CAN'T FIND WISDOM.
WISDOM IS CONCEALED FROM THE CREATION.
WISDOM IS SCARCE AND MORE VALUABLE THAN ANYTHING ON EARTH.
IT COMES FROM GOD, AND HE SEES AND KNOWS ALL.
WISDOM FOR MAN IS . . . THE FEAR OF THE LORD.
SETS UP THE READER FOR THE TIME WHEN GOD WILL SPEAK.

GOD, MAN, AND WISDOM

DEUTERONOMY 4:5-6

PSALM 111:10

PROVERBS 8:4-9; 9:10

ROMANS 11:33

EPHESIANS 3:8-10

COLOSSIANS 2:2-3

29-31 MONOLOGUE BY JOB

JOB SUMS UP HIS CASE LIKE A LAWYER.

HIS CONCERN IS NOT THE LOSS OF HIS WEALTH, BUT...

THE LOSS OF HIS DIGNITY AND FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD.

(WHEN JOB WAS "IN HIS PRIME." WHEN HE WAS SOMEBODY.

WHAT GIVES US GLORY? DO WE LOOK AT THE PAST WITH ROSE GLASSES?

WHEN WERE WE "SOMEBODY"? WE TEND TO SEE OUR BEST IN THE PAST.

DOES IT MATTER???)

THERE'S ALSO PRIDE AND SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS IN HIS VINDICATION.

COULD IT BE THAT GOD WAS CHIPPING AT HIS PRIDE?

STRONG CONTRAST BETWEEN CH 29 AND 30

JOB IS NOW LOWER THAN THE LOW PEOPLE.

JOB PROTESTS HIS INNOCENCE.

BUT THE CASE IS NOW IN GOD'S HANDS.

GOD WILL VINDICATE HIM OR SHOW HIM TO BE A LIAR.

IF JOB IS A LIAR, HE'LL BE PUNISHED.

32-37 MONOLOGUE BY ELIHU, PART 1

ELIHU HAS BEEN LISTENING THE WHOLE TIME.

HE IS VERY ELOQUENT AND POETIC.

HE IS SAID TO BE ANGRY FOUR TIMES:

FOR JOB JUSTIFYING HIMSELF AND

WITH JOB'S FRIENDS FOR NOT PROVING JOB WRONG.

ELIHU SAYS SUFFERING IS DISCIPLINARY AND REDEMPTIVE.

BUT PROLOGUE SAYS JOB'S SUFFERING IS TO VINDICATE GOD'S TRUST IN HIM.

ELIHU'S SPEECHES ARE THE BRIDGE TO THE THEOPHANY (GOD'S APPEARING).

HIS THEOLOGY IS MORE BALANCED THAN THAT OF JOB'S FRIENDS.

ELIHU IS NOT SO MUCH CONCERNED THAT THE FRIENDS CONDEMNED JOB FALSELY. HE'S CONCERNED THAT IN NOT DISPROVING JOB'S CLAIMS TO BE INNOCENT THE FRIENDS INSTEAD CONDEMNED GOD (BECAUSE THEY TAUGHT THAT GOD ONLY PUNISHES THE WICKED, NOT THE INNOCENT).

32-37 MONOLOGUE BY ELIHU, PART 2

HIS ATTACKS ON JOB ARE LIMITED TO THE STATEMENTS JOB MADE.
ELIHU DID NOT ATTACK JOB HIMSELF, AND IS NOT REBUKED BY GOD.
QUOTES JOB FREQUENTLY, USING HIS NAME (FRIENDS DID NOT).
ELIHU BELIEVES IN GRACE, BUT EVEN THOUGH GOD FORGIVES YOU WILL ALSO REAP WHAT YOU SOW.

CHALLENGES JOB'S EXTREME LANGUAGE.
(JOB WAS EXTREME BECAUSE HE WANTED TO BE HONEST, BUT HE WAS ALSO INCONSISTENT.)
ELIHU CHALLENGED JOB'S INCONSISTENCY IN WANTING VINDICATION WHILE ALSO SAYING THAT GOD DIDN'T CARE.
ELIHU WAS WARMER TOWARD GOD THAN THE FRIENDS (GOD IS A GOD OF JUSTICE AND LOVE BOTH).

CAN WE REALLY TELL IF ONE IS UNDER JUDGMENT?

38-42 MONOLOGUE BY GOD

GOD SPEAKS OUT OF THE STORM, NOT "GOLDEN SPLENDOR" (ELIHU).
GOD REBUKES JOB FOR HIS MOMENTS OF RAGE, CALLING GOD HIS ENEMY.
GOD NEVER SAYS WHY JOB SUFFERED, OR WHY THE WICKED PROSPER.
BUT GOD NEVER AFFIRMS WHAT THE FRIENDS WERE SAYING.
SO WE SEE (42:7-8) THAT JOB WAS INNOCENT ALL ALONG.

BUT GOD WANTS HIM TO SEE: I'M YOUR CREATOR, SUSTAINER, FRIEND.
JOB IS GIVEN A MASTERCLASS ON GOD'S POWER AND GOODNESS.
NO DIRECT ANSWER TO JOB'S SUFFERING ("WHY") IS NEEDED. IT'S THE "WHO"
THAT MATTERS.

TWO THINGS ARE ON DISPLAY:

GOD'S SOVEREIGN AND CREATIVE MAGNIFICENCE;
JOB'S PUNINESS.

40, 42 JOB'S CLOSING CONTRITION

JOB REALIZES THERE'S NOTHING HE CAN SAY IN LIGHT OF GOD'S GREATNESS.
NOW HE SEES, NOW HE UNDERSTANDS. THE WHINING IS OVER.

JOB REPENTS, UNEQUIVOCABLY.
GOD WILL BLESS HIM TREMENDOUSLY.

BUT GOD WILL BLISTER JOB'S THREE FRIENDS FOR THEIR ARROGANCE.
THEY HAVE TO COME TO JOB FOR FORGIVENESS. JOB IS ACQUITTED.

THE BOOK ENDS WITH THE MASSIVE BLESSING OF JOB—MORE THAN BEFORE.
AND HE LIVES TO A RIPE OLD AGE.