

# **THE BOOK OF JOB AND ITS DOCTRINE OF GOD**

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

## The Date of Job

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

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the 5th century A. D., and our manuscripts of it come from a still later period. The tradition may have some value however. It may not be that the data on authorship was correctly remembered by the Jews but that they came to the conclusion of early authorship from various factors that we too can observe.

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

The only other external evidence for the antiquity of the book would come from cross references and allusions in other Biblical books. Proverb 3:11 is one such passage, with the wording quite similar to Job 5:27. Job says, "Despise not the chastening of the Almighty." Proverbs says, "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord." The wording of the two passages is identical in Hebrew, except that Job has the divine name, Shaddai, which it very frequently uses, and Proverbs uses the more common name, the Tetragram. It also adds a characteristic proverbial touch, "my son." The force of such a parallel is debatable, because it is hard to know which book quoted the other, granted that there was some verbal dependence. The whole chapter is an encomium of wisdom in terms of a search for wisdom in places which only God knows. The conclusion is that "the fear of the Lord that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." This conclusion is quite like Proverbs 1:7; 9:10; 15:33 and Psalm 111:10. Again the question is, did Job build a beautiful poem on the subject of wisdom as defined in Proverbs and use it in his context? Or did Proverbs and the Psalms take a theme already developed in Job and allude to it In various verses? We

cannot be sure, but it does seem a little more probable that Proverbs and Psalms did the borrowing. The matter is somewhat complicated by the problem of the position of Job 28 itself. Critical commentators feel that the whole chapter is intrusive. It is indeed distinctive, but there is no need to object to such a poem being included in Job's asseveration of his righteousness. Actually the chapter is an important part of Job's argument. It builds up to a great climax in which Job establishes his ethical- and moral standard.

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

There are also interesting verbal parallels of Job 27:1 and 29:1 With Numbers 23:7, 18; 24:3, 15. Four times the book of Numbers says Balaam "took up his parable and said." It is probable that the verbal parallel is only due to a common linguistic usage. But it is interesting to date that the parallel is with Balaam, another man of the eastern area, and one living in Moses' day. To sum up, there are a few interesting verbal parallels with Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, and the Balaam oracles. These are not conclusive, but incline somewhat toward a pre-monarchy date for the writing.

There is also considerable internal evidence for a pre-monarchy date, or even for Mosaic times. This evidence is of two kinds--comparison of the book with Biblical data and comparison with the general archaeological picture of early times. On the first point, it has been widely noticed that the picture of Job's sacrificial ritual is like that of the patriarchs and bears no relation to the tabernacle ritual of Moses' day and later. Job served as a priest in his own house, as Abraham did, and as Melchizedek seems to have done. Of course, this may have been due to Job's locale as a righteous man off in the East believing in Israel's God, but not allied with Israel. But it is easier to say that the scene is patriarchal. At the same time, the book mentions names of the patriarchal circle. The land of Uz was presumably named after Abraham's nephew (Gen. 22:21) and Elihu the Buzite belonged to the clan headed by the brother of Oz. Bildad the Shuhite was a descendant of Abraham himself, by Keturah (Gen. 25:2). Presumably, the reason this record got into the circle of Israel's scriptures is that Job and his people were distant cousins of the Israelites. We may even get a glimpse here of those other godly men of Abraham's day who like Melchizedek, worshipped the true God though they were not in Abraham's immediate family. When God called Abraham to found the theocracy, there were others around who shared Abraham's faith.

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

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

element Jehovah in their names. Shaddai--names also are rare, though the two we know are Pentateuchal, Zurlshaddal and Shedeur.

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

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

Many, however, including Pope, have given a later date. Pfeiffer (*Introduction to the O. T.*) gives a date of about 600 B. C. Driver dated think "most probably to the period of the Babylonian captivity" (*Introduction to the Literature of the O. T.*, New York: Scribner's ed. of 1892, p. 405). A. Bentzen is uncertain. He places the date of the book

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

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

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

In the absence of definite evidences for late dating and in view of numerous indications of a patriarchal milieu, it seems possible to hold to a Mosaic or slightly pre-Mosaic date in accord with much old Jewish and Christian sentiment. However, the New Testament does not speak on either Job's authorship or date, and the date is not of theological

concern. We may therefore hold our conclusion provisionally expecting further light, especially from linguistic studies.

### Job and the Canon

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

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

A further point, however, is important and is usually neglected by O. T. students. It is by no means certain that the division of books

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

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

#### The Language of Job

It is agreed on all sides that Job is a great book, as well as a beautiful one. It is also agreed by students beginning work in Hebrew poetry that Job is a difficult book to translate. Those who specialize in statistics say that there are more *hapax legomena* used in Job than in any other O. T. book. And the problems of translation are not entirely lexical either. There are unusual forms and some strange usages which, unless recognized, will lead the translator astray. An extreme example: of the difficulty of translation is exhibited in the strange verse of the A V in 36:33. "The noise of it showeth concerning it; the cattle also concerning the vapor"--a verse which as it stands is quite meaningless! The language is so unusual that some (F. H. Foster referred to in M. Pope, *Job- The Anchor Bible*, Garden City: Doubleday, 1965, p. XLIV



hereafter called: Pope, *Job*) have supposed that the book was written in Arabic and what we have is a translation into Hebrew. If this be true, I would suggest that the translator did a poor job of rendering the work into Hebrew! On the face of it, such a view is unnatural. The first written Arabic we have is from the 5th century A. D., and the first literature of any extent comes after the Hejira. It would be odd if our only monument of ancient written Arabic were in Hebrew!

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

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

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

the plural of *milla* thirteen times has the typical ending of the Aramaic noun--*iy*n. Job also uses the Hebrew masc. pl. form in--*iy*m ten times. The force of this example is slightly blunted by the fact that Phoenician and Moabite also use this ending. It was not peculiar to Aramaic.

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

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

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

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

dependence on Job. (Pope, *Job in loco* and T. H. Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures*, rev. ed. Garden City: Doubleday, 1964, p. 133).

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

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

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

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

A more significant borrowing from the Ugaritic is found in 36:30, 33 where the preposition "upon" or "concerning" of AV is taken to be a shorter form of Elyon, the Most High as is witnessed to in Ugaritic. This rendition of the preposition <sup>c</sup>al is used repeatedly by Dahood in his studies on the Psalms, also in the Anchor Bible Series. The difficult vs. 33 would read: "The Most High speaks in thunder; his anger burns against evil."

There are other similarities of Job to the Ugaritic literature. The use of an enclitic "m" on the end of verbs Occurs in Ugaritic as it does in Akkadian. The occasional use of this feature in Biblical poetry is now widely recognized and several instances where "m" formerly was thought to be a 3 masc. pl. objective pronoun are now classed as the enclitic "m." One instance has been noted above, job 37:4. Other probable cases are 4:19; 17:1 and 24:1. Also, Gordon remarks (C. H. Gordon *Ugaritic Studies--Grammar*, Rome: Pontifical Bib. Inst. 1965, p. 138) that "waw" always stands first in a coordinating situation, but may be delayed if it is in a subordinate clause. The Masoretes punctuated 36:7 so that the second "waw" began a new clause. Pope gets better sense by translating "with kings on the throne he seats them." Also the later "waw" in this verse may be so treated: "and they are exalted forever."

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

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

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

### *The Literature of Job*

The structure of the book is well known. There is a prose introduction and conclusion. In between, there is an extensive poetic dialogue. Job, in great affliction raises the problem of innocent suffering.

There are two rounds of speeches of Job and his three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. On the third circuit, Eliphaz speaks, then Job, then Bildad speaks very briefly. Job gives a long speech ending with an oath of innocence.

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

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

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

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

It is true that the Tetragram YHWH is used in the introduction and conclusion, but not in the poetry. But 38:1 uses it to introduce Jehovah's highly poetic reply to Job from the storm. Also it seems that Bildad in Job 8:4 refers to the catastrophe that killed Job's sons as related in the introduction. There are many places where one speaker in the dialogue refers to what another has said. The reference to man born

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

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

As to the poetry and style of the book of Job, it may be helpful to apply to it remarks I have made elsewhere on the Psalms ("The Psalms" in *The Biblical Expositor*, ed. C. F. H. Henry, Phila: Holman, 1960, Vol. II). It is well known that Hebrew poetry is characterized by parallelism and the use of synonymous expressions to gain repetition. But the secret of great Hebrew poetry is not its rhyme and meter. Mere rhyme and meter may be found in English doggerel like the Mother Goose rhymes for children. Humpty Dumpty had a great fall. But we can hardly say that he fell in great verse! So it is with Hebrew poetry. The poetry of Job is great because it deals in magnificent ways with great subjects. The thought and conception is great. For this reason, it is great poetry, even in a fairly literal translation, such as that of the A V. I once had a friend, in the family, not a Bible student or scholar, who characterized the lines in Job 38:7 as the most beautiful in the English language. : ."Who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" The intensity of Job's trial is shown in the introduction with the successive reports of calamity punctuating his peace like pistol shots in the night.

The depth of his trial is revealed in his facing in its stark reality the awfulness of the problem of a good God who grants no justice. Note that Job spends very little time on his physical ailments. Not once does he tell us where it hurts! Because Job's hurt is the hurt of the heart of lost humanity. And by the same token, the book rises out of the depths of despair to confident heights of faith and revelation of God. Some commentators profess to find contradictions in Job's speeches and even assign part of his last speech to Zophar. They fail to realize that Job is grappling with what some today call the antinomies of existence. He sees the problem deeply. But he never lets go completely of his faith that these problems of earth have an answer in God. And he rises almost to the beatific vision in his assurance that he himself with his own eyes will behold God and then all will be well. But as in the case of Martha, whose hope was for her brother's future resurrection, God graciously gave a larger promise. Jesus said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life." And to Job, God said I am the Almighty God. In my protection you are secure. Pope is correct that the "book presents profundities surpassing those that may be found in any of its parts. . .the values men cherish, the little gods they worship--family, home, nation, race, sex, wealth, fame--all fade away. . . confidence in this One is the only value not subject to time." (Pope, *Job*, p. lxxvii). Job is great literature. And it has answers from God.

#### Mythology? or Revelation?

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

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

The problem concerns not only Job, but Psalms, Isaiah and passages in a few other books as well. Leviathan is mentioned by name in Psalm 74:14; 104:26 and Isaiah 27:1, as well as in Job 3:8 and 41:1. The reference in Isaiah calls Leviathan the fleeing serpent, the crooked

serpent. The former expression is found also in Job 26:13 in a context that also may be mythological. Pope <IDE. in loc.) says that the reference in Job 26:13 is to the dragon that causes eclipses! The line in Isaiah is very much like a Ugaritic text: "Because thou didst smite Lotan, the writhing serpent/didst destroy the crooked serpent/the accursed one of seven heads" (C. H. Gordon *Ugaritic Literature, a Comprehensive Translation*, Rome: Pontifical Bib. Inst. 1949; cf. also ANET p. 138). The words "writhing" and "crooked" are: those used in the Isaiah passage. Furthermore Leviathan in Psalm 74:14 is pictured as multi-headed. It looks very much as if Leviathan sometimes in the Bible is a name for a mythological monster. This seven-headed monster is pictured on a seal and on a piece of shell as a somewhat dinosaur-like creature with seven heads placed one below another on the long neck. A hero with a spear is seen on the seal having pierced the lower four heads of the dragon. Apparently the seal depicts the conquest of Leviathan, or Lotan as the Ugaritic pronunciation has it. It is pictured in ANEP

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

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

Albright makes the flat statement, "It may confidently be stated that there is no true mythology anywhere in the Hebrew Bible. What we



have consists of vestiges--what may be called the 'debris' of a past religious culture" (*op. cit.* p. 185). Actually Albright goes farther than is necessary in finding examples in the Bible. He assumes that the word *tehom* in Gen. 1:2 comes from the ancient myths of Marduk's fight with Tiamat when he created the world from her carcass. Albright believes the old story was demythologized. Actually, we should remember that many of the ancient deities were named after natural objects and forces. Deus means sky, Chronos means time, Tiamat and *tehom* mean fresh water, Yamm means sea. All of these items were deified probably because of animistic ideas. It is not clear that *tehom* first meant the deity of the water, then became demythologized into water. Rather it was the reverse. There was a god Yamm in Ugaritic who was god of the sea, but the meaning "sea" in all probability came first, not vice-versa. And usually when the word *yamm* is used in the Hebrew Bible, it is used without any reference to a deity of the sea at all.

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

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

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

In 9:13, close to the *yamm* context, there is the mention of the "helpers of Rahab" who bow under him. Rahab is mentioned again in

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

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

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

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

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

Leviathan is here pictured not as an evil deity, but as an animal. Again, we remember that the deity was usually invented by investing a

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

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

### The Theology of Job: The Character of God

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

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

God reveals himself first to Job as creator. It is of interest to compare God's first revelation in Genesis. The sacred scriptures begin with the creative activity of God. Here God is superlatively shown to be God without competitor or equal. The corollary is that God is the only eternal one and all else sprang into existence at God's command. The

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

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

I am convinced that one great problem of modern thought is the result of a determined denial of God's creatorship. Evolution is now in the popular mind today an explanation of how God created (a false explanation, I believe.) But it has become an alternative idea to God's creation. Evolution, however, cannot explain the beginning of things. It is accompanied by purely philosophical concepts of origin by chance, the eternity of matter, etc., and a flat denial of God. One result is that human personality is unexplainably alone in a sea of chaos. Thought

has no basis for validity. Art has no reason or coherence. Life has no meaning and death no hope. Against this torrent of despair comes the clear revelation of God. "Before the mountains were brought forth or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God" (Ps. 90:2). It is significant that when John hears the angels in heaven praising the Father, their song is "thou art worthy...for thou hast created all things and for thy pleasure they are and were created." If God be really the Creator, we are assured that he is the ultimate reality. There is none behind or over him. Job no longer seeks an umpire. There is none beside Him.

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

The providence of God extends to the remarkable and peculiar phenomena of the animal world. Do you understand the gestation of the wild goats? Obviously, as an ancient cattleman, Job knew something of the mating and birth of his animals. We know much more. We know that sperm and ova are produced and that they unite in the miracle of life. The chromosomes and genes intermingle, then the cells multiply. Some become liver tissue, some nerve cells, some bones and some blood. And how is it and why is it that it all happens just this way? : What man would have dreamed up the ostrich, that peculiar bird. The only bird, I understand, with eyelashes! Why, I have no idea. The only bird, I understand, equipped with a bladder! Again, why? There surely is a reason, but how strange are some of God's creatures! Some have

questioned if the ostrich is as dumb as the verses seem to say. I suppose that depends on what you compare it with! Most would not think of turkeys as dumb, but I have seen young turkeys hang themselves getting out of the tree where they roosted! The ostrich is dumb on some counts. Yet as the passage says, when she lifts herself up, or as Pope (*Job* in loc.) explains it, when she spreads her tail feathers and runs, she can outdistance any horse with ease. The wild ass, the ox, the ostrich, the horse, the hawk, the vulture--these are but samples of the varied, specialized and peculiar creation which God controls. And if God controls these creatures of the wild, he can care for me. Bryant said of the waterfowl,

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

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

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

But there comes a day when others must meet God. I quoted above from Henley's poem, "I thank whatever Gods may be for my unconquerable soul." I am told that later, Henley lost his ten year old daughter and was broken up by the tragedy. Our souls are not unconquerable. Some day all will stand before the judgment seat of God in an experience not like job's, and not like the alleged person to person encounter of existentialism, but in the dark. And in that dread day,

all men will lay their hand upon their mouth for the judgments of God are true and righteous altogether and they are final. No man then will annul God's judgment and Satan will then be put away, and death and hell consigned to the lake of fire, and God's power, wisdom, glory, and righteousness will be fully revealed.

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

#### The Theology of Job: Rewards

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

Job did not know and the comforters did not know that Job was suffering for the honor of God himself and to the shame of Satan, the author of sin. A groaning world today has not read the prologue of Job. It does not believe in Satan as really evil, or in God as really good.

As a result, a European leader like Hermann Hesse turns to Eastern philosophy denying, as he does in his *Siddharta*, all distinctions of right and wrong, of pain and pleasure, of man and God and eternity. All becomes merged in a river of indistinction. There is no meaning. As Matthew Arnold had said in *Dover Beach*,

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

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

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

Eliphaz confronts Job with a different view. He even claims a revelation (4:13) though he was clearly a false prophet. He declares that foolish men, i. e., sinners, are the ones who suffer and that therefore God must be chastening Job. If Job repents, God will wonderfully restore. Eliphaz here, as far as I can see, speaks for the other friends including Elihu. I can see little progress in the argument of the "miserable comforters as Job called them. They declare that Job must have sinned and therefore he suffers. If he will rectify his conduct, God will restore him. Actually this is the view expressed in those several



related treatises on suffering from Egypt and Babylonia which was referred to in the first lecture. This is really the view of the world today. If there be a just God, he must punish sin now and reward righteousness now. If this is not done, we cannot believe that God is real. This attitude was dramatized by the skeptic, Robert Ingersoll. On the platform, he would dare God to strike him dead in one minute. The audience waited in silence and at the end of a minute, he pocketed his watch declaring that he had proved that there was no God. On one occasion, a newspaper editorial the following day asked if the little man had thought that he could exhaust the patience of the Almighty in sixty seconds! But twentieth century man is not noted for his patience. We expect judgment now or else not at all. Really the view of the three comforters amounts to the idea that you get all your hell and all your heaven in this life! There has been some question about Job's doctrine of resurrection. But note that not one verse in the speeches of the three friends or Elihu direct Job's eyes to the hereafter for bliss or blame. Their's is the little quid pro quo~ of the disciples, "Master, who did sin this man or his parents that he was born blind?" Christ's answer applies also to Job, "Neither but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. " And God's works in Job at the last were manifest to devils, angels, and men.

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

The picture of the grave that Job draws thus far is close to oblivion. Indeed this is his only hope (3:13-22). It is a place of quiet, of sleep, death (*maweth*) and the tomb (*qeber*) are in parallelism. In his second speech, Job pictures the grave as the end and therefore he will give rein to his complaint (7:11). He expects to "go down to Sheol" and not come up (7:9). He will "sleep in the dust" and he will not be. The same thoughts recur in his third speech. He wished he had been "carried from the womb to the grave (*qeber*)" (10:19). He longs for the land of darkness, disorder and gloom: -It-; may be. noted that job's concept of that land differs notably from that of the Babylonian underworld, (cf. the description in ANET, p. 109). Here are no monsters, gods or goddesses. It is not a peopled place of consciousness. It is as near soul sleep as we can get. But from another angle, it does n?t describe soul sleep. It does not describe the soul at all. It describes rather" the tomb to which the body goes. This was, just then, the extent of his concern. Death, the tomb (*qeber*), Sheol, and the land of darkness are the terms used. The Palestinian tomb was cut in the rock. It was, of course, dark; it was down. It held the bones and dust of many generations. One decayed body was pushed back in the crypt when another was

laid in. The body of course slept. The soul was not then in Job's view. Neither was any Babylonian place of departed spirits. .

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

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

Job's argument begins where it should begin. Job is God's child. He considers a tree, an insensate thing, yet it has persistent life. If it is cut down, though it seems to die, it will by water at the roots, put forth a second growth. The verb is *halap*. It will bud and grow. This is for a mere tree. But man! Of greater worth, a child of God, the word of God's hands. Man dies and never rises till the heavens grow old. He does not awake (*qys*) nor rise (*wr*). Then Job wishes to be hidden in Sheol, until God's wrath passes over and God might remember him. Surely Sheol here means the grave. But will God remember him? Job answers his great question by a declaration that he would "wait" (same word as "trust" in 13:15 treated above) until his second growth (*h<sup>e</sup>lipah*) would come. Job seizes the thought that man is of far greater worth to God than a mere tree. "Thou shalt call and I will

answer thee; thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands." Here Job in a pinnacle of faith looks beyond the tomb to the resurrection call of God. It is a pinnacle. Job does not maintain this hope undimmed. But he has cried out in faith and he has begun to see that the answers to the great questions after all lie in God who made us for himself, and we may reverently reverse Augustine's famous remark. God made us to fellowship with himself and he is not satisfied until he brings us to rest in him.

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

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

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

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

Job's sixth speech is shorter than usual, but this one is a climax. Again he chides his "friends" with being his worst enemies. They should

pity him when the hand of God is heavy upon him (19:21). And so he looks beyond the present. His friends have turned against him, but he would have his words engraved upon enduring rock. For his vindicator will arise at last.

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

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

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

"And though after my skin Worms destroy this body," note the italicized words of the A V. It is a difficult line. The preposition "after" refers to time or place, and neither in Hebrew or English is the word "after" appropriate for the noun "skin"! The context wants the infinitive construct of a verb. Pope takes the preposition with the verb "destroy" and translates it "after my skin is flayed." But then with the final pronoun "this" would be out of place and the verb following the pronoun should agree with it, but it does not. The NEB *ad libs* here with a footnote that the Hebrew is unintelligible. It is possible, however, to read the word "my skin" (root <sup>c</sup>*wr*) as a verb in the infinitive construct. The same verb was used to mean "awake" in a resurrection context in 14:12 (see above). The reading would then be "after my awaking." The

verb "destroy" is difficult. It is only used three times, though it is used in a second meaning "to encircle." It may be translated, "After my awakening when this (sickness or body) is destroyed."  
 "Yet in my flesh I shall see God." Pope, and others, translate "without my flesh, I shall see God." This translation is interesting, for it would make the passage refer not to resurrection, but to spiritual life in heaven--an equally happy thought for Job. The preposition *min* can indeed mean "apart from" as well as "from the standpoint of," and many examples of the latter use are given in the lexicon. E. g., the Lord roars *min* Zion (Amos 1 :2). In view of the next line, it seems hard to adopt Pope's idea. The whole thrust is that Job will see God in his resurrected body. Tur-Sinai (The Book of Job, in loc.) takes it i to mean from the standpoint of his body--but before death.

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

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

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

And after all, what do we know of the Persian religion in the early days? We have some monuments of Persian grandeur and some reports of their kingdom and wars. But we have no early copies of the religious books of the Persians. We know not when or by whom these books were written. They were copied and recopied in lands where Christian influence was very strong in the first centuries of our era. 'What interpolations

may have occurred and what influences may have been absorbed, who knows? Eventually these books were taken to India and brought to the modern world. But it is quite uncertain that Job could have been actually influenced in this, its basic doctrine, by such alleged teaching.

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

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

Pope, of course, ascribes this also to Zophar, but it seems that Job himself may here be expressing in incipient form the even harder doctrine that the wicked, who seem to get by, will actually receive in the end the judgment of God. It cannot be said that Job expresses with any clarity the doctrine of future punishment for the wicked. But it is involved in his view and some of his statements look in that direction.

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

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

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Read the Book of Job online. Scripture chapters verses with full summary, commentary meaning, and concordances for Bible study. In many places Job is difficult to translate because of its many unusual words and its style. For that reason, modern translations frequently differ widely. Even the pre-Christian translator(s) of Job into Greek (the Septuagint) seems often to have been perplexed. So God lets the adversary have his way with Job (within specified limits) so that God and righteous Job may be vindicated and the great accuser silenced. From this comes Job's profound anguish, robbed as he is of every sign of God's favor so that God becomes for him the great enigma. Job 23 jobs response to eliphaz: his ardent desire for confrontation with god. 310. In the grandeur of its conception, its daring questioning of the traditional faith, its noble defence of an honest man, the noblest work of God, and in the existential solution of the acute problem of the relation of human justice to the justice of God in the human confrontation with the dreadful yet alluring mystery (mysterium tremendum et fascinans) of the divine presence, and in the wonderful range of poetic diction and imagery and the rich variety of literary forms, each with its own peculiar significance in the argument, the book of Job well deserves the appraisal of Thomas Carlyle: One of The Book of Job. There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east. And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. The Book of Job is a canonical work in both Christian and Jewish liturgy. In the story, Job, a man of faith, is tested by God through various horrible afflictions. Interpretations of this profoundly odd book are as many as the centuries of commentary it has undergone, but it is arguably one of the most beautifully-written books of the Bible - even the most secular of literary scholars still praise its pacing and profound wording. Author: The Book of Job does not specifically name its author. The most likely candidates are Job, Elihu, Moses, and Solomon. Date of Writing: The date of the authorship of the Book of Job would be determined by the author of the Book of Job. If Moses was the author, the date would be around 1440 B.C. If Solomon was the author, the date would be around 950 B.C. Because we don't know the author, we can't know the date of writing. Purpose of Writing: The Book of Job helps us to understand the following: Satan cannot bring financial and physical destruction upon us unless it is by God's permission