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SILENT SCREAM: THE VOICE OF JOB

IN THE WISDOM POEM JOB 28

BY

GREGORY O. PARKER

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF

COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS EXEGETICAL THEOLOGY

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

2012

APPROVAL SHEET

SILENT SCREAM: THE VOICE OF JOB
IN THE WISDOM POEM JOB 28

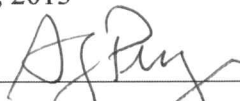
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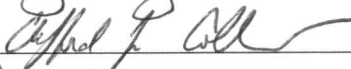
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Graduation Date January 15, 2013

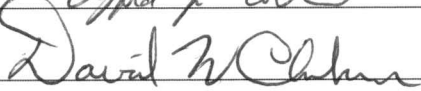
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ABSTRACT OF
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by

Gregory O. Parker

The purpose of this thesis is to shed light concerning the actual voice in the wisdom poem Job 28. It is quite surprising that many wisdom scholars and students of Job believe this to be a later addition. Therefore, the viewpoint of this thesis is the contrary or minority position. The voice in the wisdom poem actually belongs to the human being, Job. This being said, there are other preliminary matters and assumptions which require disclosure in order to properly understand and appreciate this work.

Chapter 42 of the Septuagint is foundational to understanding Job the human being, his lifespan in the patriarchal era, and his contributions to Edomite and Jewish wisdom as he is the fifth from Abram according to this text. The first assumption is that Job is a real person and not merely the subject of a Hebrew folk tale. He did indeed suffer horrible body sores; he outlived seven sons and three daughters; his animals were slaughtered.

Second, the wisdom poem, which Job spoke orally, is an outworking of his grief. He uttered these words. His friends witnessed his calamity. Later, after an encounter with God, Job was restored as a result of his faith, prayer life, and piety. The witnesses to the life and times of this actual human being were his friends, his wife, and his second set of

children. Thus the story of Job became inculcated in the genre of Hebrew wisdom as an oral tradition. It was told and retold for several hundred years before being scribed into the book of Job which we know to be literature par excellence.

This thesis begins with background material, builds through an exegesis of chapter 28, and concludes by eliminating from consideration those persons who did not speak the words of the wisdom poem. Critical scholars will reach a different conclusion because their premise is different. This view is both acknowledged and respected. However, a post exilic Job is as difficult to prove as an ancient one and the authors of the Septuagint have no reason to manufacture a falsehood. Therefore, a straightforward reading which places Job in antiquity is not beyond the pale.

In wisdom literature, often the unseen and the silent extinguish the visible and the audible. Grief and ignorance are key themes within this book. What do the characters not know? What do God and Satan know that humanity can see but dimly through the proverbial dark glass? The Bible neither promises to Job, nor to anyone, a clear explanation as to the workings of the universe. However, a holy life pleasing to God is not only recommended but is preferred above all else.

Last, this thesis concludes by explaining that the wisdom poem acts as a hinge. Self centered Job focuses only upon himself and his despair. Job 28:28 ends with the exhortation “fear of the Lord” and Job turns his eyes from himself to God and a pathway for restoration is made possible. From this viewpoint, it is critically important that Job speaks the words of the wisdom poem. Functionally, this hinge allows the door to open. Without chapter 28, chapter 42 is not possible because repentance precedes restoration.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the following people:

To my mother, Peggy for her love of Job (Exodus 20:12)

To my father, Bo, for exhorting me to read the Proverbs as a teenager (Proverbs 4:1)

To Tammy, for being a friend who sticks closer than a brother (Proverbs 18:24) and

To Julia, for her love, support, and encouragement (Proverbs 31:10-31)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the entire faculty and staff of Covenant Theological Seminary as this labor of love has been nine years in the making, 2004-2012. Thank you all for your wisdom, instruction, prayers, and guidance. Special thanks to Dr. Greg Perry and Dr. Jack Collins for your teaching both in and out of the classroom and for the Godly lives you model before me. I would also like to thank mentor and friend Dr. Mike Pabarcus of Saint Louis Christian College for your prayers and encouragement.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BDB	Brown Driver Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon
Ch	Chapter
Const	Construct
ESV	English Standard Version
Hiph	Hiphil
Inf	Infinitive
Imp	Imperative
Impft	Imperfect
Msgr	Messenger
NASB	New American Standard Bible
Niph	Niphal
NIV	New International Version
Perf	Perfect
TNK	Jewish Publication Society Tanakh
Wyqt	Wayyiqtol

Greek parsing follows a customary convention: Tense, Voice, Mood, Person and Number for verbs, e.g. PAI3S; Gender, Case and Number for nouns/adjectives, e.g. FAS; and Tense, Voice, Mood, Gender, Case, and Number for participles, e.g. PA PTC MNS.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The voice in the wisdom poem, chapter 28 of the book of Job, is a silent scream from the depths of despair; it is the voice of Job himself. Who is Job? One answer to the origins of the historical Job comes from the book of Job 42:17 in the Septuagint:

And Job died old and full of days: and it has been written¹, again he will rise up with those the Lord causes to rise². This has been explained³ in the Syriac Bible as living in Ausis upon the boundaries of Idumea and Arabia, and he was known⁴ before by the name Jobab, and having taken an Arabian wife he begot a son whose name was Ennon, and he [Job] was the son of his father Zare, one of the sons of Esau, and his mother Bosorrha, so that he was the fifth from Abram.

And these are the kingdoms of Edom in which he also ruled a country: first Balak [the son] of Beor and the name of his city [was] Dennaba, but after Balak, Jobab⁵ was called⁶ Job, and after this Asom was a prince from the country of Thaeman⁷: and after this one Adad, the son of Barad, the one who destroyed Midian in the plain of Moab and the name of his city was Gethaim.

And his friends who came to him were Eliphaz of Esau a son of the Thaemanites, a king; Bildad of the Sauchaeans, Tyrannus; Zophar the king of the Minaeans.

¹ γέγραπται (γράφω) PPI3S “It has been written.”

² This parallels the Christian idea of the righteous being raised with Christ.

³ ἐρμηνεύεται (ἐρμηνεύω) PPI3S “It has been explained.”

⁴ προὑπῆρχεν (προὑπάρχω) IAI3S exist previously, “He was known previously.”

⁵ Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 384b, Jobab is “a king in Edom.”

⁶ καλούμενος (καλέω) PP PTC MNS “He was called.”

⁷ J. I. Packer, Merrill C. Tenney, and William White Jr., *The Bible Almanac* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1980), Θαϊμανίτιδος Thaeman; תימא Tema. The name means “south, south country or sun burnt.” The descendents of Ishmael dwelt here, as did Job, in this land of Arabia located midway between Damascus and Mecca, 729.

If factually accurate, this passage places Job in the Edomite genealogy of Genesis 36:33-34, and this history is recounted in 1 Chronicles 1:44-45, 8:9, 8:18. Aside from the minor point that Job, formerly known as Jobab, is the fifth from Abraham, why does he deserve our attention? Job, as a figure of importance to Israel, is the third generation removed from the patriarchal line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: Abraham, Isaac, Esau, Zare, and Job. Therefore, to be a proper subject and fit for Jewish sages and Talmudic scholars, Job must share more in common with Abraham than Esau. The introductory material from chapter 1:1-8 of the book of Job paints the sketch:

1 There was⁸ a man in the land of⁹ Uz¹⁰, named¹¹ Job and that man was¹² blameless¹³ and upright, fearing¹⁴ God and turning¹⁵ aside from evil.
 2 There were¹⁶ born to him seven¹⁷ sons and three¹⁸ daughters.
 3 And he possessed livestock¹⁹: seven thousand²⁰ sheep, and three thousand camels²¹, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred

⁸ Ronald J. Williams, *Williams' Hebrew Syntax*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), § 567 (200), הָיָה existential clause expresses existence in past time.

⁹ John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 66n9, Three people named Uz are mentioned in Genesis: 1) the son of Dishan, a chief of Edom (Gen. 36:28); 2) the son of Aram (Gen. 10:23 and 1 Chr. 1:17); 3) the eldest son of Nahor, the Aramean brother of Abraham (Gen. 22:20-21).

¹⁰ Amos Hakham, *The Bible: Job: with the Jerusalem Commentary* (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 2009), 3, Uz is a dwelling place of “all the mingled people” or “all the Arabs.”

¹¹ Literally, “Job his name.”

¹² Literally, “and that man became complete and straight.”

¹³ Hakham, *Jerusalem*, 3, Hakham prefers “honest.”

¹⁴ Literally, “and to fear.”

¹⁵ Qal PTC MS, turning aside.

¹⁶ Niph Wyqt 3 MP, “and they were born.”

¹⁷ Williams, *Williams' Hebrew Syntax*, § 95b (40), שְׁבַע וְעַד עֶשְׂרִים three through ten, also called chiasmic concord, masculine numbers, i.e. “seven sons” take feminine ending; feminine numbers “three daughters” is without suffix.

¹⁸ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 68n19, “Interesting parallel between Baal and Job; in Ugaritic mythology, Baal also had seven sons and three daughters; the daughters, but never the sons are named.”

¹⁹ Literally, “his cattle.”

²⁰ Literally, “seven thousand flock.”

²¹ Hakham, *Jerusalem*, 4, In this day a camel is worth ten times as much as a sheep.

female donkeys and very many servants²² and that man was the greatest²³ of all the people of the east.

4 And his sons, each on his day, made a feast²⁴ in his own house, and they would send and invite their three sisters²⁵ to eat and to drink with them

5 And when the days of the feasting were completed, Job would send²⁶ and consecrate them and rising early in the morning he would offer up a whole burnt offering for each²⁷ of them because Job said, “Perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.” Thus Job did continually.²⁸

6 And it came to pass, one²⁹ day³⁰ the angels³¹ of God came and stood³² before YHWH and also Satan³³ came³⁴ in their midst.

7 And YHWH said to Satan, “From where have you come?” And Satan answered YHWH and said, “From going about³⁵ upon the earth and walking to and fro upon it.”

²² Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 68n18, The city-dwelling Job and the agrarian Job are not mutually exclusive. “It is likely that Job was a city dweller who engaged in farming and commerce and employed pastoral nomads to tend his vast herds.”

²³ TNK prefers, “that man was wealthier than anyone in the east.” In context, greatness here may be associated with possessions. Early on, this sketch of Job centers on his blameless character and his abundance of possessions.

²⁴ Hakham, *Jerusalem*, 6, “These feasts were attended by the young people, and Job himself did not take part in them.”

²⁵ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 69, “The invitation to the sisters likely means they are unmarried and still living at home with their father.”

²⁶ Paul Jouon and Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 2nd ed. (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblio, 2008), § 111e (327), “A repeated or continuous action can be represented in a global way, and then it is treated as if it were unique or instantaneous.”

²⁷ Literally, “according to the number of them.”

²⁸ Williams, *Williams’ Hebrew Syntax*, § 168 (70), כָּבַד יַעֲשֶׂה אִיּוֹב iterative imperfect, “thus did Job continually.” The imperfect expresses custom or habit.

²⁹ Hakham, *Jerusalem*, 8, “According to the Aramaic translation, the day was Rosh Hashanah.”

³⁰ Jouon-Muraoka, *Biblical Hebrew*, § 137n (479), “In the expression הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה the yom is the subject and is made determinate by what follows.”

³¹ Literally, “sons.”

³² Hithpael Inf. Const. “to stand or present one’s self before another.”

³³ Norman C. Habel, *The Book of Job* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1985), 78, הַשָּׂטָן, with the definite article, this is not a name, but a title, The Adversary.

³⁴ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 71-2, “The Hebrew root שָׁתַן means ‘to oppose at law’; on the basis of this conjecture, some scholars believe Satan is functioning as the prosecuting attorney of the heavenly council.”

³⁵ Hakham, *Jerusalem*, 8, According to Hakham, Satan’s task was to roam the earth and look for sins there.

8 And YHWH said to Satan, “Have³⁶ you considered³⁷ My³⁸ servant³⁹ Job,⁴⁰ because there is no man on the earth like him there, upright⁴¹, and fearing God and turning aside from evil.”

In the patriarchal setting, predating the laws of Moses and the system of priests, selected men were singled out as exemplars: Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Job. Such men were in effect handpicked by God as possessing righteousness par excellence. God says of Job in v. 8, “there is no man on the earth like him there, upright, fearing God and turning aside from evil.” Wise as a sage and holy man, Job lives a blameless life (1:1), publicly and privately, even performing the duties of a priest (1:5) pre-Sinai. It is for these reasons that his story is told, retold, later written, and bound in the Hebrew canon.

DEBT OF GRATITUDE

This author owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to David J. A. Clines and this thesis borrows extensively from his work. In large part there exists broad agreement with Clines on all except two matters. First, it is Clines’ contention that Job is late, and it is the view of this author that Job, or at least the original story is early. Second, it is the contention of Clines that the words of Job 28 are not those of the protagonist Job, and it is the view of this author that Job speaks these words.

³⁶ Conditional, “whether, if” rendered in English as “have you?”

³⁷ Literally, “inner heart or inner mind”, i.e., has Satan thought about or considered Job with any degree of seriousness as to his character or conduct?

³⁸ Hakham, *Jerusalem*, 9, Hakham renders this, “have you set your heart upon My servant Job?”

³⁹ Williams, *Williams’ Hebrew Syntax*, § 70 (28) עֲבָדִי אֲנִי explicative apposition; one term may be used for the other, “My servant, Job.”

⁴⁰ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 73n12, Servant proves to be a great title when God acknowledges their humble service: Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, David, Isaiah, and the prophets. When God acknowledges Job as My Servant, this places Job in select company indeed.

⁴¹ Literally, “straight.”

ORIGEN AND THE 42:17 NOTES

The notes in the Septuagint, the expansion of 42:17, shed tremendous light on the suffering subject in this drama. Without these notes, Job could have existed in any time frame and indeed this is part of the charm of Job's story. However, the patriarchal setting and the Edomite lineage not only add flavor and character to this literary masterpiece but also ground a literal human being within a physical time frame. Therefore, with the aid of these notes, a historical context is established.

The literary product, the book of Job was refined over millennia. The original story is ancient; however, over centuries many bees have produced this pint of honey. Gathering, working, refining, and storing – all play their respective roles. The literary product is rather like the honey jar in this respect. In the Book of Job, the lemma which Rahlfs presents ... is a critical reconstruction⁴² of the Ecclesiastical Text with the lines added by Origen marked with an asterisk. The text of the Manual Edition was based mainly on the uncials⁴³ B & A.”

Judging from the words of Origen, he observed places in the book of Job believed to be deficient. “Again, throughout the entire book of Job there are many passages in the Hebrew which are found wanting in our copies ... but why do I have to list all the instances we collected with so much labor, to prove that the difference⁴⁴ between our copies and those of the Jews did not escape us?” Further, it may be said that Origen greatly desired to integrate the whole document on the basis of all the sources available to him. “With the help of God's grace I have tried to repair the disagreements in the copies

⁴² Peter John Gentry, *The Asterisk Materials in the Greek Job*, Septuagint and Cognate Studies 38 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 11.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 3.

of the Old Testament on the basis of other versions,”⁴⁵ thus preserving valuable material in the corpus of Job. “The copies of the Old Greek (Septuagint) known to Origen differed from the Hebrew at various places and for a variety of reasons. The aim of Origen’s work was to bring the Greek into quantitative alignment⁴⁶ with the Hebrew.”

“After 42:17, the line corresponding to the end of Job in the Masoretic Text, Old Greek has a couple of additional notes. Whereas α’ and σ’ end exactly as the Masoretic Text, both plusses are found⁴⁷ in θ.” “Origen says both Old Greek and θ’ have the same text.”⁴⁸ “The longer plus of the two is asserted to be derived from the ‘Syrian’⁴⁹ book’, possibly an Aramaic Targum.” However, the Septuagint version, being a free rendering of the book of Job, must be used very cautiously; yet it cannot be denied that the Septuagint contains many traces of the correct reading, and it is worth noting that the Syriac translation, Peshitta, was corrected⁵⁰ after the Septuagint.

TARGUM NOTES

The earliest stages of the Targum of Job, as a written document, reflect considerable variation in the text.⁵¹ Though this targum may have been a literary work from the beginning, the variations are better accounted for on the basis that originally the text was orally transmitted.⁵² Three texts⁵³ are prominent, א ב ג, although others are also

⁴⁵ Ibid., 2.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁷ Ibid., Appendix D.

⁴⁸ Ibid., Appendix D, Note 1.

⁴⁹ Ibid., Appendix D.

⁵⁰ *The Jewish Encyclopedia: The History, Religion, Literature, and Customs of the Jewish People from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, vol. 7 (New York: Funk And Wagnalls Company, 1909), s.v. “Job, Book Of” subsection “Textual Criticism,” 199.

⁵¹ David M. Stec, *The Text of the Targum Of Job: An Introduction and Critical Edition* (Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1994), 92.

⁵² Ibid., 93.

mentioned. נ has a tendency to omit non-literal elements;⁵⁴ however, when נ differs significantly with ׀ it almost always agrees⁵⁵ with ׀. Interestingly, ׀ identifies the name of Job's wife as Dinah⁵⁶ in Job 2:9. "The discovery of targum texts at Qumran, most notably the Job scroll (11QtgJob) but also a further fragment of Job (4Q157) and two fragments of Leviticus (4Q156), shows that literal translation was carried out at a very early⁵⁷ date, and cannot be taken as an indication of lateness."

PLACE AND SETTING

Uz⁵⁸, mentioned briefly in Jeremiah 25:20 and Lamentations 4:21, is regarded as a literal place on the northern edge of the great Arabian desert once invaded by the Sabeans from the north and the Chaldeans from the south. "According to the cuneiform inscriptions, Shalmaneser II received tribute from one Sasi, a son of the land of Uzza, from 859 to 831 B.C.; and the Midrash also identifies the name of Uz with the country, making Job a contemporary of Abraham."⁵⁹ In rabbinical literature, "according to Bar Kappara, Job lived in the time of Abraham;⁶⁰ according to Abba b. Kahana, in the time of

⁵³ Ibid., 11.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 14.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 11.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 14.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 88.

⁵⁸ *The Jewish Encyclopedia: The History, Religion, Literature, and Customs of the Jewish People from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, vol. 12 (New York: Funk And Wagnalls Company, 1909), s.v. "Uz" by Kautzsch.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ *The Jewish Encyclopedia: The History, Religion, Literature, and Customs of the Jewish People from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, vol. 7 (New York: Funk And Wagnalls Company, 1909), s.v. "Job" subsection "In Rabbinical Literature" by Isaac Schwarz.

Jacob, he married Dinah, Jacob's daughter." "Job is mentioned by Ezekiel with Noah and Daniel, as among the three most righteous⁶¹ men."

EZEKIEL'S PARAGONS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

12 And the word of the LORD came to me:
 13 "Son of man, when a land sins against Me by acting faithlessly, and I stretch out my hand against it and break its supply of bread and send famine upon it, and cut off from it man and beast,
 14 even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness, declares the Lord GOD.
 15 "If I cause wild beasts to pass through the land, and they ravage it, and it be made desolate, so that no one may pass through because of the beasts,
 16 even if these three men were in it, as I live, declares the Lord GOD, they would deliver neither sons nor daughters. They alone would be delivered, but the land would be desolate.
 17 "Or if I bring a sword upon that land and say, Let a sword pass through the land, and I cut off from it man and beast,
 18 though these three men were in it, as I live, declares the Lord GOD, they would deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they alone would be delivered.
 19 "Or if I send a pestilence into that land and pour out my wrath upon it with blood, to cut off from it man and beast,
 20 even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, declares the Lord GOD, they would deliver neither son nor daughter. They would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness.⁶²

Three devout men are mentioned in verses 14 and 20. "Every member of Ezekiel's audience would have known that even though Noah and Job were not Israelites, the God they worshipped was Yahweh."⁶³ "Noah and Job represent periods millennia apart, the first from the antediluvian era and the second from the period of the patriarchs."⁶⁴ A quick glance suggests, concerning Noah, Daniel, and Job, deliverance from the flood, deliverance from the fire, and deliverance from the hand of Satan. However, Craigie

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² *ESV Study Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), Ezekiel 14:12-20.

⁶³ Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), 448.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 449.

asserts that the Daniel here “is not the biblical hero of that name, but rather a heroic figure referred to in the literature of Phoenicia and Syria.”⁶⁵ “In an ancient text (approximately 13th century B.C.) from Ugarit, on the coast of Syria, we may read of upright Daniel and his encounter with grief.”⁶⁶ “The tale of Aqhat tells the story of a legendary King Dan’el, characterized as ‘upright, sitting before the gate, beneath a mighty tree on the threshing floor, judging the cause of the widow, adjudicating the case of the fatherless.’”⁶⁷ The lesson here is not that the hero overcomes great obstacles but that the righteous are delivered by God.

RIGHTEOUSNESS AND WISDOM

Righteousness and wisdom are related. It is intuitive to assert that without wisdom, there is no righteousness. Seeking God, knowing God, and living as one who fears the Lord are the hallmarks of wisdom. It is for these reasons that the story of Job is handed down, told and retold, perhaps with slight variations from village to village. Wisdom students hear or read a rather engaging tale and are soon swept up with the problems and concerns of first one man and later all mankind.

The common bonds of the wisdom literature join together to answer five questions: who is God; who is man; what is the duty of man to God; what does it mean to be righteous and what does it mean to seek and find God’s favor? Proverbial wisdom (Proverbs 4:1) is steeped in tradition and sound advice passed down from father to son. Here we find the stark contrast between the righteous (4:9-13) and the wicked (4:16-19); between those who will hear the voice of wisdom and those who refuse; between those

⁶⁵ Peter C. Craigie, *Ezekiel* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 1983), 101.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel*, 448.

who plan and are careful juxtaposed against those who are rash and reckless. The crucial admonition in Proverbs 4:5: “get wisdom, get insight.”⁶⁸ In Ecclesiastes, we find the tiring journey to understand all the ways of the world, the exhaustion it brings, and finally the sage nugget of a dying man who says: “The end of the matter, all has been heard. Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.”⁶⁹

The book of Proverbs is a staunch defender of retribution with the underlying idea that wisdom, which is how to live rightly, leads to life and folly leads to death.⁷⁰ The operation of the world is systematic and rational; cause and effect hold sway and predictable outcomes may be anticipated. In fact, the ways of the world are older than the world itself (Proverbs 8:22-31), as wisdom is the “first of God’s works”, “when there were no depths”, “before the mountains”, and even “before the first of the dust”. There is a close parallel here with Job 28:23-28, as “God knows the place of it”, “sees it”, “declares it”, and “commends it to man.”

Spring rains yield flowers and leaves turn color in autumn. The world does indeed follow a course; however, sometimes the path is long. In Ecclesiastes, the path is so long that Solomon can never find the original source before reaching his final destination. Searching and studying in order to find the beginning and ending points of the universe exhaust him. Ultimately, the wise man and the fool share the same fate, though it is better to be wise than a fool. Whereas Proverbs is concerned with instruction and application, Ecclesiastes dares us to ask not so much about cause and effect as meaning and significance. What is the meaning of life? Is it important to be remembered by the

⁶⁸ BDB 108a, בִּינָה Understanding is the object of knowledge; see Job 28:28.

⁶⁹ *ESV*, Ecclesiastes 12:13.

⁷⁰ David J. A. Clines, *Job 1-20*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 17 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1989), lxi.

next generation? Without God, does it matter if the flowers bloom in spring and the leaves turn color in autumn? Solomon, in his exhaustion, concluded that without God, life is meaningless. Job confronts Proverbs at a different level: Is the doctrine of retribution⁷¹ true, and what does this mean for people who are sick and suffering? Is God just? Does God care if we suffer? Superficial answers are utterly lacking; however, there is an order to the universe and a definite relationship between the creatures of God and the Creator God. The unifying theme for Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes is the “fear of the Lord”. “Proverbs is permeated with this outlook: not only is the fear of the Lord the beginning of knowledge (Proverbs 1:7), but so too it is the fountain of life (Proverbs 14:27).”⁷²

Job is not merely good but wise. In fact, the overarching theme of goodness permeates not only the wisdom literature but also the creation accounts, and even God’s own character. It is not surprising that righteousness is positively correlated⁷³ with wealth and that the righteous have long lives and grandchildren. Despite the attempt of naysayers to dismiss Proverbs as being simplistic for asserting such connections, the body of evidence suggests this correlation is well founded. As with Job, the handing down, the telling and retelling, the scribing and memorizing, of these sage nuggets over centuries attest their worth. Wisdom literature consistently and overwhelmingly affirms that righteousness is superior to wealth⁷⁴ and, should God be so gracious as to grant material comfort, that this is both blessing and gift. Moreover, Job is not the first nor the last to notice that

⁷¹ Ibid., lxii.

⁷² *ESV Study Bible*, Introduction to the Poetic and Wisdom Literature, 867.

⁷³ Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, “Wealth and Poverty: System and Contradiction in Proverbs,” *Hebrew Studies: A Journal Devoted to Hebrew Language and Literature* XXXIII (1992): 25-35.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

sometimes all that is promised does not manifest on the first pass through this life; none less than Abraham, Moses, Josiah, and even Israel⁷⁵ herself did not receive, at least yet, all that has been promised. Lady Wisdom looks forward, not as a naïve fool, but as one who knows that this dismal present does not exclude future blessing. Job expects to be vindicated. He knows God is good and his wisdom rests in this knowledge. Instilled in His faithful ones is this same divine wisdom by which God made the world; He made everything in it; He made it all good.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

CHAPTER II: THE SUFFERING SUBJECT

WHY DO THE RIGHTEOUS SUFFER?

Why do the righteous suffer? An easier question to answer is why do the wicked suffer? Proverbial wisdom attests that the wicked suffer because of their wickedness. Beginning with an ungodly attitude, the rebellious nature, worldly vices, and lack of personal restraint take their toll. The Teacher in Ecclesiastes might suggest this as the weight of the world bearing down on humanity writ large. There is an apportionment of suffering painted on the canvas of history, and at various times and in a multitude of ways each of us has a measure of suffering until finally we succumb to death. However, for Job, this suffering has nothing to do with wickedness, as God Himself attests to Job's character, and neither does his suffering have anything to do with generalized malady that strikes the population in an arbitrary manner. Job is blameless and he is singled out.

Specifically, in the case of Job, he suffers because Satan afflicts him and this is done with the permission of God, 1:12 and 2:6:

1:12 And YHWH said unto Satan, "Behold, all⁷⁶ that he has is in your hand, only against him do not stretch out your hand." Then Satan went out from the presence⁷⁷ of God.

2:6 And YHWH said to Satan, "Behold he is in your hand, surely his life you must⁷⁸ spare."

In the first instance, the verses following, 1:13-19, entail losses that include oxen and donkeys (vv. 14-15), servants (v. 15), sheep and servants (v. 16), camels and servants (v.

⁷⁶ Hakham, *Jerusalem*, 10, According to Hakham, "Satan believed that if Job lost even a small part of his property, he would immediately abandon his fear of God." Because God gave Satan not merely a portion of Job's material property but all of it, "Satan actually received more than he asked for."

⁷⁷ Literally, "before the Face of God."

⁷⁸ Qal Imp MS "you must spare his life." TNK, ESV, and NASB prefer "only spare his life." NIV favors "must."

17), his eldest son's house, and the lives of his seven sons and three daughters (vv. 18-19). In the second instance, the verse following, 2:7, describes Job's afflictions: "And Satan went out from before the presence of YHWH and smote⁷⁹ Job with painful⁸⁰ boils⁸¹ from the sole of his foot up to the crown of his head."

The Septuagint, in noting that Job is the fifth from Abraham, sets up an interesting parallel between Job⁸² and Abraham:

<u>Job</u>	<u>Abraham</u>
Rich man	Rich man
Fears God	Fears God
Man of faith	Man of faith
Tested by God to prove faithful	Tested by God to prove faithful
Hears God in whirlwind	Hears God's voice
Gains a double portion	Is promised "father of nations"
Honorable name	Honorable name
Story is told and retold	Story is told and retold

This parallel suggests that Job's suffering is necessary. In other words a pious man is made more holy by testing. This view appears to result from a backward glance rather than a forward look. In the period before Job gains the double portion suffering may appear necessary; however, as the story progresses, Satan does not afflict Job so that he will become a more righteous man, nor does God promote Job's suffering because He has doubts about Job – quite the contrary. However, once again, the question is raised, why do the righteous suffer?

⁷⁹ Hiph. Wyqt. 3MS "smote."

⁸⁰ Literally, "evil."

⁸¹ Hakham, *Jerusalem*, 18, "The sages said that Satan's sadness was greater than that of Job." It boggles the mind to believe that any creature could be this miserable.

⁸² Clines, *Job 1-20*, 28.

This impossible problem forms the boundary where humans reach their limits of understanding and find that God is often silent. The questions are hard and uncomfortable. For example, if God is truly good, then why is there suffering⁸³ in the world? Atheists are quick to pose this one, first because there is no easy answer to it and, second, it postulates that perhaps God is not truly good. Perhaps God is unconcerned with human suffering. Perhaps God is not only good. Many ancient cultures believed in gods who were fickle and temperamental, who were sometimes good and sometimes evil, and who would raise up a king only to destroy him later.

⁸³ Francis I. Andersen, *Job: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1976), 64-5.

WHAT DOES JOB BELIEVE?

What does Job believe? What is his theology and world view? As the fifth from Abraham, he appears content with one God who rules the universe. Therefore, any notion of competing or warring gods comes off the table. He believes God is overwhelmingly good, and he poses this question to his wife in 2:10: “Shall we⁸⁴ receive only good things from God and the evil things we shall not receive?” This is not to say that Job believes God to be evil; however, he does not know how to reconcile the simultaneity of his innocence and his present state with God’s Sovereignty. Job believes in the practices of righteousness, which include prayer and sacrifice (1:5). He believes in the temporary nature of this present life (1:21): “And said, naked I came⁸⁵ from my mother’s womb⁸⁶ and naked will I return there.⁸⁷ YHWH gave and YHWH took away; blessed be the name YHWH.” Job believes God hears and answers prayers: “I would know that He would answer me and understand what He would say to me.”⁸⁸ Last, Job believes in an afterlife present with God: “And after my skin has been thus destroyed⁸⁹,

⁸⁴ Jouon-Muraoka, *Biblical Hebrew*, § 161a (574), rhetorical question, “shall we receive good from God and not evil?” Job does not expect his wife to answer. However, readers of his story are often frustrated that no one enlightens Job; “yes, you shall receive only good from God and not evil.”

⁸⁵ Ibid., § 78f (186), though silent, the guttural \aleph is often omitted. Here צָרָרִי is defectively written.

⁸⁶ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 75n11, “The mother’s womb, in which a body is knit together, was perceived as an extension of the earth. It was common in the ancient Near East to bury a person in a curled position, suggesting a return to the embryonic condition.”

⁸⁷ Poetic, not literal. Job is not going to return literally to his mother’s womb; here, he is talking about his death. The womb of the earth is a metaphor for the grave.

⁸⁸ *ESV*, Job 23:5.

⁸⁹ BDB 668b, Piel Perf. 3 PL, “after my skin which they have struck off (alluding to the ravages of his disease).”

yet in my flesh I shall see God.”⁹⁰ The Hebrew root פָּנָה holds two possibilities with the first meaning according to BDB derived from “strike off” and the second “go around”. According to Hartley, if the second form is used, then “Job in his emaciated body will see God’s appearing to vindicate him”, and if the first form is used, then “in a resurrected body, Job will see God.”⁹¹ BDB identifies the first form of פָּנָה in Job 19:26.

WHY IS JOB DESPAIRING?

As a prelude to exploring the wisdom poem, the emotional journey is further down. What is it that drives a man of faith to the depths of despair? Loss of property produces misery; loss of his children and his inheritance produces an outcry of injustice; loss of his physical health produces deepest depression and thoughts of death. The sum of these losses over time produces despair. If Job is a book of limits, whether these are the limits of man in understanding God or the limits of man in overcoming his circumstances and rising above the cruel twists of fate, then the testing of Job is also bounded and limited, with its outcome determined by a purposeful God. One phrase that is twice used in the Septuagint version of Job is εἰ μὴν. The first usage comes in 1:11 and the second in 2:5:

11 But⁹² send Your hand and touch all that he has, and surely⁹³ unto Your face he curses⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Ibid., Job 19:26.

⁹¹ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 297.

⁹² Adversative.

⁹³ εἰ μὴν “if surely” or an alternate reading “if one month.” Satan proposes a propositional bet to God. Withdraw your blessings, strip Job of his material wealth and “surely” he will curse You to Your face. An alternate view of this proposition involves a time duration, one month. Remove his blessings and material wealth and “in one month” he will curse You to Your face. No other hint is given in the book of Job as to the exact duration of his suffering. The Hebrew reading is אִם־כֵּן “if not” and gives no reference to time. If one month is accurate, then one month in Satan’s hand is a most miserable test to endure.

⁹⁴ ἐλογήσῃ FAI3S “He will bless.” The same word for blessing sometimes means curse.

5 But no⁹⁵, send forth Your hand to touch his bone and his flesh and surely⁹⁶ he will curse you to Your face.

It is possible that Job is tested for one month. This period corresponds to the times of the heavenly assemblies when the angels present themselves before God. Although we do not know exactly how long Job has suffered at this point, if the alternate readings of εἰ μὴν and οὐ μὴν may be used (i.e., “if a month” and “not a month”, respectively), then Job has been suffering for a period of 30 days. “According to the Targum Yerushalmi, the two councils of heaven took place respectively on Rosh ha-Shanah and Yom Kippur.”⁹⁷ This is a ten-day interval. A doubling down, by Satan, at day ten, posits the duration of Job’s test to be one month (i.e., ten days plus twenty days). Ironically, Satan bets double and loses; Job receives a double portion following restoration. This period allows time for his three friends to journey, arrive, and find Job mourning on the dung heap. Even though Job must suffer, his suffering is limited; even as Satan seeks to torment him, the duration of the testing has its beginning, its middle, and its end. Thus God is the same God who defines boundaries and limits. This is evident in Genesis and other ancient works as God divides the sky from the waters and the waters from the land. Not knowing when the end will come or how long the testing will last produces the greatest despair. Conversely, knowing that God determines the boundaries and limits not only of the physical world, but also of our days and our trials, lightens the load.

⁹⁵ οὐ μὴν alternate reading here, “not a month.” The particle μὴν is used once in 1:11 and twice in 2:5. The alternate reading of 2:5 might sound something like this: Not a month! Stretch forth your hand to touch his flesh and bone and before the month ends, he will curse You to Your face.

⁹⁶ εἰ μὴν “if surely” or an alternate reading “if one month”; see previous note.

⁹⁷ *The Jewish Encyclopedia: The History, Religion, Literature, and Customs of the Jewish People from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, vol. 7 (New York: Funk And Wagnalls Company, 1909), s.v. “Job” subsection “In Rabbinical Literature” by Isaac Schwarz.

However, before Job can see the end of his trials, he must endure the full measure of testing. Chapters 3 through 27 describe the dark tunnel, and at the end of chapter 28, the first ray of light appears. As a necessary precondition for proving this thesis, one must first prove that a state of despair exists and that Job is not merely miserable but, rather, is suffering in the depths of human depression. Therefore, the next step forward requires a prerequisite step back to examine not only the plight of Job but also the surrounding context leading up to chapter 28. Not only has Job lost his livestock, his servants, and his children; his illness, with boils and excruciating pain, leads him to believe that he is actually dying. Job's legacy (i.e., his seven sons), are dead and his wife invites him to "curse God and die" (2:9). His adversary, Satan, has attacked him, and God, at this point, is silent.

Next, we shall examine Job's three friends and their well-intended advice. If the note at the end of the Septuagint 42:17 is accepted as accurate, it is worth restating that Job's friends were royalty: King Eliphaz, Tyrannus Bildad, and King Zophar. This says something about Job's previous status and lends a certain gravitas to his complaint. Job, "the greatest of all the people of the east," was himself a Potentate or Sheikh (1:3) and these friends were his peers. This royal court, assembled here at the site of Job's mourning, is concerned primarily with righteousness, right rule, and God's administration here on earth. As we shall see, by examining their lines of reasoning, Job's suffering is secondary in their respective world views. If the book of Job is considered as a legal drama, the courtroom on earth stands in parallel with the courtroom in Heaven. These earthly kings first hear evidence and then make their pronouncements; at the close of the book, the Heavenly King makes His pronouncements.

THE SPEECHES OF KING ELIPHAZ (4:1 to 5:27, 15:1-35, 22:1-30)

Eliphaz, as a theologian, supposes his dogmatic presuppositions to be divine revelation; however, his observations about life are unintentionally cruel.⁹⁸ His opening salvo begins with assertions that the innocent are not punished (4:7) and those who plough iniquity reap the same. His line of reasoning is proverbially grounded in a pre-scientific cause-effect relationship based upon known facts, observations, and personal experiences. However, not all the assertions of this king are spot on. He asserts that man cannot be righteous before God (4:17), but this stands directly contradicted by God, who says that Job is upright (1:8). Further, Eliphaz asserts that God places little trust in His servants and even less so in those who live in houses of clay (4:18-19).

In the second cycle, Eliphaz asserts that Job has sinned and shows no fear of God (15:4) and that Job would do well to heed the voices of his aged friends: “older than your father” (15:10). “It is more than likely Eliphaz is referring to himself, Bildad, and Zophar.”⁹⁹ Therefore, in a circuitous way, the sarcasm here is that Job is a young fool. He is a fool who does not fear God and he is also a fool for not listening to his elders. The further irony is that a “foolish Job” turns the Elihu speeches into side-splitting laughter as “Elihu’s verbose, overly apologetic style offers comic relief to break the tight, fearful atmosphere created by Job’s oath” in chapter 31.¹⁰⁰

In the third cycle, King Eliphaz, perhaps as a result of frustration, goes beyond the pale and accuses Job of great wickedness (22:5-10). Job stands accused of exacting pledges of clothing from the poor (22:6); denying water to the weary and food to the

⁹⁸ Clines, *Job 1-20*, 133.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 351.

¹⁰⁰ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 427.

hungry (22:7); favoring the powerful (22:8); refusing charity to widows (22:9); denying justice to the fatherless (22:9). Therefore, in the mind of Eliphaz, Job is receiving the wages of a wicked man whose only hope is repentance (22:10). Yet, what is the source of these charges? Are they corroborated anywhere else? Does King Eliphaz know something that God Himself does not know, for God calls Job “blameless” (1:1)?

In the realm of proverbial wisdom, reading the arrow from left to right, the righteous are blessed and the wicked cursed; the natural order is worshipful attitude, right behavior, and proper reward. Eliphaz reverses the arrow and infers, based on a perception of proper punishment, that the antecedent is sinful behavior and that the root cause is a rebellious, sinful attitude toward God. However, as hearers and readers over the centuries have noted, the order of the universe operates not as a bidirectional arrow but, rather, as a unidirectional arrow. Though it is true that the righteous are blessed, it is a complete fallacy and a misreading of wisdom literature to conclude that present human misery directly correlates to immediate past sin and is well deserved.

The high point in the words of King Eliphaz comes when he exhorts Job to “agree with God and be at peace” (22:21). Little does Eliphaz know that when Job finally ends his protest and repents, Job’s misery will become bearable and his healing will begin, as recorded in Job 42:6 in the Septuagint:

Therefore, I despise¹⁰¹ myself and have melted¹⁰² my thinking
of myself in dust and ashes.

¹⁰¹ ἐφάυλισα (φαυλίζω) AAI1S, *The Greek of the Septuagint*, “despise, consider worthless.”

¹⁰² A vivid image of repentance is seen here. As a candle melts or as ice melts away to nothing, so Job’s opinion of himself and his cause does likewise. ἐτάκην (τήκω) API1S “I have been melted.” ἤγημαι (ἡγέομαι) PMI1S “I think or consider myself.” The middle voice is completed with the reflexive pronoun, ἑμαυτὸν.

The final ironic note for Eliphaz is sounded in 22:30 when he insists that God is capable of cleansing the guilty (i.e., Job), but who may Job cleanse with his hands? At the conclusion of the book, Job indeed offers up sacrifices for Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar with his own hands, and God accepts Job's prayer on behalf of his friends.

THE SPEECHES OF TYRANNUS BILDAD (8:1-22, 18:1-21, 25:1-6)

Bildad, as a historian, frames his debate with the wisdom of the fathers (8:8) and the science of plants (8:11-17). As human beings, our lives are fleeting and altogether brief, and the greatest wisdom we can hope to attain is gained by us from our Godly ancestors. Observe them, remember them, and live as they lived. Bildad's attack is immediate and vicious. In 8:4 he thrusts his attack into the most sensitive aspect of Job's misery – the loss of his children:

If your children have sinned against Him, He has delivered them into the hand of their transgression.

Hearers and readers are shocked at Tyrannus Bildad's callousness; yet it is surprising that ancient hearers might have been inclined to agree with Bildad. Because Bildad is thoroughly immersed in the doctrine of retribution, "he probably does not believe he is telling Job anything new."¹⁰³ Job, in Bildad's view, has observed the partying of his children and has noted their untimely deaths; therefore, Job, of all people, should be thoroughly convinced already that retribution is true. Bildad's view, like that of other ancient readers, is that Job prayed for his children because they were not righteous and that their untimely deaths confirm this fact. In contrast, the modern reading is that Job prayed for his children because he was righteous. Further, Bildad's statements are

¹⁰³ Clines, *Job 1-20*, 203.

merely summary, and his expectation is that Job should immediately see the connection between wickedness and punishment, agree with him, and repent for his own sake.

In the second cycle, Bildad asserts that Job has grown too important in his own eyes and poses the question in 18:4:

You who tear yourself in your anger,
shall the earth be forsaken for you,
or the rock removed out of its place?

“This question parallels an Arabic proverb for someone too important to heed counsel: ‘the universe will not be emptied on his account.’”¹⁰⁴ Using the logic paradigm of exclusivity, the universe can either be snow white or pitch black, with no middle gray. Therefore, from this paradigm, for Job to be morally right, the entire universe must be reordered. For it to be morally reordered, the physical universe must also be materially reordered. The irony of this view is that Job alone will remain, and the rocks and all other physical substance of the universe will disappear. As a further irony, when God speaks to Job, He also addresses the order of the universe and Job’s place in this order; yet God merely asks Job to consider his place in this order rather than rearrange its physical and chemical structure. The second speech is closed with another, more direct reference to Job’s dead children (18:16-21). In his first mention, Tyrannus Bildad suggests Job’s children received the fate¹⁰⁵ they deserved for their sins. However, in his second pass, he suggests they received the fate they deserved because of Job’s sins. Again, this reasoning is couched in the realm of science and observation of the wicked: his roots dry up (18:16); his branches wither (18:16); his memory perishes (18:17); he is

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 412.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 422.

driven out (18:18) and he has no posterity and no survivors (18:19). “Without a justice guaranteed by heaven, the foundations of the earth tremble.”¹⁰⁶

In the third cycle, Tyrannus Bildad softens his debate slightly and poses to Job questions for consideration. Who is holy before God? If the moon and stars pale before Him (25:5) and all men born of women are impure (25:4), how can any man be righteous? As before, Bildad is not seeking an answer or expecting anything from Job except simple agreement. From his view, the ancient holy men such as Abraham would all concur, and the weight of wisdom literature writ large echoes and confirms these self-evident truths. Therefore, who could be so arrogant as to oppose them? Why would Job choose to be a fool?

The high point in the words of Tyrannus Bildad, like those of King Eliphaz, comes in the third cycle when he asserts, “He makes peace in His high heaven” (25:2). Like Eliphaz, to find peace here on the earth is to find peace with God Himself. His peace is the peace of heaven. Conversely, to oppose God and make an enemy of Him is to invite calamity and misfortune. “Bildad does not believe God’s rule is confined to heaven and peace, if necessary, will be imposed through force of arms.”¹⁰⁷ As with Eliphaz, Bildad utters truth amid tirades. Ironically, God agrees with Tyrannus Bildad that to oppose Him is folly, and ultimately Job does find his peace here upon the earth as a result of God’s imposing His rule both in the heavens and on the earth when finally Satan is silenced and Job is restored.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 411.

¹⁰⁷ Clines, *Job 21-37*, 631.

THE SPEECHES OF KING ZOPHAR (11:1-20, 20:1-29)

Zophar, as a judge, believes it to be his moral duty¹⁰⁸ to silence Job. His arguments are legalist (11:10), and as God judges from on high, King Zophar holds his court here upon Job's dung hill. Zophar begins with a "contempt of court" charge when he asserts:

Should a multitude of words go unanswered,
and a man full of talk be judged right?
Should your babble silence men,
and when you mock, shall no one shame you?¹⁰⁹

Without hearing the remainder of Job's remarks or even those of the other friends, Zophar has already reached a conclusion. Job is guilty. His guilt, in Zophar's view, is troubling on many fronts, beginning with the fact that Job remains alive although his children are dead. Surely this is undeserved mercy, yet Job has no gratitude. King Zophar states this plainly: "God exacts of you less than your guilt deserves" (11:6). The only question remaining for Zophar is to be answered by God Himself. In the unfathomable¹¹⁰ freedom between mercy and justice, not for humans to determine, is why sometimes God elects to punish in part rather than in full. Surely Job is wicked and guilty, and yet, as fully deserving as he is of death for some inexplicable reason God has spared him. Perhaps, then, there is a ray of hope. If only Job will confess his guilt, then perhaps the Righteous Judge will pardon the guilty prisoner. Job's assertion of blamelessness has fallen on deaf ears; Zophar will have none of it. He grills Job, "when God sees iniquity, will He not consider it" (11:11)? More ironically, Satan, the great deceiver, has touched Job; however, King Zophar believes Job to be the deceiver who has masked his secret sin so skillfully that even his closest intimates do not know exactly

¹⁰⁸ Clines, *Job 1-20*, 259.

¹⁰⁹ *ESV*, Job 11:2-3.

¹¹⁰ Clines, *Job 1-20*, 261.

what it is. Nevertheless, even this deception is not as relevant as Job's unwillingness to confess it and beg forgiveness. "Humans may not be able to find any fault in Job; nevertheless, God is punishing him and this proves in His superior wisdom that He has discovered something."¹¹¹ Sensible men understand and stupid men gain no understanding. Zophar continues, "But a stupid man will get understanding when a wild donkey's colt is born a man."¹¹² As biting as this sarcasm may seem, Zophar has graced Job's dunghill with his presence. This king, who has neither time nor patience for fools, is saying to Job, "you, Job, are not a fool; you are not stupid, and I will teach you."¹¹³

In the second cycle, King Zophar does not address Job directly. Instead he spins a didactic spider web addressing secret sin, hidden poison, sudden death of the wicked, and the omniscience of God. Some puzzle at the curiosity that Zophar has no third speech, and scholars speculate that this speech has either been lost or edited. Another view is that King Zophar, unlike his two friends, intended to make only one speech to silence Job. Believing Job to be a wise man and not a fool, Zophar expected the outcome to be a quick, simple agreement complete with repentance. Failing to achieve this end, Zophar in his second speech gave a summary speech. He states only once more the rudimentary material Job should have already grasped, and at the conclusion of the second speech, Zophar has nothing further to say to a fool incapable of comprehending his own sinful state. In the first strophe, 20:4-11, King Zophar restates themes such as certain punishment of the wicked (vv. 5, 7, 9, and 11). In the second strophe, 20:12-23, he sounds the warning of secret sin (v. 12) and its dark nature: venom (v. 14), vomit (v. 15),

¹¹¹ Ibid., 264.

¹¹² *ESV*, Job 11:12.

¹¹³ Clines, *Job 1-20*, 264.

poison (v. 16), and vomit (v. 18). Zophar uses images from nature and observation here to instruct Job. Quickly, he reminds Job of his present situation: no contentment (v. 20), nothing left (v. 21), and distress (v. 22). In the third strophe, Zophar likens Job's plight to that of a man who declared war on God and the principal theme is the inescapability¹¹⁴ of the wicked. Imagery includes iron weapon (v. 24), a bronze spear (v. 24), utter darkness (v. 26), and the wicked man's portion (v. 29). With these last stinging words, King Zophar concludes his speech to Job. The judge has pronounced his judgment. The biting sarcasm hangs in the air. Job's dead children have no inheritance and Job has no monument.

The high point in the words of King Zophar comes in the latter portion of verse 29: "man's portion is from God, the heritage decreed for him by God."¹¹⁵ The full context of Zophar's intent is that the wicked man receives his just due; however, because Job is not a wicked man, his portion is also decreed by God. Ironically, both Zophar and Job would very much like to see Job receive justice.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 494.

¹¹⁵ *ESV*, Job 20:29.

CHAPTER III: WISDOM POEM IN CONTEXT

To reiterate, the voice in the wisdom poem, chapter 28 of the book of Job, is a silent scream from the depths of despair; it is the voice of Job, himself. The material presented thus far has introduced the character Job and his misfortune, and as a result of his “miserable comforters”, has proven the existence of a true state of despair. Job’s health is failing, his children are dead, his servants have been slaughtered and his possessions lost. Further, no one here on this earth, neither wife, nor friends, believe him to be blameless. In the pit of his despair, the wisdom poem, chapter 28, is the silent scream of a desperate man. It is the center section of Job’s uninterrupted speech spanning from 26:1 through 31:40. This context includes a rebuttal to Tyrannus Bildad, chapter 26, in which Job outlines the unsearchable nature of God’s Majesty. Chapters 27 and 28 form Job’s first monologue. In chapter 27 he once more asserts his righteousness and vows to maintain his integrity. Chapter 28, the wisdom poem, concludes this monologue. Chapters 29 through 31 form the second monologue. Chapter 29 remembers a past time and Job’s warm friendship with God; chapter 30 contrasts with 29 and restates his present condition as a laughingstock and chapter 31 concludes with his final appeal and summary defense. After enduring suffering at the hand of Satan and harsh insults from his closest intimates, Job is silent.

HARMONY AMID DISCORD

The genre of Job 28 is in question; included in the possibilities¹¹⁶ are the following: poem, hymn, speech, instruction, extended riddle, and disputation speech. Therefore, the sum and substance of chapter 28 depend on who is speaking and to whom. A poem could be written by anyone and remain anonymous. A hymn of wisdom likely would be written by a holy man or sage. A speech, if it is a major speech, is scribed by the chief protagonist or antagonist. An instruction is authored by one doing the teaching, and for Job 28, it could be Elihu (as some scholars believe). An extended riddle is given by a teacher, a sage, or a trickster of sorts. Last, a disputation speech is offered by the defendant in a trial, addressing the court in a disputation of the charges leveled against him (in Job's case that he is innocent and has done nothing worthy to deserve his fate). According to Clines,¹¹⁷ "If the chapter (Job 28) is not seen as belonging to the Elihu material, it is not so easy to tell what its function may be." Therefore, the conclusion Clines reaches from his premise is that Elihu is an educator and this material foreshadows the later direct answer to Job by God. The function from this view is didactic and the nature of this chapter is instruction.

This author disagrees. Job 28 falls within a larger section, Job 26-31. Job begins with a response to Bildad (26), maintains his integrity (27), searches for wisdom (28), and ends with a disputation speech (29-31). Whereas Clines hears the voice of Elihu, this author hears the voice of a desperate man and, as such, would term this poem a "wisdom quest" or a "search for God's truth." If this poem is didactic, then Job teaches by his

¹¹⁶ Clines, *Job 21-37*, 906.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 907.

living example that human beings suffer terribly at times, and we learn by his faithfulness to fear the Lord and remain faithful by his example.

OPPOSING VIEWS

Many will argue, quite persuasively, that chapters 26 through 31 are not one coherent speech. However, this author will explain why this section is in fact one integrated whole despite the contradictions and will show that there is a latent pattern in what appears to be otherwise random and chaotic emotions. Nevertheless, literary scholars argue against harmony. How may one man make pronouncements about such divergent topics in such a short span of time? It is not logical that Job, or the character of Job, can be so argumentative one moment and so philosophic the next. How can he praise God with one breath and scream about his innocence the next? The answer has less to do with mathematical logic and more to do with the human psyche.

One countervailing argument begins with the axiom that grief is a process. Consider all that Job has experienced. Consider a time span of extended suffering. Consider the arguments of his comforters. Last, consider his expectation of vindication, because of his belief that ultimately God is just. Visitors to funeral parlors know well this dynamic range of emotions: sobbing, hysteria, nausea, nervous chatter, howling laughter, throbbing headaches, stone silence, and at the end of the day, complete exhaustion and a sense of unbearable loss.

A second countervailing argument posited by Samuel Balentine is “that the speech does not specify a change of speaker; thus it is plausible that it is a continuation of Job’s

words in chapter 27.”¹¹⁸ This assertion stirred an inquiry into the beginning of speeches in the book of Job based on grammatical and contextual cues. Unlike other Biblical books and narratives, the book of Job is remarkable in its clarity. For scholars keen to search out mysteries, given the markers and context of Job 28, this simple story is relatively self-contained as we consider the following evidence. Who speaks, the nature of the speech, to whom it is spoken, and its intended effect are self-evident.

MARKERS AND CONTEXT: SPEAKERS AND SPEECH

Consider the change of speakers and the grammatical markings from the following verses:

<u>Verse</u>	<u>Hebrew</u>	<u>Greek</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
1:1	אִישׁ הָיָה בְּאֶרֶץ-עֹז	ἄνθρωπός τις ἦν ἐν Αὐσίτιδι	Narrator
1:7	וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה	καὶ εἶπεν ὁ κύριος	God
1:9	וַיַּעַן הַשָּׂטָן	ἀπεκρίθη δὲ ὁ διάβολος	Satan
1:12	וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה	τότε εἶπεν ὁ κύριος	God
1:14	וּמַלְאָךְ בָּא אֶל-אִיּוֹב וַיֹּאמֶר	ἄγγελος ἦλθεν πρὸς Ἰωβ καὶ εἶπεν	1 st Msgr.
1:16	וַיָּבֹא בָּא וַיֹּאמֶר	ἦλθεν ἕτερος ἄγγελος καὶ εἶπεν	2 nd Msgr.
1:17	וַיָּבֹא בָּא וַיֹּאמֶר	ἦλθεν ἕτερος ἄγγελος καὶ εἶπεν	3 rd Msgr.
1:18	וַיָּבֹא בָּא וַיֹּאמֶר	ἄλλος ἄγγελος ἔρχεται λέγων	4 th Msgr.
1:20	וַיִּקָּם אִיּוֹב	οὕτως ἀναστὰς Ἰωβ	Job (acts) ¹¹⁹
1:21	וַיֹּאמֶר	καὶ εἶπεν	Job (speaks)
2:2	וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה	καὶ εἶπεν ὁ κύριος	God

¹¹⁸ Samuel E. Balentine, *Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary: Job* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2006), 416.

¹¹⁹ The word for “speaking” in the Hebrew begins 1:21; in the Septuagint this word ends 1:20.

2:2	ויען השטן	τότε εἶπεν ὁ διάβολος	Satan
2:3	וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה	εἶπεν δὲ ὁ κύριος	God
2:4	ויען השטן	ὑπολαβὼν δὲ ὁ διάβολος εἶπεν	Satan
2:6	וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה	εἶπεν δὲ ὁ κύριος	God
2:9	וַתֹּאמֶר לוֹ אִשְׁתּוֹ	εἶπεν αὐτῷ ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ	Job's Wife ¹²⁰
2:10	וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיהָ	εἶπεν αὐτῇ	Job to Wife
3:1	פָּתַח אִיּוֹב אֶת־פִּיהוּ	ἤνοιξεν Ἰωβ τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ	Job
4:1	ויען אליפו התימני	ὑπολαβὼν δὲ Ελιφας ὁ Θαϊμανίτης	Eliphaz
6:1	ויען איוב ויאמר	ὑπολαβὼν δὲ Ἰωβ λέγει	Job
8:1	ויען בלדד השותי ויאמר	Βαλδαδ ὁ Σαυχίτης λέγει	Bildad
9:1	ויען איוב ויאמר	ὑπολαβὼν δὲ Ἰωβ λέγει	Job
11:1	ויען צפר הנעמתי ויאמר	Σωφαρ ὁ Μιναῖος λέγει	Zophar
12:1	ויען איוב ויאמר	ὑπολαβὼν δὲ Ἰωβ λέγει	Job
15:1	ויען אליפו התימני	ὑπολαβὼν δὲ Ελιφας ὁ Θαϊμανίτης	Eliphaz
16:1	ויען איוב ויאמר	ὑπολαβὼν δὲ Ἰωβ λέγει	Job
18:1	ויען בלדד השותי ויאמר	Βαλδαδ ὁ Σαυχίτης λέγει	Bildad
19:1	ויען איוב ויאמר	ὑπολαβὼν δὲ Ἰωβ λέγει	Job
20:1	ויען צפר הנעמתי ויאמר	Σωφαρ ὁ Μιναῖος λέγει	Zophar
21:1	ויען איוב ויאמר	ὑπολαβὼν δὲ Ἰωβ λέγει	Job
22:1	ויען אליפו התימני	ὑπολαβὼν δὲ Ελιφας ὁ Θαϊμανίτης	Eliphaz
23:1	ויען איוב ויאמר	ὑπολαβὼν δὲ Ἰωβ λέγει	Job

¹²⁰ Job's wife speaks for an extended length in the Septuagint. Her words are terse in Hebrew.

25:1	ויען בלדד השותי ויאמר	Βαλδαδ ὁ Σαυχίτης λέγει	Bildad
26:1	ויען איוב ויאמר	ὑπολαβὼν δὲ Ἰωβ λέγει	Job
27:1	ויען איוב שאת משלו ויאמר	ἔτι δὲ προσθεὶς Ἰωβ εἶπεν	Job
29:1	ויען איוב שאת משלו ויאמר	ἔτι δὲ προσθεὶς Ἰωβ εἶπεν	Job
31:40	תמו דברי איוב: פ	καὶ ἐπαύσατο Ἰωβ ῥήμασιν	Narrator
32:6	ויען אליהוא ויאמר	ὑπολαβὼν δὲ Ἐλίου λέγει	Elihu
38:1	ויען יהוה את־איוב	εἶπεν ὁ κύριος τῷ Ἰωβ	God
40:3	ויען איוב את־יהוה	ὑπολαβὼν δὲ Ἰωβ λέγει τῷ κυρίῳ	Job
40:6	ויען יהוה את־איוב	ὁ κύριος εἶπεν τῷ Ἰωβ	God
42:1	ויען איוב את־יהוה	ὑπολαβὼν δὲ Ἰωβ λέγει τῷ κυρίῳ	Job
42:7	ויהוה אל־אליפו ויאמר יהוה	εἶπεν ὁ κύριος Ἐλιφας τῷ	God
42:10	ויהוה שב את־שבית איוב	ὁ δὲ κύριος ἡŷησεν τὸν Ἰωβ	Narrator

In chapter 26, Job rages at Bildad: “How have you helped him who has no power! How have you saved the arm that has no strength!”¹²¹ Yet a scant few verses later in the same chapter, he marvels at God: “He stretches out the north over the void, and hangs the earth on nothing.”¹²² In chapter 27, Job again lashes out: “I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go; my heart does not reproach me for any of my days.”¹²³ Chapter 28 will be addressed at length later. Chapter 29 has a nostalgic feel: “Oh that I were in the months of old, and in the days when God watched over me.”¹²⁴ Chapter 30 describes emotional upheaval: “My inward parts are in turmoil and never still; days of affliction

¹²¹ *ESV*, Job 26:2.

¹²² *Ibid.*, Job 26:7.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, Job 27:6.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, Job 29:2.

come to meet me.”¹²⁵ Last, in chapter 31 and running throughout, a series of self-proclaimed curses follow the formula, “if I have ... then let it be to me”.¹²⁶ Afterward, Job is silent for an extended period.

DISPUTED VERSE 28:28

Another bone of contention is the ending of Job 28. Many scholars (Driver, Gray, Fohrer, and Duhm to name just four) believe Job 28:28 to be a later addition¹²⁷ and that the original poem ended in verse 27. Why does it matter and what are the implications based on the ending note? If this epic quest ends with verse 27, then the insight is God’s alone: “He saw her, declared her, established her, and searched her out.” Wisdom is exclusively God’s and no human can possess or even find it. This is unsatisfying for the reader but perhaps is more in keeping with the ancient notion of wisdom. However, verse 28 provides the great bridge. Humans now have access to wisdom through God. We can fear the Lord and turn from evil (v. 28), and in these two ways we can be wise. Indirectly, we have access to wisdom via our direct access to God because wisdom is the Lord’s chief creation and without Him we are mere fools. As a test case, given the ending of Job (Chapter 42), which ending seems more likely? Supporting evidence favoring the verse 27 ending includes Job’s confession that God’s ways are “too wonderful for me” (42:3) and the fact that Job never seems to have any understanding (as do his readers) of the test orchestrated by Satan. Supporting evidence for the verse 28 ending rests upon a more inductive proof. To “fear the Lord” and “turn from evil” (v. 28) is evidence of wisdom. Possessing wisdom is evidence of a relationship with God. God

¹²⁵ Ibid., Job 30:27.

¹²⁶ Ibid., Job 31.

¹²⁷ Clines, *Job 21-37*, 924.

blesses those in relationship with Him. Chapter 42 ends with Job receiving a “double portion” of his lost possessions, now restored, and a long life befitting a patriarch in the Pentateuch era.

“Fear of the Lord” is a common theme in the Pentateuch, particularly Deuteronomy 6:13, and Job’s blessing attests to his “fear” (reverence and respect). This same reverence attested to Job 1:1 leads Job to live an upright life pleasing and submissive to God. This same wise living resonates with Proverbs 3 in terms of “not forgetting” (3:1), “trusting” (3:5), and “honoring” (3:9). Parallels present themselves concerning the worth of wisdom and the preference for wisdom over gold and jewels (Proverbs 3:14, 15 and Job 28:17, 18). “Life is thus a journey whose motive force is a quasi-erotic desire for real or bogus goods, whose end is determined by the ‘woman’ one chooses to love”(i.e., Lady Wisdom or Lady Folly).”¹²⁸ Job chooses Lady Wisdom, but Satan retorts in Job 1:9, “Does Job fear God for no reason?” “Genuine faith is sometimes called upon to ‘fear God for nothing.’”¹²⁹ This is the secret escape from the Chinese handcuffs. “Paradoxically, then, it is the most God-dependent persons who are the most independent of external controls and coercion.”¹³⁰ Ironically, as much as Job may appear both prisoner and victim, Job is free, but Satan is bound by God.

JOB CHAPTER 28: THE EYE OF THE HURRICANE

Examining chapter 28 we find a brief moment of calm between emotional outbursts and sobbing. Job stops, pauses, and composes himself for one brief, clear, lucid moment

¹²⁸ Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, *The New Interpreter’s Bible, Volume V, The Book of Proverbs: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), 31.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

and reflects. For the first time, at his moment of greatest despair, with a hearing heart and a receiving mind, he asks, “where is wisdom found (28:12, 20)?” Not only does he ask, but by asking, when God appears later, Job prepares himself to hear God’s answer. “Augustine understood the biblical heart well: ‘Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee.’”¹³¹

¹³¹ Ibid., 61.

CHAPTER IV: EXEGESIS, ANALYSIS, AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

EXEGESIS

28:1 Surely¹³² there is for the silver a mine¹³³
and a standing¹³⁴ place¹³⁵ for gold they refine.¹³⁶

2 Iron¹³⁷ from dry earth is¹³⁸ taken
and ore¹³⁹ is smelted¹⁴⁰ [into] copper.¹⁴¹

3 Man puts [an] end¹⁴² to the darkness¹⁴³

¹³² Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 373. וַיִּ is an introductory particle with assertive force, i.e., surely.

¹³³ *The Jewish Encyclopedia: The History, Religion, Literature, and Customs of the Jewish People from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, vol. 8 (New York: Funk And Wagnalls Company, 1909), 596. Mines did not exist in the land inhabited by the Israelites; however, the author of Job displays a vast knowledge of the subject. It is possible that his knowledge came from the copper works of the Egyptians on the Sinaitic Peninsula. At this time mining was not carried out by regular miners, but by slaves, convicts, and prisoners of war. This lends voice to a curious metaphor: those who are most desirous of the rich ore cannot find it and those who search and grapple for it are ignorant prisoners. Job's search for wisdom strikes a parallel.

¹³⁴ Clines, *Job 21-37*, 911. "This is the only depiction of mining in the Hebrew Bible, and much of the language is obscure."

¹³⁵ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 389. The "place" is not the locus of the refining process, but the location of the gold in the earth.

¹³⁶ Qal Impft 3 MP.

¹³⁷ BDB 137a, בַּרְזֵל is iron ore. This same form is used 12 times in the Pentateuch: Genesis 4:22, Leviticus 26:19, Numbers 31:22, 35:16, and Deuteronomy 3:11, 4:20, 8:9, 19:5, 27:5, 28:23, 28:48, 33:25.

¹³⁸ Jacob Weingreen, *A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 151. Qal Impft 3 MS (passive). Imperfect of this verb takes the form of a Pe Nun Hophal; however, as this verb is not found in the Piel or Hiphil, some grammarians regard it as a passive Qal.

¹³⁹ Literally, "a stone."

¹⁴⁰ Qal Impft 3 MS.

¹⁴¹ Hakham, *Jerusalem*, 280. "Beautiful metals, gold and silver, are sought in v. 1; base metals, iron and copper are sought in v. 2. Man seeks out and obtains them both."

¹⁴² TNK prefers "boundary."

¹⁴³ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 390. The "end to the darkness" here refers to the extremity of darkness rather than the cessation of darkness. Interestingly, as a metaphor, Job is pushed to the extremity of human existence and finds himself in outermost darkness, i.e.,

and to every limit¹⁴⁴ man searches¹⁴⁵ out
ore [in] gloom and deep shadow.

4 He breaks¹⁴⁶ through a shaft [far] from any dwelling¹⁴⁷
forgotten¹⁴⁸ by the foot
they dangle¹⁴⁹ [far] from mankind they swing to and fro.¹⁵⁰

5 From the earth comes¹⁵¹ bread¹⁵²
and underneath is upturned¹⁵³ as a fire.¹⁵⁴

6 Its stones a standing place of sapphire¹⁵⁵
and it has¹⁵⁶ dust¹⁵⁷ of gold.¹⁵⁸

depression. However, it is God who brings about the “end of darkness”, i.e. its cessation, as God Himself is the creator of light.

¹⁴⁴ BDB 479a, “end” equals to the farthest limit man explores.

¹⁴⁵ BDB 350b, to search out a subject or matter as in mining.

¹⁴⁶ Qal Perf 3 MS.

¹⁴⁷ BDB 158b, sojourning place or dwelling place. The miner depicted here is searching in a remote region not inhabited by humans.

¹⁴⁸ David J. A. Clines, *Job 21-37*, 896n4b (B). Possibly foreign miners are working in a distant land. Two ideas are present: one, wisdom is remote to the seeker; two, the land is remote to the foreigner.

¹⁴⁹ BDB 195b, Men dangle in suspension as they descend a miner’s shaft. As men enter into the earth many elements are present: danger, instability, uncertainty, stumbling and groping in darkness.

¹⁵⁰ BDB 631a, Miners swing to and fro suspended by ropes or cabling, moving back and forth, and steadily maneuvering lower.

¹⁵¹ Qal Impft 3 MS, “goes out.”

¹⁵² Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 375. Hartley prefers “stone” to “bread” based upon an understanding that heat is necessary to bake bread and the usage of “bread” is out of place in Job 28:5. I respectfully disagree. In context, the earth, on its surface, produces “bread” and underneath, the heat and pressure of the earth form “stones.” The digging for wisdom has less to do with eating from the surface than with digging beneath the surface. Common people, in their ordinary daily lives, do not dig beneath the surface, and they are fed and clothed. Job, in his state of misery, is contented neither to be fed, nor clothed, nor answered by any shallow, surface, superficial answer.

¹⁵³ BDB 246a, Niphal Perf 3 MS, “be upturned”, as a result of the subterranean work of miners.

¹⁵⁴ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 396. “Volcanoes created the belief in the ancients that the earth at its depths was consumed by fire and that ‘stones of fire’ were formed at these locations.”

¹⁵⁵ BDB 705b, sapphire, also lapis lazuli, precious stone quarried from mines in Job 28:6.

¹⁵⁶ Literally, “and dust of gold to him.”

¹⁵⁷ Williams, *Williams’ Hebrew Syntax* § 9 (3), A plural of composition may refer to numerous items of the same material that form or constitute something.

7 No bird of prey¹⁵⁹ knows its¹⁶⁰ path
nor has the falcon's eye caught a glimpse¹⁶¹ of it.

8 The proud beasts¹⁶² have not trodden¹⁶³ it
nor has a lion¹⁶⁴ advanced¹⁶⁵ upon it.

9 Man stretches out his hand against¹⁶⁶ the flint
He overturns mountains by [their] roots.

10 He carves¹⁶⁷ channels¹⁶⁸ in the rock
and his eyes behold every¹⁶⁹ precious¹⁷⁰ thing.

11 He dams¹⁷¹ up the trickling¹⁷² streams
and [the] hidden thing he brings out [to] light.

12 But where shall wisdom¹⁷³ be found¹⁷⁴
and where¹⁷⁵ is this standing place of understanding?

¹⁵⁸ Clines, *Job 21-37*, 894n2b. Loose dust stands in marked contrast to solid stones.

¹⁵⁹ Hakham, *Jerusalem*, 282. עֵיט (from scream), refers to vulture or buzzard, two raptors with exceptional eyesight. The mining location is so remote these birds of prey do not know the place though miners find them.

¹⁶⁰ In context, path refers to the pathway to find wisdom.

¹⁶¹ BDB 1004b, “catch sight of.” Elusive wisdom cannot be found. The TNK, in contrast, prefers “gazed upon”; however, this appears a bit strong. First, wisdom must be found; secondly, it is studied.

¹⁶² BDB 1006b, “majestic wild beasts.”

¹⁶³ BDB 202a, “tread or tread down.”

¹⁶⁴ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 390. שִׁלֵּי is usually rendered lion; however, there are Semitic cognates which mean “lion” in one dialect and “serpent” in another.

¹⁶⁵ BDB 723b, “The fierce lion hath not advanced upon it.”

¹⁶⁶ BDB 1018b, “stretches out ... against.”

¹⁶⁷ BDB 132b, “rends open, the cutting of mining shafts.”

¹⁶⁸ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 374. Foreign people have pierced shafts. The “people of the lamp” break open passageways.

¹⁶⁹ Clines, *Job 21-37*, 900n10d. The notion of the miners’ eyes “seeing every precious thing” is true only in the poetic sense; it is not literally true. Consequently, Clines favors eyes that “watch for anything precious.”

¹⁷⁰ BDB 430a, “precious costly things.”

¹⁷¹ Piel Perf 3 MS “dams up.”

¹⁷² BDB 113b, “trickling streams in mines – hindrance to miners.”

¹⁷³ Jouon-Muraoka, *Biblical Hebrew*, § 137j (477), “Abstract nouns can be taken in a determinate way and so have the article.”

¹⁷⁴ BDB 593b, “wisdom, that which is sought.”

13 Man does not know her worth¹⁷⁶
nor is she found¹⁷⁷ in the land of the living.

14 The deep¹⁷⁸ says she¹⁷⁹ is not¹⁸⁰ in me
and the sea says [she is] not with me.

15 Fine¹⁸¹ gold¹⁸² can not be given¹⁸³ in exchange¹⁸⁴ for her
nor can silver be weighed¹⁸⁵ as her price.

16 She cannot be valued¹⁸⁶ in [the] gold of Ophir,¹⁸⁷
nor precious onyx, nor sapphire.

17 Neither gold nor glass¹⁸⁸ can compare¹⁸⁹ to her
nor can she be exchanged for vessels¹⁹⁰ of fine gold.

18 Corals¹⁹¹ and crystal [are] not to be mentioned¹⁹²

¹⁷⁵ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 395. “By establishing that even rare and hidden commodities have a specified ‘place’ in the cosmos, the poet prepares the way for asking about the primordial locus of Wisdom, the most precious find of all.”

¹⁷⁶ BDB 789-790a, “estimate, valuation”; in context, how to weigh, count, or value wisdom.

¹⁷⁷ Niphal Perf 3 FS, passive aspect of finding or in this case of not being found.

¹⁷⁸ The “deep” (v. 14) and the “sea” (v. 15) parallel “Abaddon” and “Death” (v. 22) – the former are deep, unknowable, and within the realm of the living; the latter deep, unknowable, and the realm of the dead.

¹⁷⁹ Wisdom is personified as a woman in wisdom literature.

¹⁸⁰ Jouon-Muraoka, *Biblical Hebrew*, § 160c (568), negative particles, use of אֵין to avoid repetition of הֵין.

¹⁸¹ Clines, *Job 21-37*, 902n15b, זהב סגור is sometimes said to signify leaf gold or gold overlay.

¹⁸² BDB 689b, Job 28:15 must equal “fine gold.” Interestingly, the same term in Hosea 13:8 means “the encasement of their heart.” Gold, wisdom, and the weighing out of matters of the heart share a common referent.

¹⁸³ BDB 681b, “be given, bestowed.”

¹⁸⁴ Hakham, *Jerusalem*, 284. Wisdom cannot be bought for all the money in the world, because wisdom is not in the possession of those who would seek to sell it.

¹⁸⁵ Niphal Impft 3 MS, to be weighed for purchase.

¹⁸⁶ BDB 699a, “it cannot be weighed against”, comparative.

¹⁸⁷ BDB 20b, 1st citation: “place in SE Palestine where Solomon’s ships ported”; 2nd citation: “poetic name for fine gold itself” – the geographic name came to be associated with the rich cargo.

¹⁸⁸ Hakham, *Jerusalem*, 285. In antiquity, special forms of glass were as valuable as gold.

¹⁸⁹ BDB 789b, “be comparable.”

¹⁹⁰ BDB 479b, “money or articles of property”, “valuables carried.” Coins or jewelry fit the context.

and [the] acquisition¹⁹³ of wisdom¹⁹⁴ is above pearls.¹⁹⁵

19 Topaz¹⁹⁶ of Cush¹⁹⁷ cannot compare with her
in pure gold she cannot be weighed.¹⁹⁸

20 From where, then, does the wisdom come?
And where [is] this standing place of understanding?

21 And¹⁹⁹ she is hidden²⁰⁰ from [the] eyes of all living
and from flying creatures²⁰¹ of the heavens she is concealed.²⁰²

22 Abaddon²⁰³ and Death²⁰⁴ say,
without ears we heard a rumor²⁰⁵ of her.²⁰⁶

23 God understands²⁰⁷ her way
and He knows her standing place.²⁰⁸

¹⁹¹ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 391. “The word here seems to refer to a breast ornament, perhaps a string of coral beads or pearls.”

¹⁹² BDB 270b, “coral (not to be thought of [others not mentioned] in comparison with wisdom).” Conceptually, not remembering precedes not mentioning.

¹⁹³ Noun, “drawing up”, or “fishing.”

¹⁹⁴ Clines, *Job 21-37*, 903n15d, “Better to go fishing for wisdom than for pearls” apparently is an old expression. As a parallel, the earth is mined; the ocean is fished.

¹⁹⁵ BDB 819b, “pearls”, although TNK and NIV prefer “rubies.”

¹⁹⁶ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 391. “Topaz originally discovered on the island of Topazos in the Red Sea.” Both island and stone were apparently known by original audience.

¹⁹⁷ BDB 469a, “Cush refers to a land and people of southern Nile-valley, or upper Egypt, extending from Syene indefinitely to the south.”

¹⁹⁸ BDB 699a, Pual Impft 3 FS, “it cannot be weighed against her.”

¹⁹⁹ Clines, *Job 21-37*, 903n21a, “and it is hidden”, emphatic waw.

²⁰⁰ Niphal Perf 3 FS.

²⁰¹ The semantic range of flying creatures is larger than birds or fowl.

²⁰² BDB 711b, “be hid, concealed from birds.”

²⁰³ BDB 2b, “place of ruin in Sheol for lost or ruined dead.”

²⁰⁴ Hakham, *Jerusalem*, 287. Hakham favors “perdition and death.”

²⁰⁵ BDB 1034b, “mere report as opposed to personal knowledge” (i.e., rumor).

²⁰⁶ Hakham, *Jerusalem*, 287. There is an implication that “perdition is closer to wisdom than the previous respondents. The Rabbis indeed taught that the Torah exists by virtue of those who have given their lives for it.”

²⁰⁷ Hiphil Perf 3 MS, “God understands.” Causative use of the Hiphil, God understands because it is He who created wisdom.

²⁰⁸ TNK prefers “source.”

24 For He looks²⁰⁹ to the ends²¹⁰ of the earth
underneath all the heavens He sees.

25 When He²¹¹ gave²¹² to the wind weight
and waters He meted²¹³ out by measure,

26 When He made a decree²¹⁴ for the rain
and a way for [the] thunder-bolt²¹⁵ peal,²¹⁶

27 Then²¹⁷ He saw her²¹⁸ and declared²¹⁹ her
He established²²⁰ her and also searched²²¹ her out.

28 And to man He said,
“Behold, fear²²² of the²²³ Lord,²²⁴ she is wisdom,

²⁰⁹ BDB 613b, “look upon.” God has the ends of the earth in full view.

²¹⁰ Hakham, *Jerusalem*, 287. The book of Job does not teach that wisdom is not to be found among people; rather, it teaches that wisdom may be very near, but their eyes are veiled.

²¹¹ Qal Inf. Const. usually translated “to make”, though not in this case; see following note.

²¹² NET Bible, Bible.org, <http://www.netbible.com>, search on Job 28, net notes, note 38 (accessed 25 February 2012), “‘he gave weight to the wind.’ The form is the infinitive construct with the ל (lamed) preposition. Some have emended it to change the preposition to the temporal ב (bet) on the basis of some of the versions (e.g., Latin and Syriac) that have “who made.” This is workable, for the infinitive would then take on the finite tense of the previous verbs.”

²¹³ Piel Perf 3 MS, “meted out.”

²¹⁴ BDB 349b, “enactment, decree, ordinance of God ... in nature.”

²¹⁵ BDB 304a, “and a way for thunder-bolts.”

²¹⁶ BDB 876b, “plural form usually of thunder”; 877a, “thunder clap or peal.”

²¹⁷ Jouon-Muraoka, *Biblical Hebrew*, § 166IN (588), “We very occasionally find the ו of apodosis, which adds some emphatic nuance.” Here, it represents a dramatic moment when God sees and declares the goodness of wisdom.

²¹⁸ Wisdom is personified as a woman throughout Job 28.

²¹⁹ Piel Wyqt 3 MS + 3FS suffix, BDB 708a, “declared”; “and He declared her.”

²²⁰ Hiphil Perf 3 MS + 3FS suffix, BDB 466a, “established”; “He established her.”

²²¹ Qal Perf 3 MS + 3FS suffix, BDB 350b, “searched”; “He searched her out.” Having established wisdom, God tested it, confirmed it, and declared it to be “good”, along with the other works of His Hands.

²²² BDB 432a, loaded terminology, many meanings and connotations in the phrase “fear of the Lord”: 1) the beginning of wisdom, 2) a wisdom instruction, 3) actual fear, 4) reverence, 5) piety, 6) deep respect as unto one’s earthly father, 7) hating evil, 8) turning from evil, 9) revering the law, and 10) a true understanding of the Nature of God, the nature of man, and the covenantal relationship between the two. The first meaning, the

and to turn aside²²⁵ from evil is understanding.”

ANALYSIS AND STRUCTURE OF JOB 28.

Job 28 consists of four (4) principal²²⁶ parts:

- PART I, verses 1-11

This epic poem utilizes a mathematic technique in defining wisdom. For problems with no apparent solution, the boundaries are defined, the rules are established, and the limits are set. After an exhaustive analysis, the answer lies somewhere within the operating system, given the boundaries and rules within defined limits. Job’s quest for wisdom is such a problem. Beginning with the concrete and steadily working toward the abstract, the search begins in a silver mine (v. 1). Silver is useful, known, and prized; therefore, it is sought out for its value. Hence it functions as both metaphor and framing device. The search next moves from silver to gold. The movement here is from the lesser value to the greater value. Rhetorically, if common silver is worth searching out, how much more so is precious gold? The amplification comes with the “refining of gold”. Silver ore begins verse 1 and refined gold closes it. Not only is the movement from the lesser value to the greater value, but a shift takes place with regard to purity. Silver is removed in a crude natural state and smelted gold is poured from the refiner’s fire. Extending the metaphor, the search for wisdom begins with crude groping and ends with refined understanding.

beginning of wisdom, applies in a specific and narrow sense to Job 28:28. However, the other nine meanings harmonize and resonate with agreement.

²²³ Jouon-Muraoka, *Biblical Hebrew*, § 154e5 (529), The nominal substantival predicate is used in expressing an abstract quality. The “fear of the Lord” is wisdom and keeping away from evil is prudence.

²²⁴ Hakham, *Jerusalem*, 289, אֱלֹהִים is written here as the Tetragrammaton does not appear at all in the speeches of the book of Job.

²²⁵ Qal Inf. Construct, “to turn aside from evil.”

²²⁶ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 373, Outline with four (4) part structure is borrowed from Hartley; however, the analysis represents independent thought.

Iron is taken from the dust (v. 2), just as man was formed from the dust (Genesis 2:7), and man employs tools of iron to dig into the earth in the search for valuable ore. Iron, then, is both the subject of the search and an instrument whereby the search is made. Wisdom, in this case, is the object of Job's search; however, if Job had greater wisdom (or iron tools), his search would be greatly enhanced and speeded along. Ore is taken from the earth, and from the harsh, unforgiving stone, copper is poured. Something of value (i.e., copper) is extracted from a stone that otherwise is rough and crude, and has no worth. Descending into the mine (v. 3), man leaves behind the easy surface answers to find ore and find wisdom. If such easily found treasures were available at a surface or elementary level, no digging, no probing, and no remote search would be necessary. Therefore, the need to undertake the search strongly suggests that a cursory search of well traveled-paths is not enough and that the search for wisdom necessitates leaving the known and familiar for the dark, the dangerous, and the unfamiliar. Beneath the surface of the earth, natural sight is limited and torches must be carried down. Movement slows as ore becomes heavy and the operation appears other-worldly. Careful steps, precise balance, and keen awareness of every movement become paramount as the miner sinks deeper and deeper as he follows the vein of ore throughout the layers of sediment. The quest for ore, like the quest for wisdom, is to follow the vein of greatest wealth wherever it may lead. In verse 4, this path leads to remote regions uninhabited by man and forgotten by the earliest settlers; it becomes a dark, desolate, and distant place. Is it really a "place", though? In the sense of ore, yes; however, in the sense of searching out wisdom, perhaps the darkest and most distant and remote place of all is within our own human heart as we cry out for answers when none are present. Unsteady, suspended in

midair by cabling, weighed down by ore, and trembling beneath uneven loads, we continue the dangerous struggle. Verse 5 further extends the metaphor: “bread” on the surface of the earth is enough to satisfy simpletons who understand little about how the world works in contrast to the miner who digs for the precious and hidden gems beneath the surface. Even the earth, which has a static surface appearance of tranquility, is turned over by volcanoes, earthquakes, floods, and erosion. Is it plausible that before his calamity, Job had only a surface view of the world and never considered the architectural underpinnings of life? As readers, then, we are like Job, and as he digs, probes, and asks hard questions, we echo those questions. Verse 6 returns to the “deep dark blue stones”²²⁷ used in the ancient Near East as jewelry or even paid as tribute. Beneath the earth, the search continues. Meanwhile, the scene shifts in verses 7 and 8 to seeing and knowing. Where is this place of wisdom? No bird of prey has seen it, nor has the falcon’s eye caught a glimpse of it. The search area widens and deepens. If wisdom is dark, mysterious, and hidden, then surely it is within the ground. However, if wisdom abides on the plain, then perhaps the birds of the air might see it as they fly high above the mountains. Perhaps it is imperceptible to man because he cannot see vast distances. The birds of the air can see farther than Job, and yet they cannot find wisdom. Similarly, in verse 8, the “proud beasts and a lion” have not passed over wisdom; however, sizeable strength and lack of fear²²⁸ are not assets in this quest. This fact begs the question: Is man like the falcon and the lion, who despite their great vision and great strength, respectively, live their allotted days on the earth and die in ignorance? The search intensifies. Wisdom cannot be found on the earth, even when one is looking down on the

²²⁷ Ibid., 377.

²²⁸ Ibid.

earth from on high. Therefore, man returns to the mines with a full-force assault and overturns the “mountains by their roots” (v. 9). In desperation, human beings act somewhat like God in their search for treasures as they shake the mountains, which were considered by the ancients to be eternal²²⁹ and often were associated with the dwelling place of the gods. It is ironic, when we consider the ending of the book of Job, that this searching for stones may be equated with barging uninvited into the house of God, that finding wisdom amounts to finding God Himself, and that God’s gracious answer comes to us despite our rudeness before His Majesty. In verse 10, Job continues carving channels in the rock. The word for channel, יַאֲרִים , in the singular refers to the Nile and in the plural to the tributaries of the Nile,²³⁰ and this quest for wisdom goes all the way back to the tributaries, where the first droplets of the Nile are formed. Verse 11 caps this strophe with a note of optimism. Without understanding the source of the Nile, man dams the streams. By searching and groping, he brings the hidden gems into the sunlight. Thus for the problem of finding wisdom, the boundaries are defined, the rules are established, the limits are set, and the answer lies with God.

○ PART II, verses 12-19

The second section drifts further into the abstract, as if the distant mine shaft in uninhabited land were not far enough removed. Verse 12 begins probing the human heart and the human brain. Who among us is truly wise? Where is wisdom found? Silver, gold, and precious stones are hard to find but not impossible. Men may extract choice ore, but slowly, with great difficulty, and sometimes at the cost of human life, but “where shall wisdom be found and where is this standing place of understanding?” At first

²²⁹ Ibid., 378.

²³⁰ Ibid.

glance, the standing place for wisdom appears to be a school. The unlearned go there to acquire knowledge. Their place, then, is at the feet of a great teacher or thinker and there they listen attentively to every word. Two problems become readily apparent with this line of reasoning. If Job lives in the patriarchal period, the wisdom school tradition comes later. Further, as Balentine²³¹ notes, verses 1 and 12 are parallel and balance the “coming out place for silver and the place for gold” (v. 1) with “the valuable wisdom which has no known standing place” (v. 12); by analogy – valuable : place :: greater valuable : no place.

The second half of the question is the part that gnaws at our souls: “Where is the place of understanding?” The latter question gets to the very heart of Job’s quest. It is not that he is merely a curious chap who is studying the stars and wonders about their distance from Uz. In Job chapter 1, we find he has lost everything (1:12-19) – all his servants, cattle, material property, and even children. In chapter 2, he is afflicted bodily (2:7) and his wife instructs him to “curse God and die” (2:9). His only help comes from three well-intentioned friends who understand even less than Job; he calls them “miserable comforters” (16:2). Therefore, his quest for wisdom is motivated by his great loss, the silence of God, and an inability to connect any of his past deeds with any of his present misfortune. Verse 13 continues saying of wisdom that man does not know her worth. Understanding, even in the midst of dire circumstances, brings a type of peace. The ability to reason cause and effect in the face of tragedy makes life bearable. Neither price nor “worth” can be placed on good health, a restful sleep, and a sense that the universe is just. Wisdom is not found in the land of the living. If wisdom is beyond the

²³¹ Balentine, *Job*, 419.

grasp of the living, perhaps it abides in the realm of the dead. Even so, the dead, though perhaps wise, do not communicate their wisdom to the living. Thus the wisdom of the wisest elder, when he dies, dies with him and is no more. Beyond the grave and sinking deeper, “the deep says she is not with me” (v. 14). Even at the bottom-most depth of the ocean, wisdom is not to be found. The second half of verse 14 echoes the refrain. Job has searched the earth, the inhabited places, the dark mines beneath the surface, the sea, and the ocean deep. It is a double entendre for the reader that even as Job defines the boundaries and limits of wisdom, he is pushed against his own boundaries and taken to his absolute limit of human sanity as he grapples with his great misfortune and loss of children.

Verses 15 through 19 are restatement and add nuance to verses 1 through 6.

Exhausted, Job leaves the realm of philosophy and returns to the tangible world of precious metals, precious stones, and valuables. The early quest at the mining camp was to find and extract valuables. The nuance is that after these valuables were found or acquired, none could be exchanged for wisdom:

<u>Object Sought</u>	<u>Not Exchanged</u>
Silver, Gold (v. 1)	Fine Gold (v. 15)
Copper (v. 2)	Gold of Ophir, Onyx, Sapphire (v. 16)
Sapphire, Gold Dust (v. 6)	Gold, Glass, Fine Gold Vessels (v. 17)
	Coral, Crystal, Pearls (v. 18)
	Topaz, Pure Gold (v. 19)

Though men may seek valuables, spending years and risking their lives to do so, nothing compares with wisdom. The clear message is that wisdom is extremely difficult to find,

impossible to procure, and even if found would never be exchanged for inferior goods.

Proverbs 4:5-7²³² resonates with harmony and with exhortations to “get wisdom” (4:5), “do not forget” (4:5), “do not forsake” (4:6), “the beginning of wisdom” (4:7), and most importantly, “get insight”, בִּינָה ²³³(4:5-7).

○ PART III, verses 20-27

As grieving men often do, Job again succumbs to a wave of sorrow and reopens his wounds only to relive the pain (vv. 20-22). Agony is expressed in restatement as he once again returns to seek an understanding for his suffering and attempts to make sense of an otherwise meaningless existence.

From where, then, does the wisdom come?
And where is the place of understanding (v. 20)?
But where shall wisdom be found?
And where is the standing place of understanding (v. 12)?

And she is hidden from [the] eyes of all living
And from flying creatures of the heavens she is concealed (v. 21).
No bird of prey knows its path
Nor has the falcon’s eye caught a glimpse of it (v. 7).

Abaddon and Death say,
With our ears we heard a rumor of her (v. 22).
Man does not know her worth,
Nor is she found in the land of the living (v. 13).

Humanly speaking, Job has exhausted all possibilities. He has surveyed the known world, inhabited and remote; he has considered all human beings, beasts of the field, and birds of the air. He has probed the oceans and the deep, but wisdom is nowhere to be found among the living. Death has only heard a rumor of wisdom (v. 22); however, this cannot be communicated to any living man. Finally, physically exhausted, Job turns to

²³² *ESV*, Proverbs 4:5-7.

²³³ BDB 108a, בִּינָה in this context, refers to gaining understanding or insight. This is something Job desperately needs in his present situation.

the One source he has not considered – God Himself. “God knows her way and He knows her standing place” (v. 23). God knows because He established wisdom²³⁴ at the very beginning of His creation (Proverbs 8:22).

Verse 23 shifts in tone from what Job does not know to what God knows perfectly well, namely, the substance of wisdom. The man of mourning finally dries his eyes and focuses his attention away from his own miserable lot here on earth; he looks upward, and here he recasts verse 12 and takes the larger view.

But where shall wisdom be found?
And where is the standing place of understanding (v. 12)?
God understands her way
And He knows her standing place (v. 23).

For the first time, Job has an answer to one of his questions. It is ironic that he actually answers it himself. Peace, at the end of the grief cycle, does not mean an absence of hurt; rather, it means a sense of acceptance and understanding. The feeling of peace is the intellectual equivalent of “it is well with my soul”. It is not possible until this point for Job, himself, to move toward some understanding of God and why tragedies strike innocent victims.

God’s scale is the galactic scale. Verses 24 through 27 hearken back to Genesis and the creation accounts, where God is the principal Actor. This is not a remote God, inaccessible to the living, removed from the proud beasts (v. 8), and nowhere to be seen by the falcon (v. 7). God here is very much present, active, and dynamically involved with every aspect of life.

²³⁴ As an aside, some commentators, favoring a later date for Job, believe the author of Job was familiar with Proverbs; for others, the primacy of God’s wisdom is self evident, regardless of the date for the book of Job.

<u>Hebrew Form</u>	<u>English</u>
נבט	looks (v. 24)
ראה	sees (v. 24)
ל עשה	gave (v. 25)
תכן	meted out (v. 25)
ב עשה	made (v. 26)
ראה	saw (v. 27)
ספר	declared (v. 27)
כין	established (v. 27)
חקר	searched (v. 27)

Just as in Genesis, God creates, surveys, and declares the goodness of His creation. In the nine verb forms here, four deal with creation: gave the wind weight, meted out waters, made a decree, and established wisdom; four deal with visual survey: looks to the ends of the earth, sees underneath the heavens, saw her (wisdom), and searched her (wisdom) out; one deals with declaration: He declared her (wisdom). Though the text is not explicit, it is strongly pointed; God declared wisdom to be “good.”

○ PART IV, verse 28

While the book of Job ends (Chapter 42) with a direct answer from God, followed by a double portion blessing, which encompasses family and fortune restored, a fitting alternate ending may be summarized by Job 28:28:

And to man He said,
 “Behold, fear of the Lord, she is wisdom
 and to turn aside from evil an understanding.”

Ultimately, peace comes to Job, not through restoration, but through understanding.

“God has direct access to wisdom; mortals only gain wisdom²³⁵ indirectly through submission to the Lord.” Restoration, afterward, is a bonus. It is satisfying to the reader

²³⁵ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 393.

that the book concludes with a happy ending. However, more satisfying from a theological point of view is the concept of holiness. God alone can satisfy our soul's deepest cravings, and when we have lost everything, only God remains. Ironically, God alone is all we need, and in Job's case, perhaps losing everything was a necessary part of his spiritual journey. Satan's desire to destroy Job, body and soul, actually made him whole, as God uses Satan's treachery as a foil.

If wisdom is God's holy means of "order and ordering of created things,"²³⁶ then what is the application? First, we must recognize the principle of understanding. God's ways are right and to follow them is to be righteous. God's ways are holy and to follow them is to pursue holiness. Second, for man, a healthy respect (i.e., "fear") of the Lord is essential. The wise man has a fear of the Lord; the fool fears nothing and dies, both bodily and spiritually. Third, the application of understanding and fear results in "turning aside from evil" and living a life pleasing to God. A close parallel is Proverbs 8:13:

Fear of YHWH is to hate evil,
pride and exaltation and the way of evil
and the perverse mouth I hate

True wisdom is displayed by loving those things God loves and hating those things God hates. If evil, by its very nature, is contrary to God's nature and His prescribed order in creation, then God hates evil. As image bearers, we, then, are to hate evil in all its forms as well.

²³⁶ Ibid., 394.

PSYCHOANALYSIS: THE SILENT SCREAM

Viewed from the end state of Job 42, chapter 28 operates as a hinge, looking simultaneously forward and backward. From his former state, as described in chapter 1, Job enjoyed temporal and spiritual blessings and a daily prayer life with God. From the vantage of chapter 42, these temporal blessings are not merely resumed but doubled, as Job enjoys the privilege of the first-born, receiving a double portion.

However, in chapter 28, the view from within the eye of the hurricane is decidedly different. As the hurricane approaches our island of tranquility, we notice rain bands, gale-force winds, torrential downpours, extreme flooding, and death and destruction. As the eye of the hurricane centers over the island, all is calm for a brief span. Finally, as the hurricane buffets the island once more with the back-side forces, we feel the return of gale-force winds, downpours, and destruction.

Emotionally, Job experiences exactly these phenomena. Scholarly critics are quick to remind us that the tone and content of chapter 28 are decidedly different from the other 41 chapters of Job and that such dramatic shifts in content, mood, tone, and argument are not consistent with the voice of a single character. Though these shifts are not logical, they are psychologically and emotionally consistent with human behavior, especially that of a human being experiencing grief and loss. Just as the hurricane rages violently, becomes calm for a period, and resumes the rage, so do human beings experiencing the stresses associated with loss of livelihood, loss of position, and most importantly the loss of children.

The manifestation of normal grief includes the following emotions: sadness, anger, guilt, self-reproach, anxiety, loneliness, fatigue, helplessness, shock, yearning, emancipation, relief, and numbness.²³⁷ Surely, even a casual reading of the book of Job will easily find these very real, decidedly complex human emotions. Therefore, the integrity defense in chapter 27 appears to favor anger, righteous indignation, and an utter disbelief that none of Job's "miserable comforters" has seen any merit in his arguments whatsoever. This same anger that begins chapter 27 as a thunder peal quickly dissipates into helplessness and utter loss at the close of the chapter. Chapter 29 focuses almost entirely on Job's yearning for earlier days, when he was well fed and blessed. In the middle stands chapter 28 as a clear and lucid moment; it is the eye of the hurricane.

WISDOM IN PAIN AND GRIEF

It is in this eye of the hurricane that Job opens his spiritual eyes and sees for the first time a clear path toward reconciling with God. The greatest problem with spiritual blindness is not the blindness itself. No, the greatest problem is that we are not able to see God and the things of God because we cannot see anything but our own misery and state of loss. When we change the focus, we gain the wisdom. This happens most clearly in 28:28, when Job looks beyond himself and his miserable lot to focus instead on God, and in so doing Job turns his thoughts away from inescapable helplessness and toward a real and viable relationship with his Creator.

The behaviors associated with normal grief include the following: sleep disturbances, appetite disturbances, absentminded behavior, social withdrawal, dreams of the deceased,

²³⁷ J. William Worden, *Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy: A Handbook for the Mental Health Practitioner*, 3rd ed. (New York: Springer Publishing Company, Inc., 2002), 11-14.

avoiding reminders of the deceased, searching and calling out, sighing, restless overactivity, crying, visiting places or carrying objects that remind the survivor of the deceased, and treasuring objects that belonged to the deceased.²³⁸

JOB'S SEARCHES INSIDE OUT

Psychologically, chapter 28 represents “searching and calling out”, as unbearable grief is made slightly more bearable through understanding. The wisdom to be gained through grief and suffering is less proverbial and more what persons today would call soul searching. Rather than beginning with the most difficult and most unattainable, Job begins his wisdom quest with a probe of the most tangible, most immediate, and simple and works toward complexity and the workings of God. Instead of asking why his children are dead, Job probes for the origins of silver (v. 1). Silver is precious, but not so precious as gold. It can be found. Miners search for it and achieve success. Iron ore may be extracted (v. 2), but why iron? Iron is used to forge the tools necessary to mine the silver and gold. Job is searching, and symbols and metaphors abound. His possessions and children were taken, but why? What is the cause, the root, the antecedent behind his misfortune? Before we unearth silver, we must have the tools; before we can address the present, we must understand the principles at work. Surely the death of Job’s children is the result of sin. Tyrannus Bildad essentially makes this assumption as an inductive proof in 8:4. Job continues to search and call out, on one level for his children and on another level for the voice of reason. Finding a reason will not bring his children back to him but could provide a small measure of comfort. His search continues underground for sapphires hidden from view (v. 6), but is it sapphires that he

²³⁸ Ibid., 17-20.

desires? This same earth that conceals the sapphires from the light of day also provides a grave not only for his children but also for his servants. What is more valuable than life itself? Job continues to mine for answers that elude not only man but the wild beasts as well. Perhaps the beasts are wiser than man. The lion cub dies, but the lion shows outward signs of neither grief nor mourning. Is it possible to relinquish grieving without understanding the deeper reason? The deep (v. 14), the sea (v. 14), Abaddon (v. 22), and Death (v. 22) say “she is not in me”: the place of wisdom is not here. Meanwhile, not to comprehend is to remain suspended in midair, as miners are suspended in a dark mine shaft (v. 4), searching in darkness for something of value in a remote and desolate place, all the while groping through days of fruitless drudgery and never quite sure whether or not the search is in vain.

As an aside, Job here echoes Solomon. Life is an endless search spent in vanity²³⁹ and all of man’s study, labor, and pursuit of pleasure are of no consequence because all eventually die. Contrasting Job and Solomon, we might argue that Job’s search was not motivated, as was Solomon’s, by fleshly pursuits. Nonetheless, some nodes of resonance present themselves: first, we cannot know fully the inner workings of God, nor should we attempt to know such things; second, being wise is indeed better than being a fool and last, fearing the Lord is the entire duty of man. It is here wisdom begins and here wisdom sustains man all his days by sealing man’s relationship with God.

For Solomon, his greatest wisdom came from his dying breath; for Job, it comes from his silent scream, “from where does this wisdom come” (v. 20), and from its echo, “God understands her way and He knows her standing place” (v. 23). Solomon searches the

²³⁹ *ESV*, Ecclesiastes 1:2.

outer world, the world of nature, and every pleasure in the world. Job searches the innermost hearts of his comforters, the innermost heart of his wife, and finally the innermost heart of God Himself. His answered questions came from answered prayers.

THE OTHER VOICES AND THEIR SILENCE

The final argument in defense of this thesis concerning the voice of Job 28 is presented as a process of elimination. This thesis asserts that this voice belongs to Job alone, and though many scholars disagree that this is Job's voice, there is no clear consensus regarding whose voice speaks these sage lines about the nature of wisdom and the nature of God. Therefore, the cast of characters in the book of Job shall be considered each in turn, and evidence for this narrational role shall be weighed. As a matter of convention, the characters are presented in order from the least likely to the most likely to be the voice of the wisdom poem.

First, consider the character of Satan the Accuser. His role in Job is chief antagonist. Satan orchestrates the test of Job and speaks at the Heavenly Council (chapters 1 and 2). His role in this drama resembles that of a prosecuting attorney. Is there any evidence to suggest that Satan the Accuser gave voice to the wisdom poem of Job 28? There is none. Because Satan tormented Job and insisted before God Almighty that Job will "curse You to Your Face" (2:5), the possibility that Satan is the speaker of the wisdom poem is remote. He exhibits wisdom neither in speech nor conduct. Therefore, he cannot give voice to a quality he does not possess. The idea that Satan would say: "God understands the way to it [wisdom], and He knows its place" (28:23) or "the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom" (28:28) is laughable.

Second, consider the Sabeans and Chaldeans (1:15, 17). These marauding bands raided Job's livestock and killed his servant boys. Being pawns of Satan, they display neither great Chaldean wisdom nor the words of great Sabean sages. Is there any evidence that the Chaldeans gave voice to the wisdom poem of Job 28? Although the Sabeans might be keenly interested in silver and gold (1:1), it is unlikely that these thieving pirates would be willing to work so hard to secure what is easily stolen. Respect for God implies respect for other human beings. Therefore, there is no evidence of a "fear of the Lord" (28:28). No interest is shown by the Chaldeans to pause for a moment in the midst of camel theft and expound on the "standing place for wisdom" (28:12).

Third, consider Job's original seven sons and three daughters, likely ranging in age from 13 to 30. This narrative would be strange indeed coming from these children. Although their father is a pious man, Job's children are primarily concerned with the enjoyment of life. They are not necessarily wicked, but people in modern life might describe them as partiers. They enjoy their fill of wine while Job, the concerned father, prays for them (1:5). Their untimely death (1:18) is a result of Job's test by Satan. There is no evidence of reflection here. It is doubtful that one of these, Job's first set of children, gave voice to the wisdom poem.

Fourth, consider the four messengers (1:14, 16, 17, and 18). These field hands are employed by Job to tend of his herds and flocks. For argument's sake, we may infer that these boys are honorable even as their employer is honorable. We may even say that these youth are sensible and have a strong sense of duty. The surviving boys, the first, second, third, and fourth messengers, each in turn, dutifully reported to Job the calamity. Is there any evidence that any of these servant boys could produce the wisdom poem of

Job 28? Unlike Daniel and his three young friends, who appear wise and fit to serve in the court of a Babylonian king,²⁴⁰ no particular wisdom is on display in the discourses of these four messengers. After the initial disasters, the servant boys fade into the background. There is no evidence to suggest that any of these field hands spoke the wisdom poem.

Fifth, consider the angelic members of the Heavenly Council, excluding Satan. These angels (i.e., “sons of God”) present themselves before God twice (1:6, 2:1). Satan happens to mention his duty of “going to and fro on the earth” (1:7); by extension, it is not unreasonable to believe that perhaps these angels as well have areas of supervision that extend to the earth and that like Satan, they are reporting on their findings and observations here. It is plausible, then, that angels, who have the requisite knowledge of God and the things of God, could be wise enough to voice the wisdom poem. However, no evidence is given for such an assertion. No heavenly choirs, no drama in the sky, no voices from on high, no brilliant lights, and no terror are described in association with the presence of angels or heavenly beings. There is no evidence the wisdom poem was spoken by angels.

Sixth, consider Job’s wife. Is there any evidence that Job’s wife gave voice to the wisdom poem of Job 28? She does speak to Job (2:9). Her speech in the Septuagint is extended; whereas the terse Hebrew sounds shrill, the more expanded Greek invites considerable sympathy for Job’s wife. She discusses “her hope”, “her memorial”, “her birth pangs”, “her state of misery”, “her sorrow at Job’s misery”, and now “her reduced status as a servant woman”. Though her words are very real, there is no expansive range

²⁴⁰ *ESV*, Daniel 1:17.

of thought here. Her speech, even in Greek, does not extend beyond the present. There is no note of anything beyond the immediate situation. She does not speak as one who might consider mining for silver (28:1) or as a miner carving out channels in rock (28:10) or weighing the value of wisdom as one would pearls (28:18). There is no evidence Job's wife spoke the words of Job 28.

Seventh, consider God. Of course God, as a Character, is the central character in the book of Job. He presides over the heavenly council (1:6, 2:1); He dialogs with Satan (1:7, 2:2) and agrees to Job's test (1:12, 2:6); He is the subject of the speeches of Job and His friends (4:17, 8:20, and 11:7); He is defended by Elihu (36:2); finally, He appears as Himself in the form of a whirlwind (38:1). Surely, if anyone could offer Job a lesson on wisdom, it would be God Himself; however, this argument by its very nature is lacking. In the first place, if God speaks in chapter 28, then what need is there for Him to speak in chapters 38-41? Further, there is no heavenly majesty associated with these musings. On literary grounds alone, to assert that God speaks the wisdom poem of chapter 28 falls flat and renders the remainder of the book void.

Eighth, consider King Eliphaz. In his three major speeches, Eliphaz asserts his arguments on the basis of known facts, observations, and personal experiences. The wisdom poem is far too expansive, reaching into the realm of philosophy, for Eliphaz. Where is the standing place for wisdom (28:12)? Death has heard only a rumor of it (28:22). This is directly opposite from guilt and innocence (4:7), sin and punishment (15:4), and inhumanity and injustice (22:6). This poem plays sad violin strings, underscoring nagging doubts and unanswered questions. King Eliphaz is grounded and certain. Therefore, contextually, it is unlikely that these are his words.

Ninth, consider Tyrannus Bildad. In his three major speeches, Bildad argues from a historical framework. He appeals to Job to consider the wisdom of the fathers (8:8). In the second speech, he appeals to natural cause and effect (18:16). His closing speech stresses the dominion and power of God (25:2) and the insignificance of man (25:6). Although his scale is far reaching and his arguments are expansive, Tyrannus Bildad's words lack the loftiness and grandeur of the wisdom poem. The same man who suggests that Job's children are dead for good reason (8:4) lacks both the soul of a poet and the tongue of a country gentleman.

Tenth, consider King Zophar. Because Zophar makes only two speeches instead of three as do the other comforters, critical scholars are quick to make him at least a possible candidate for the voice of wisdom. Scholars are irritated at the lack of symmetry in Job. Clines even ascribes "27:7-23, with the exception of verses 11-12 to Zophar as a third speech."²⁴¹ This puts Zophar on the doorstep of the wisdom poem with the possibility of a continuing speech and offers a hint of possibility that Zophar's words are spoken in chapter 28. Therefore, setting aside this author's doubt for a moment about chapter 27, let us consider Zophar's other words from his two speeches in chapters 11 and 20. King Zophar begins his dialogue as a judge and a moralist whose duty it is to silence Job. Zophar states that Job is guilty already (11:6) as he follows the cause-and-effect arrow from right to left and ascribes guilt based on Job's misery. In chapter 20 he likens the results of sin to vomit and cobra venom (20:14). Lastly, for argument's sake, if Clines is correct, 27:23 ends with "clapping" and "hissing". Chapter 28, in sharp contrast, swings, as a hinge, to a softer and more philosophic tone. Can a morally outraged man whisper a

²⁴¹ Clines, *Job 21-37*, 908.

sweet song? There is no evidence that the speaker is Zophar. Except for the wisdom poem itself (chapter 28), the opening of the book (1:1-5), Job's cessation of words (31:40), and the closing narration (42:7-17), the speeches and speakers are clearly marked. Therefore, even if chapter 27 is an unmarked third speech by King Zophar, there is no evidence that he continues speaking into chapter 28. Hissing and cobra venom do not mix easily with coral and pearls (28:19).

Eleventh, consider the wisdom poem as reworked Elihu material. Though the young scholar may have excelled his elder statesmen, King Eliphaz, Tyrannus Bildad, and King Zophar, in terms of scope and literary form, asserting that chapter 28 is removed from the Elihu material (chapters 32-37) raises more questions than it answers. Why would this material be removed? Why is it not marked, as are other major speeches? Why does neither Job nor his comforters acknowledge Elihu earlier? Why does Elihu say, "Behold I waited for your words" (32:11) and "Behold my belly is like wine that has no vent; like new wineskins ready to burst" (32:19)? By all appearances, Elihu has been holding his tongue for some time and is now speaking for the first time. Functionally, beginning at 37:14, Elihu comes closer than any of the other speakers, before God's speech from the whirlwind, to answering Job's question. Elihu discusses God's wondrous works (37:14), lightning (37:15), perfect knowledge (37:16), the south wind (37:17), the skies (37:18), God's Majesty (37:22), and God's Justice (37:23). Indeed, chapter 37 and chapter 28 may be viewed as bookends. Elihu even makes reference to the "whirlwind" (37:9) and God follows with His answer to Job in chapter 38 "out of the whirlwind" (38:1). Though a case may be made that redacted Elihu material is the substance of the wisdom poem, his vigorous speech does not seem to have the same pathos as chapter 28. However, the

burden of proof is on the one making such an assertion. The Elihu material is different in tone, questioning, certainty, and optimism. The wisdom poem is doubtful, grasping, and searching and has the weightiness of a death bed or funeral parlor. The speaker is in the pit of despair. Elihu has lost nothing; in contrast, Job has lost everything but his faith. Job has doubts; Elihu has answers. Though Elihu is a wise youth indeed, and his material (chapters 32-37) even prepares the hearing audience for God, this author holds that chapter 28 is not spoken by Elihu.

Twelfth, consider one of Job's second set of children (42:13-15) as the speaker of the wisdom poem. If this consideration seems perhaps a bit odd, we pause to reconsider Job as both a real human being and also a literary work. Differentiating between the two, Job, the human being, is a patriarch and the fifth from Abraham. His story is almost as old as the Pentateuch. His first mention comes in Genesis 36:33 as Jobab.

The book of Job, the literary work, represents the high point of Edomite wisdom. Like its older cousin, the Pentateuch, the story of Job was first an oral tradition. It was told, as oral traditions are, by persons most well acquainted with the true historical figure. The second set of children, then, become the "prime suspects" as the first tellers of the life and history of their famous father. The historicity and accuracy of the accounts of Job's life are substantiated by these ten children. The story spreads like wildfire in the ancient Near East and is told and retold by neighbors, villagers, perhaps his three comforters, and even his wife after the trials. Inculcated in the telling and retelling, the working and reworking, of this oral history are not only the accounts of Job's loss and restoration but also the link between these accounts and the 28:28 refrain.

Further, it is plausible that this poem was added later to Job's story anonymously by one of his closest intimates. No empirical proof exists to corroborate this possibility. However, it is merely suggested that hundreds of years before the book of Job took shape on a scroll, his words were worked and reworked. Astute observers of life may infer that those who knew him best would not find it extraordinary or unreasonable to speak on Job's behalf even as far as his grandchildren and great-grandchildren, to the fourth generation (42:16).

Thirteenth, consider a Jewish sage, post-exilic scribe, or later editor as the voice of the wisdom poem. This view of Job stems from a different premise entirely. The opinion of many Job scholars is that the book of Job was written far later than the Pentateuch; in fact, it may even be post-exilic. According to Clines, "chapter 28 is almost universally denied to Job ... and is an independent poem, not set in the mouth of any of the speakers of the book of Job."²⁴² This view holds that Job's trials parallel the trials of the Hebrews in exile. His misery is their misery. Therefore, the essence of Job is that Jews must cling to piety and holiness even as Job so that they will persevere even as Job did. From this view, the old folktale is reworked with the "fear of the Lord" refrain and Job's Edomite genealogy is deemphasized as God proclaims Job a righteous man (1:8). This proclamation grants their righteous cousin a seat at the table with the sons of Jacob.

²⁴² Ibid.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

Even as Clines subscribes to the later date for Job and to the later addition of chapter 28, he does acknowledge two problems: First, why should there be a poem within the book that does not appear to be spoken by any of the interlocutors? Second, why should there be a poem about the acquisition of wisdom in this book, which is otherwise devoted to issues of suffering and injustice?

The second question posed by Clines is easier to answer than the first. The wisdom tradition contains many strains of thought: proverbial wisdom, fear of the Lord, the wisdom of worship and praise, the stream of history and the lot of man, and, in the case of Job, the gnawing question of why the righteous suffer. There is no dichotomy between finding the answer and following the path. These are not mutually exclusive as one presupposes the other. If we find the answer, then we are on the path; conversely, if we follow God's path, then we find the answer. Solomon and Job each found the same answer: "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this, is the whole duty of man."²⁴³

The first question is an issue only for Clines and not this author. Clines contends that the wisdom poem is not spoken by Job and asserts, "there is no conceivable reason why Job should suddenly launch into a didactic speech about wisdom."²⁴⁴ First, if Job is a teacher, he is surely the most reluctant teacher ever to have walked on planet Earth. His quest for wisdom has less to do with the classroom, or wisdom school, than with a search for answers to his personal tragedy. Second, those in a state of grief can and do change

²⁴³ *ESV*, Ecclesiastes 12:13.

²⁴⁴ Clines, *Job 21-37*, 908.

gears emotionally, with wild mood swings ranging from manic, hysterical laughing to bitter tears to utter despair. Job, at the pit of his despair, turned his eyes from himself and his personal misery to God.

Job's question "where is wisdom found" (28:12) rivals Hamlet's "to be or not to be." The most fundamental questions ever posed by any human being center on the meaning of life and the meaningless of life apart from Creator God. Chapter 28 functions as a hinge. From Job 1:1 through 28:27 the miners are followed down into the deepest pit; 28:28 is the pivot point and chapters 29 through 42 follow God along the path of righteousness to full restoration. Job never stops praying. His miserable comforters never prayed, though they spoke of God. In fact, Job prays for his friends and God accepts Job's petition on their behalf (42:8-9). Without chapter 28, chapter 42 is not possible. No one except Job could have spoken the wisdom poem of chapter 28. Confession and repentance prepare the way for restoration.

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