



unfoldingWord® Simplified Text

Job

Version 77

[en]

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Date: 2023-10-27

Version: 77

Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Hebrew Bible

Date: 2022-10-11

Version: 2.1.30

Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Greek New Testament

Date: 2023-09-26

Version: 0.34

Published by: unfoldingWord

unfoldingWord® Simplified Text

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Job

Chapter 1

¹In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. He was a man of complete integrity. He respected God and so he avoided doing evil things. ²Now Job had seven sons and three daughters. ³He owned 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 1,000 oxen, and 500 donkeys. He also had many servants. Job was richer than anyone else who lived in the area east of the Jordan River.

⁴Job's sons often held feasts in their homes. Whenever any of them held a feast, he would invite all of his brothers and sisters to share the meal with him. ⁵After all of the sons had each held a feast, Job would gather his children together. He would ask Yahweh to cleanse them from any action they might have committed during their feasting that would have made them unacceptable to him. He would get up early in the morning, kill animals, and burn them on the altar {as sacrifices}, one for each {of his children}. {For} Job {always said}, "Perhaps my children have sinned by saying something evil about God in their thoughts. {If they have, I need to ask God to forgive them.}" Job did this after each time his sons had all hosted feasts.

⁶One day the angels came and gathered together in front of Yahweh, and Satan came too. ⁷Yahweh asked Satan, "Where have you just come from?"

Satan replied, "I have come from the earth, where I was traveling around {to see what was happening}."

⁸Yahweh said to Satan, "Have you noticed Job, who worships me? I mention him because no one else on earth has such complete integrity as he does. He respects me and so he refuses to do anything evil." ⁹Satan replied to Yahweh, "Job only worships you because of what you have done for him. ¹⁰You have always protected him, his family, and everything he owns. You make him succeed in whatever work he does. As a result, he has built very large herds of livestock. ¹¹But if you attack what he owns and take it away, he will certainly curse you in front of everyone."

¹²Yahweh replied to Satan, "All right, I permit you to take away everything that he has. But do not harm him in his own body."

Satan {agreed and then} left Yahweh {in order to carry out his attack on Job}.

¹³One day after that, Job's sons and daughters were attending a feast at the home of the oldest brother. ¹⁴{While they were doing that,} a messenger arrived at Job's home. He told Job, "Your oxen were plowing the fields and your donkeys were grazing nearby. ¹⁵But a group of men from the Sheba people group came and attacked us. They killed all of your servants who were working in the fields. They took away all the oxen and donkeys! I am the only one who has escaped to come and tell you what happened."

¹⁶While he was still talking to Job, another messenger arrived. He said to Job, "Lightning from the sky struck and killed all the sheep and all the men who were taking care of them! I am the only one who has escaped to come and tell you what happened."

¹⁷While he was still talking to Job, a third messenger arrived. He said to Job, "Three groups of robbers from the region of Chaldea came and attacked us. They stole all the camels and killed all the men who were taking care of them. I am the only one who has escaped to come and tell you what happened."

¹⁸While he was still talking to Job, a fourth messenger arrived. He said to Job: "Your sons and daughters were feasting in the home of their oldest brother. ¹⁹Suddenly a very strong wind came from the desert and struck the house. The house collapsed on your sons and daughters and killed them all! I am the only one who has escaped to come and tell you what happened."

²⁰Then Job stood up and tore his robe and shaved his head {because he was very sad}. Then he lay down on the ground to worship God. ²¹He said,

“When I was born, I was wearing no clothes.

When I die, I will not take any clothes with me.

It is Yahweh who gave me everything that I possessed,

and it is Yahweh who has taken it all away.

I find no fault with Yahweh.

²²So in spite of all the things that had happened to him, Job did not sin by saying that what God had done was wrong.

Chapter 2

¹On another day, the angels came again and gathered together in front of Yahweh. Satan also came again.

²Yahweh asked Satan, “Where have you come from {this time}?” Satan replied, “I have come from the earth, where I was traveling around {to see what was happening}.”

³Yahweh asked Satan, “Have you noticed that Job continues to worship me? I mention him again because no one else on earth has such complete integrity as he does. He respects me, and so he refuses to do anything evil. He still does this even though you persuaded me to {permit you to} attack him for no reason.”

⁴Satan replied to Yahweh, “Job still worships you because he is glad you destroyed his herds and family rather than destroying him. People will give up everything they have in order to save their own lives. ⁵But if you harm his body, he will certainly curse you in front of everyone!”

⁶Yahweh replied to Satan, “All right, I permit you to harm his body. But you must leave him alive.”

⁷Satan {agreed and he} left. He went and caused Job to suffer from very painful boils all over his body. ⁸Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped the boils on his skin. He sat down in a pile of ashes {outside the city}.

⁹His wife said to him, “You should not still be loyal to God! You should curse God and then go ahead and die.”

¹⁰But Job replied, “You are talking the way people talk who do not know God. We should be willing to receive whatever God sends us.” So in spite of all the things that had happened to him, Job did not sin by saying that what God had done was wrong.

¹¹Job had some good and wise friends. One of them was Eliphaz from the town of Teman. Another was Bildad from the Shuhite people group. A third friend was Zophar from the town of Naamah. These men heard about the terrible things that had happened to Job. So they each left their homes and went together to visit Job to comfort him sincerely. ¹²But when they saw Job from a distance, they almost did not recognize him. They wailed loudly, they all tore their clothing, and they threw dust into the air that settled on their heads. {They did these things to demonstrate how sorry they were for Job.} ¹³Then they sat on the ground with Job for seven days. {During that time} none of them said anything to him, out of respect for how greatly he was suffering.

Chapter 3

¹At the end of those seven days, Job started speaking. He cursed the day when he was born. ²He said,

³“I wish that the day of my birth had never existed!

{I feel the same way about} the night when my mother conceived me.

⁴I wish that there would only be darkness on that day {so that it would not even be a day}.

I wish that God in heaven would not care about that day

and so not make the sun shine on it.

⁵I wish that that day were only darkness,

with clouds blocking out the sunlight

and many other things also making it very dark.

⁶I wish that the moon and stars would not shine on the night when my mother conceived me.

I wish that the day of my birth was not part of any month.

Indeed, I wish that it was not a day in the year at all.

⁷I mean it—I wish that no mother would ever again bear a child on that date.

I wish that no one would ever again rejoice {over a child's birth} on that date.

⁸There are magicians who know how to agitate the chaos monster. I want them to curse the day of my birth!

⁹I wish that the stars that shone early in the morning of that day would never shine again.

I wish that it would never become light on that day.

I wish that not even the first rays of the rising sun would appear on that day.

¹⁰I wish that day did not exist, because my mother gave birth to me on that day,

and because I became alive, I have now experienced all these terrible things.

¹¹I wish that I had died right after my mother gave birth to me!

I wish I had stopped breathing after being alive for only a short time!

¹²I wish that my mother had never held me on her lap and nursed me!

¹³If I had died shortly after my mother gave birth to me,

I would now be resting peacefully among all the other people who had died.

¹⁴{I would be resting} with great kings and their advisers.

They built beautiful tombs on spacious grounds {and are now resting in them}.

¹⁵Or {I would be resting} with princes

who owned great quantities of gold and silver.

¹⁶I wish that I had died in my mother's womb

and never lived for even a moment.

Then people would have buried me privately.

¹⁷After wicked people die, they do not cause any more trouble.

That allows the people whom they were oppressing to rest.

¹⁸Those who were prisoners all rest peacefully {after they die}.

They no longer have slave drivers ordering them around.

¹⁹Everyone, whether rich or poor, goes to the realm of the dead.

Those who were slaves no longer have to obey their masters.

²⁰God should not allow those who are suffering greatly like me to continue to remain alive!

God should not allow those who are very miserable to live!

²¹They long to die, but they do not die.

They desire to die more than people desire to find buried treasure.

²²{God should not give life in the first place} to people who are very happy when they finally die!

²³God should not give life to people if he is going to keep them from knowing what to do
or from understanding what is really happening to them!

²⁴I am wishing that I were dead because now I cry so much that I cannot eat.

I just keep groaning loudly.

²⁵There were things that I always worried might happen to me.

Those things have now happened!

²⁶I really have no peace of mind at all.

My troubles keep disturbing me."

Chapter 4

¹Then Eliphaz, Job's friend from the town of Teman, replied to what Job had said. Eliphaz said,

²"Will you please allow me to say something to you?

I feel compelled to speak to you.

³You yourself have given good advice to many people.

You have encouraged people who were discouraged.

⁴When people were struggling, you were able to say the right thing to help them.

You enabled them to be brave again.

⁵But now that you yourself are suffering, you have become discouraged.

You are not facing your troubles bravely {as you have helped others to do}.

⁶You should be confident because you honor God.

You should be hopeful because you conduct yourself with integrity.

⁷Think about this: God does not destroy people who are innocent!

No, God never kills people who are doing what is right!

⁸I know from experience that this is true:

When people plan to do bad things to others,

those bad things happen to them instead.

⁹God becomes very angry with them {because of the wrong things they plan to do},

and so God commands that they will die, and they do die.

¹⁰Wicked people may boast and threaten,

but God destroys them.

¹¹Those wicked people will have nothing in the end, like lions that starve to death because God keeps them from catching any prey.

Different relatives will have to take care of the children of those wicked people, as if they were lion cubs whose parents caught no prey and they had to separate from each other in order to search for food.

¹²I once heard a message that someone came and whispered to me.

¹³One night I fell deeply asleep and had a dream that made me very perplexed.

¹⁴I was so scared that I started to shake all over.

¹⁵Then a spirit slid into view right in front of me!

This caused the hair on the back of my neck to stand straight up.

¹⁶The spirit stopped there, but I could not see what it really looked like.

However, I knew that there was some being in front of me.

At first it did not speak, but then it said,

¹⁷'No human being can be more righteous than God.

No person can be better than his Creator.

¹⁸Consider this: God recognizes that even his own angels may not always do what is right.

If they do not act wisely, he corrects them.

¹⁹So God is even more careful to discipline human beings,

knowing how very frail they are.

²⁰{Humans are so fragile that} they can be here today and gone tomorrow.

{And humans are so insignificant that} a person can die, never to return to earth, and no one will even notice.

²¹Humans are {fragile,} like tents that collapse if someone pulls up their stakes.

And they may live their whole lives on earth without ever learning to be wise.'

Chapter 5

¹If you ask someone to judge between you and God, no one will agree to do that for you.

Not even an angel would have the authority or wisdom to judge your case.

²People who do not respect God get angry with God {instead of considering how they have sinned}.

Naïve people resent God {when they do not get what they think they deserve}.

{Their anger and resentment lead them to disobey God, so that} God punishes them severely and even kills them.

So respect God and do not be naïve!

³I have seen foolish people who seemed to be successful.

But immediately I recognized that they would not prosper for long.

⁴Their children are never safe.

They always lose to their opponents in court

because no one defends them.

⁵People who do not respect God are not able to harvest the crops that they plant.

Poor people come and claim the grain—right to the edges of the field!

Yes, poor people see their crops and are glad to have them.

⁶After all, trouble does not come out of nowhere.

⁷No, people cause trouble for themselves throughout their lives.

This is as certain as the fact that sparks shoot up from a fire.

⁸If I were suffering as you are,

I would ask God for help

and trust God to help me.

⁹God does great things that we can not understand.

We can not even count the marvelous things that God does.

¹⁰God is the one who sends rain onto the earth

so that it waters our fields.

¹¹God defends people who are humble.

He gives widows safe places to live.

¹²God keeps devious people from being able

to do what they plan.

¹³When people try cleverly to make others suffer,

God makes this cause suffering for them instead.

When people try to trick others,

God shows that it is a trick before it can fool the others.

¹⁴God keeps wicked people from knowing how to fulfill their plans.

It is as if the wicked people are always in the dark, even during the day,

and they need to feel around with their hands to try to find where to go.

¹⁵When powerful people threaten or accuse weak people,

God rescues the weak people.

He keeps the powerful people from harming them.

¹⁶{Because they know that God will help them,}

poor people can confidently expect that good things will happen to them.

God proves that they are innocent

when people accuse them falsely.

¹⁷Consider this: Anyone whom God corrects is better off because of it.

So you should be thankful that God is disciplining you.

¹⁸You should be thankful because

God allows people to suffer {in order to correct them}

and then he restores them.

¹⁹Whenever you are in trouble, God will keep rescuing you.

God will keep bad things from happening to you.

²⁰When there is little food to eat, God will not allow you to starve to death.

When there is war, God will not allow your enemies to kill you.

²¹God will protect you when people say bad things about you.

God will protect you from things that could badly harm you.

²²You will not worry about things like that

or about not having enough to eat.

You will not be afraid that wild animals will hurt you,

²³because you will be confident that those wild animals will not attack you.

You will not have big rocks in your fields that make plowing difficult.

²⁴You will know that things will go well for you in your home.

When you check on your animals, you will see that they are all there.

²⁵You will be certain that you will have many descendants.

They will be as numerous as blades of grass.

²⁶You will live a long life,

like grain that grows to become fully ripe before it is harvested.

²⁷I can assure you that my friends and I have thought carefully about these things.

We know that they are true,

so please pay careful attention to what I have said!

You also will realize that it is true.”

Chapter 6

¹Then Job replied to Eliphaz and the others. He said,

²“If I could put all my troubles and misery

on a scale and weigh them,

³they would certainly be heavier than all the sand along the ocean shores.

That is why I spoke very rashly about the day when I was born.

⁴It is as if Almighty God had shot me with arrows.

It is as if those arrows had poison on their tips and that poison had gone into my spirit.

The things that God has done to me are like soldiers lined up to attack me.

⁵Just as a wild donkey does not complain by braying when it has plenty of grass to eat,

and an ox does not complain by bellowing when it has food to eat,

I would not complain if you were really helping me.

⁶People use salt to help them eat food that has little taste.

People do that with the white of an egg, for example.

I have been saying how I feel in order to help me deal with my situation.

⁷But regarding food itself,

I actually do not want to eat at all,

because my troubles are making me too upset to eat.

⁸I wish that God would do for me what I have asked of him:

⁹I wish that God would agree to let me die!

God is certainly able to end my life.

¹⁰If he did that, I would be comforted:

I would know that in spite of the unrelenting pain I had suffered,
I would still always have obeyed God's commands.

¹¹I do not have the strength to endure until these troubles are over.
I have nothing to look forward to, so I do not want to live any longer!

¹²I am not strong like stone,
my body is not sturdy like bronze,
so I will not be able to endure these troubles for a long time.

¹³I am no longer able to help myself.
My troubles are keeping me from doing that.

¹⁴When a man has many troubles, his friends should be kind to him,
even if he stops honoring Almighty God.

¹⁵But you, my friends, have not helped me.
You are like streams in the wilderness
that travelers cannot depend on,
because they leave their channels empty in the dry season.

¹⁶These streams are full of water
when the melting ice and snow make them overflow,

¹⁷but when the dry season comes, there is no water flowing in those streams,
and the channels dry up.

¹⁸Merchant caravans turn off the road to search for water.
{However, there is no water in those stream beds,
so} the merchants die in the desert.

¹⁹The men in those caravans searched for some water
because they were sure that they would find some.

²⁰They were very disappointed,
because they had been sure that they would find water.
They traveled a long distance to the stream bed,
but there was no water in it.

²¹Similarly, you three have not helped me at all!
You have seen that terrible things have happened to me,
and you are not helping me,

because you are afraid that God might do similar things to you.

²²{After I lost all my wealth,} I did not ask any of you to give me money.

I did not plead with any of you to spend some of your money to help me.

²³I never asked any of you to rescue me from my enemies.

No, I did not ask you to save me from people who were oppressing me.

²⁴Answer me now, and then I will be quiet;

tell me what wrong things I have done!

²⁵I would be willing to listen to what you had to say, even if it were painful, as long as it was helpful.

But though you are trying to correct me, you are not really helping me at all.

²⁶I am a man who has nothing to hope for,

but you try to correct me, and you think what I say is as useless as the wind!

²⁷In fact, you are treating me as callously as if you were gambling for an orphan
or arguing over the price of a friend you were selling into slavery!

²⁸Please look at me! I will not lie while I am talking straight to you.

²⁹Please stop saying that I have sinned! Stop criticizing me unfairly!

You should realize that I have not done anything wrong.

³⁰You must not think that I am lying!

I know what is right to say and what is wrong to say.

Chapter 7

¹"Life is very difficult for all of us on this earth!

Like manual laborers, our days are long and hard.

²We are like slaves who keep wanting to be in the cool of evening.

We are like workers who have to wait to be paid.

³Like a slave, I am enduring a time when it feels useless to be alive.

I have been experiencing many miserable nights.

⁴When I go to bed I say, 'I hope I will be able to sleep for a long time!'

But I never really get to sleep. I am restless right through to the morning.

⁵My body is covered with maggots and dirt;

pus oozes out of my open sores.

⁶I am running out of days faster than a shuttle releases yarn into a loom,

and I have no reason to hope that my life will end well.

⁷God, remember that my life will soon end.

{I do not think that} I will ever be happy again.

⁸God, you see me now,

but {after I die,} you will not see me anymore.

You may look for me then, but {you will not find me, because} I will not exist.

⁹Just as a cloud never appears in the sky again once it fades,

so when people die and go to the place where dead people are, they never return to earth.

¹⁰They never return and live in their houses again.

¹¹So I will say everything I want to say.

I will speak because I am so upset.

I will complain because I am so bitter.

¹²God, you do not need to watch what I am doing so closely!

I am not a dangerous sea monster!

¹³Sometimes I think that if I could just go to sleep, I would stop suffering;

my pain would be less while I was sleeping.

¹⁴But then you make me have terrible nightmares!

¹⁵And I wish someone would kill me by choking me

so that I would not have to stay alive {and suffer so much}.

¹⁶I hate being alive {and suffering so much}!

I do not want to live any longer!

Stop afflicting me, because I will only be alive for a short time.

¹⁷We human beings are not very important!

You should not think that we are so important that you need to pay attention to what we do.

¹⁸You do not need to check every morning to see what we are doing!

You do not need to evaluate us at every moment!

¹⁹I wish you would stop watching me

and leave me alone for at least a little while!

²⁰You watch me constantly,

but if I sin, that certainly does not harm you!

I feel as if I am your target and that you are shooting at me!

You act as if I am bothering you all the time!

²¹If I have done wrong things, you could just forgive me.

I am going to die soon.

When I do, then if you decide you want us to be friends, it will be too late, because I will be dead.”

Chapter 8

¹Then Bildad, Job’s friend from the Shuhite people group, responded to Job. He said,

²“Job, you should not continue to talk like this.

You are saying a lot of things, but they are not sensible.

³God always does things fairly.

Yes, Shaddai always does what is right.

⁴Your children sinned against God.

This is evident, because God has punished them for the evil things they did.

⁵But as for you, you should pray to God. Yes, you should ask Shaddai to help you.

⁶If you are genuinely good,

then God will certainly do something good for you.

He will give you back the abundant prosperity that good people have.

⁷God would make you so wealthy later in life

that it would seem as if you were not very prosperous before!

⁸You should really consider the wise teachings of the people who lived before us.

Yes, you should think about what our ancestors learned about life.

⁹I advise you to consider the wisdom of our ancestors

because we have only been alive for a short time

and we know very little.

This is because our time here on the earth is very short,

like a shadow that appears briefly and then goes away.

¹⁰But if you consider the wisdom of our ancestors, you will learn useful things.

Indeed, you will learn very profound things.

¹¹Papyrus certainly does not grow away from marshland.

No, reeds certainly cannot grow where there is no water.

¹²If their water dries up while they are blossoming,

they wither, while plants that do have water keep flourishing.

¹³People who do not pay attention to God are like those reeds.

Such people hope for good things, but they do not get them.

¹⁴Godless people confidently expect good things to happen to them, but those things do not happen.

Godless people trust certain other people to help them, but those others prove unreliable.

¹⁵Godless people think they are secure because they are wealthy,

but ultimately they can not rely on their wealth for security.

When they begin to fail despite their wealth, they try to preserve their status,

but they fail anyway.

¹⁶Godless people are like plants that formerly flourished in abundant sunshine,

whose branches once spread out over the ground.

¹⁷Godless people are like plants whose roots once twisted securely around piles of stones

and clung tightly to rocks.

¹⁸But a person can still pull a plant completely out of the ground even if it is that healthy and securely rooted.

Then it will be as if the plant was never there in the first place.

People who do not pay attention to God will perish just as completely.

¹⁹So people who do not pay attention to God will be sad in the end.

Other people will come and take their places.

²⁰So I tell you, Job, that God will help you if you do what is right.

But God will not help you if you do what is wrong.

²¹God can still make you happy,

yes, very happy.

²²{When God blesses you,} everyone who opposed you will be very ashamed.

God will completely destroy wicked people."

Chapter 9

¹Then Job replied to Bildad and the others. He said,

²"I certainly know that what you have said is true.

But a person can not prove that he has done the right thing

{and that God should not punish him}.

³If someone wanted to argue with God about that,

God would ask him many questions

and that person would not be able to answer any of them!

⁴God thinks very deeply and he is very powerful.

No one who has tried to argue against him has ever been able to win.

⁵God moves mountains {in earthquakes} without anyone knowing in advance what he is going to do.

God knocks down mountains when he is angry.

⁶God causes earthquakes far below the surface of the earth

that shake the ground and make it move.

⁷On some days, God makes it so cloudy that people can not see the sun in the sky.

On some nights, God makes it so cloudy that people can not see the stars shining.

⁸God created the sky all by himself.

God defeated the forces of chaos {so that he could make an orderly universe}.

⁹God arranged the stars in the sky to make constellations such as the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades.

God arranged stars into many other constellations as well.

¹⁰God does amazing things that people can not understand.

God does more marvelous things than people are able to count.

¹¹If God passed by where I was, I would not be able to see him.

Yes, he might be going by, but I would not notice him.

¹²If God wants to take something away, no one can stop him from doing that.

No one can require God to defend what he is doing.

¹³God would continue to be angry {even if someone tried to calm him down}.

{No one can oppose him;} he {even} defeated the forces of Rahab, the great sea monster.

¹⁴So I could hardly think of the right words to say

in order to argue a case against God!

¹⁵Even if I were innocent, I would not be able to argue a case against him.

All I could do would be to ask God, as my judge, to be merciful to me.

¹⁶Even if he agreed to hear my case,

I would not believe that he was genuinely considering my arguments.

¹⁷He keeps causing troubles that batter me.

He hurts me many times for no good reason.

¹⁸He causes me to suffer all the time.

It is as if he will not even let me get my breath again {before he causes the next disaster}.

¹⁹Suppose I did make a case against him. And suppose the winner would be the one who was stronger.

Then he would win, because he is far stronger than I am.

And it would not matter who was right,

since no one could make him obey what a judge decided.

²⁰Even though I was innocent, he would find grounds in what I said to punish me.

Even though I had not done anything wrong, he would still decide, based on what I said, that I was guilty.

²¹I have not done anything wrong, {but that does not matter anymore because} I do not care what happens to me.

I do not care whether I live or die.

²²God punishes everyone the same way.

As I have been saying, God destroys everyone whether they have done wrong or not.

²³When people experience disaster and it causes them to die suddenly,

God laughs when he sees them suffer, even if they are innocent.

²⁴God has allowed wicked people to control what happens to everyone else.

It is as though God has caused judges not to be able to judge fairly.

If it is not God who has done that,

who, then, has done it?

²⁵I am approaching the end of my life more quickly than a messenger runs to bring news.

It is as if the days of my life are running away from me.

Good things do not happen to me.

²⁶My life is going by very rapidly,

as fast as a sailing boat made from reeds,

as fast as an eagle swooping down to seize an animal.

²⁷If I decide that I will just forget what I am complaining about,

if I decide to stop looking sad and try to be cheerful,

²⁸I still become afraid again

because I know that God does not consider me innocent

and so I think that he will punish me.

²⁹He will condemn me anyway,

so why should I keep trying in vain to defend myself?

³⁰If I washed my body with pure water from melted snow

and cleansed my hands with strong soap

{to show how innocent I am},

³¹God would just throw me into a filthy pit {to show how guilty he considers me to be}.

My body would become so dirty that it would be as if my own clothes did not want to be on it!

³²God is not a human, as I am,

so I could not refute him to prove that I am innocent

if we went together to have a trial in a courtroom.

³³There is no one to mediate,

no one who has authority over both of us.

³⁴There is no one who could keep God from causing me to suffer,

who could keep God from doing terrifying things that frighten me.

³⁵{If someone could protect me and judge between us,}

I would declare that I am innocent without being afraid of God.

But I can not do that now.

Chapter 10

¹I am tired of living,

so I will freely express everything I want to complain about {without worrying about what God will do to me}.

Yes, I will say exactly how unhappy I am.

²I will say to God, 'If you are going to punish me,

you should tell me what I have done wrong!'

³You seem to think that it is all right to harm me

and to abandon me, whom you created.

But at the same time, you seem pleased to allow

wicked people to do the things that they plan to do!

⁴Certainly you know and understand more than what people can see with their eyes! {So you should understand my true motives and know that I am innocent.}

⁵You do not live for only a short time as people do!

⁶So you do not need to act as if you would run out of time

if you did not discover all of my sins right away!

⁷{You do not need to work hard to discover any sins that I may have committed,

because} you know that I am not guilty.

And there is no one who could help me get away from you {if you decided you should punish me}.

⁸You personally created every single part of me.

So it is not right for you to destroy someone whom you created yourself.

⁹Please recall how you made me! You molded me the way people mold objects out of clay.

If you destroy me, I will crumble into dust {and you will lose your marvelous creative work}.

¹⁰You made me through a careful process,
the way people carefully make cheese out of milk.

¹¹You attached my bones together with tendons,
and then you covered them with flesh inside my skin.

¹²You are the one who made me alive.
{It seemed that} you were faithfully taking care of me.
{It seemed that} you were protecting me.

¹³But you kept secret what you were planning to do to me.
I am certain that you were planning to do these things to me!

¹⁴You were watching me to see if I would sin
so that you could punish me for sinning.

¹⁵If I am a wicked man,
then I hope that terrible things will happen to me.
But even if I am a good man,
I must still act ashamed
because you are punishing me as if I had sinned.

¹⁶If I did act like the good man that I am,
you would {conclude that you should punish me further
and you would} hunt for me the way a lion hunts for some animal to kill.
{When you caught me,} you would do even more things to harm me greatly.

¹⁷You would claim that I had committed even more sins.
You would become even more angry with me.
You would keep punishing me in new ways.

¹⁸God, you should not have allowed my mother to give birth to me!
I wish that I had died at birth!

Yes, I wish that my parents had never shown me to anyone.

¹⁹I wish that I had never even existed!

I wish that I had died at birth so that people had buried me right away.

²⁰I am not going to live very much longer!

So please leave me alone and let me have a little peace.

²¹{Let me have some peace now because}

soon I will go to the place from which I will never return.

In that place {where dead people go} it is always gloomy.

Yes, it is very dark.

²²Yes, in that place it is very dark, the way it is in deep shadow.

Things are very chaotic there.

Even the small light that is there

is like darkness.”

Chapter 11

¹Then Zophar, Job’s friend from the town of Naamah, responded to Job. He said,

²“I would like to respond to the long speech that you have just given.

You talk a lot about how innocent you are, but that does not mean that you truly are innocent.

³You have boasted that you are innocent,

and I need to talk back in response.

You have said disrespectful things about God.

I need to tell you that you should be ashamed!

⁴I need to correct you because you have told God,

‘I believe the right things,

and you know that I have done the right things.’

⁵If only God would speak

and say something to correct you!

⁶

If only God would tell you the secrets that he knows because he is so wise!

{You need to realize that} God knows far more than you do.

If you could understand as God does,

you would realize that God is punishing you less than you deserve!

⁷You will never be able to understand God by thinking hard about him.

No, you will never be able to find out everything about Shaddai.

⁸God's wisdom is so much greater than ours,

it is as if it is higher than the sky.

So there is nothing you can do to understand it all.

It is as if God's wisdom is deeper below the earth

than the place where dead people go.

So it is impossible for you to know it all.

⁹There is so much to know about God

that it is as if that knowledge is longer than the earth

and wider than the ocean.

¹⁰If God wants to arrest you and put you on trial,

no one can stop him from doing that.

¹¹{God is a trustworthy judge} because he knows which people have bad character.

When God sees people doing wicked things, he punishes them.

¹²Some people simply have no understanding.

They will become wise when humans start having wild donkeys as babies{—that is, never!}

¹³Job, I urge you to repent humbly

and pray sincerely to God.

¹⁴If you have been doing evil things, stop doing them.

If you do nothing wrong in any part of your life,

¹⁵then you will be able to act as a person who is not ashamed of anything.

You will be strong, and you will not be afraid of anything.

¹⁶You will not be afraid, because you will forget all the bad things that happened to you.

They will all be gone, like the water that flows away down a river.

¹⁷Your life will be happy again.

It will be as if the sun were shining on you as brightly as it shines at mid-day.

You have had many troubles, but they will end,

just as night ends when the sun rises.

¹⁸You will feel safe because you will be confident that good things will happen to you.

You will think about your life and realize that you can go to bed and sleep peacefully.

¹⁹You will lie down to sleep and nothing will scare you.

Many people will come and ask you to be kind to them.

²⁰But God will punish wicked people by making them die.

They will not be able to escape from God's punishment.

They will hope to live, but they will die anyway."

Chapter 12

¹Then Job replied to Zophar and the others. He said,

²"You are speaking as if you were the people to whom everyone should listen.

You seem to believe that you are the only wise people who are now alive.

³But I have as much good sense as you do.

I am just as wise as you are.

People certainly know, in general, the things that you have said.

⁴Before, when I prayed to God for help, God would help me.

But now{, because God is not helping me in my suffering,} other people laugh at me.

I am righteous and I honor God, but they laugh at me!

⁵People like you who have no troubles think that others are suffering because of their sins.

You think that God is punishing us and that is why we are suffering.

⁶Meanwhile, bandits get rich by robbing people.

Those who defiantly disobey God live peacefully.

Such people believe that God cannot stop them from doing what they want to do.

⁷But if the wild animals could speak,

and if you asked them {what they know about God},

they would tell you {that God is responsible when someone suffers as I am suffering}.

If the birds could speak,

and if you asked them {the same question},

they would tell you {the same thing}.

⁸If the ground could talk, and if you asked it about God,

or if fish could talk and you asked them,

they too would tell you that God is responsible when people suffer.

⁹All of them certainly know that it is Yahweh himself who has caused me to suffer.

¹⁰He controls whether all living creatures live or die,
including whether any person dies or continues to live.

¹¹We decide whether our food is good or bad by tasting it.

In the same way, we think carefully about what we hear people say in order to decide whether it is good or bad advice.

{I have listened carefully to you, and I have decided that you are giving me bad advice!}

¹²Older people have usually become wise.

Because they have lived a long time, they have learned many things.

¹³God himself is wise and very powerful.

He has good sense and he understands everything.

¹⁴Indeed, if God tears something down, no one can build it back up again.

If God puts someone in prison, no one can enable that person to escape.

¹⁵Yes, God is so powerful that if he prevents rain from falling, then the water on the earth dries up.

If God causes a lot of rain to fall, then water floods onto the land.

¹⁶God is the one who is truly strong and wise.

He does not let anyone get away with doing wrong or with convincing others to do wrong.

¹⁷{God is so powerful that} he can remove royal advisors from their positions,
and he can cause judges to become fools.

¹⁸God can take away the ruling authority that kings have
and make those kings become slaves instead.

¹⁹God can remove priests from their positions
and take the power away from those who have long ruled others.

²⁰God can cause trusted counselors not to know what to say,
and he can cause wise elders no longer to have good sense.

²¹God can cause princes to lose the respect of others,
and he can cause those who are powerful to become weak.

²²God can enable people to understand
things that are very difficult to understand.

²³God causes some nations to become very great,
but later he destroys them.

God enables some nations to enlarge their territory greatly,
but later he allows others to conquer them and take their people away as prisoners.

²⁴He causes some human rulers to become foolish.

As a result, they try one thing after another without success,
as if they were lost in a desert without roads.

²⁵It is as if they were trying to feel their way in complete darkness.

It is as if they were staggering around drunk.”

Chapter 13

¹“I can assure you, my friends, that I already know everything that you have been telling me.

Yes, I have heard and understood all that you have said.

²I know everything that you know.

I do not know less than you do.

³But I would like to speak with Almighty God{, not with you}.

I would like to convince him {that I am innocent}.

⁴As for you, you are telling so many lies about me

that other people can hardly recognize what I am really like.

Your advice is so worthless

that you are all like doctors who sell people useless medicine.

⁵I wish that you would just stop talking.

Then you would really seem to be wise!

⁶Please pay attention to what I am telling you!

⁷You are speaking on God’s behalf,

but you are not telling the truth!

You are speaking deceptively,

but you think that you are helping God!

⁸You are not being fair to me.

Instead, you are acting as if you are God’s lawyers defending him in court!

⁹If God investigates what you are doing,

he will find that you are doing wrong.

No, you can not deceive him

as you might deceive a human being!

¹⁰God would certainly rebuke you when he discovered that you were pretending to be fair but were actually being unfair.

¹¹He would certainly bring the full force of his power against you.

That would make you very afraid of him!

¹²You are quoting traditional sayings, but they have no value in my situation.

Your arguments in support of your position are very easy for someone to refute.

¹³So stop talking to me. Allow me to speak.

I do not care what God does to me as a result of what I say.

¹⁴I will be risking my life.

I will be taking the chance that God will execute me for what I say.

But I have good reason to do that.

¹⁵Indeed, God might kill me {for starting to argue a case against him}, but I hope that he {would still judge me fairly after I die}.

So I am going to defend my behavior to him in person.

¹⁶I believe that arguing a case against God will actually help convince God that I am innocent.

After all, no wicked person would dare to approach God personally."

¹⁷"God, listen very carefully to what I say.

Pay attention to me as I speak.

¹⁸Please pay careful attention because I will be defending myself by telling you things I have thought carefully about.

I have examined myself,

and I am convinced that I am innocent.

¹⁹I do not believe that anyone could prove that what I am going to say is false.

If I knew that it was false, I would not argue this case.

I would accept dying {as my fair punishment}.

²⁰However, I must ask you to stop doing two things to me.

Then I will be able to speak with you in person.

²¹The first thing I ask is that you stop punishing me.

The second thing I ask is that you stop scaring me.

²²{If you agree to stop punishing me and stop scaring me, then}

go ahead and start questioning me, and I will respond.

Or allow me to question you first, and then you respond to my questions.

²³Tell me what I have done that is wrong.

Tell me what sins I have committed.

Show me how I have disobeyed you.

²⁴I do not understand why you are avoiding me.

I do not understand why you are treating me like your enemy.

²⁵I am as insignificant as a leaf that the wind blows,

so you do not need to punish me {as if I were a dangerous criminal}.

I am as unimportant as a bit of dry chaff,

so you do not need to chase me.

²⁶{From the way I am suffering, it appears that you are punishing me because}

you consider that I have done terrible things.

It seems that you are punishing me even for

the wrong things I did when I was young {and I did not know any better}.

²⁷It seems as if {you are judging me too strictly, as if} you had put chains on my feet {to keep me from going anywhere}.

It feels as if you are watching everything that I do very closely.

It is as if you will only let me do a few specific things.

²⁸{But you do not need to watch me so closely.}

I am a mere human being

with a body that is as fragile as rotten wood that is falling apart,

as fragile a piece of cloth that the larvae of moths are eating.

Chapter 14

¹Human beings live only a short time,

and during that time they experience much trouble.

²People live brief lives, like flowers that appear quickly but then wither and fall to the ground.

Yes, people's lives are temporary, like shadows that appear only for a short time.

³God, you do not need to watch fragile humans so carefully.

You do not need to judge everything that I do.

⁴No one can make something that is acceptable to God out of something that is not acceptable to him.

⁵You have decided how many days each human life will last.

Yes, you have decided how many months each person will live.

No one can live any longer than the time you have decided.

Because this is true, ⁶

please stop watching people so closely.

Give them relief so that they can live out their brief lives in peace.

⁷Now even after people cut a tree down,

it is possible for it to start growing again and make new branches.

⁸Its roots in the ground may be very old,

and its stump may be decaying,

⁹but when rain falls on it,

it may revive and send up shoots just as a young plant does.

¹⁰But even the strongest people die.

They grow weak and stop breathing,

and then they are gone forever.

¹¹Just as water evaporates from a lake,

and just as a riverbed dries up,

¹²so people die and do not become alive again.

Until the heavens do not exist any longer,

people who die will not come back to life.

No, no one will be able to make them alive again.

¹³I wish that you, God, would put me safely in the place where dead people go and forget about me.

That way I would not suffer any more until you were no longer angry with me.

I wish that you would decide how much time I need to spend there

and then come and rescue me from that place.

¹⁴I do not believe that we humans live again after we die.

If I knew that I would live again, I would wait patiently throughout this difficult life.

I would know that after I died, things would become different for me.

¹⁵{After I had been in the place where dead people go for the time you had determined,} you would call for me, and I would answer you.

You would be eager to see me, one of the creatures that you had made.

¹⁶Yes, then you would protect me wherever I went,

and you would not be watching to see whether I sinned or not.

¹⁷You would forgive the things I had done wrong.

Yes, it would be as if I had not done them at all.

¹⁸But just as mountains erode away and rocks tumble down slopes,

¹⁹just as water wears away stones and floods wash away soil,

so you make all people die, even though they hope to keep living.

²⁰You make us age the whole time we are living, and then we die.

Yes, you make our faces show that we are old and about to die,

and then you make us go to the place where dead people go.

²¹When we die, we do not know whether our children will grow up and do things that will cause other people to honor them.

If they do shameful things instead, we do not know that either.

²²When we die, we feel sorry for ourselves, but no one else feels sorry for us.

Yes, we grieve for ourselves, but no one else grieves for us."

Chapter 15

¹Then Eliphaz, Job's friend from the town of Teman, replied to what Job had said. Eliphaz told him,

²"If you were truly wise, you would not have said such useless things.

You have said a lot, but it has all been insignificant.

³You should not be saying things that do not benefit anyone.

No, you should not speak things that are not helpful.

⁴You are actually encouraging others not to respect God.

Yes, you are discouraging people from honoring him.

⁵You are wicked, and that is why you say what you do.

You are talking in the way that deceptive people talk.

⁶Everything that you say shows that God should punish you.

It is not necessary for me to prove that.

⁷{You should not think that you know so much}

You were not the first person whom God created.

God did not make you when he first formed the world.

⁸You do not listen as God makes his plans.

You should not think that you are the only person who is wise.

⁹We know everything that you know.

We understand everything that you understand.

¹⁰My friends and I are saying the same things

that old, wise people say,

people who were born before your father was.

¹¹God wants to comfort you

and speak gently to you,

but you do not appreciate that.

¹²You should not be allowing yourself to become so emotional.

No, you should not be allowing yourself to lose your temper.

¹³You have become angry with God,

and so you are saying harsh things against him.

¹⁴No human being can be sinless.

No one on this earth can be completely righteous.

¹⁵God does not even trust his own angels {to do the right thing every time}.

He does not consider the heavens to be completely pure.

¹⁶So God certainly does not consider people to be pure who commit terrible wrongs,

who do evil deeds as often as they drink water.

¹⁷Job, I want to explain {why you are experiencing so much suffering}.

Please listen to me.

I have learned many things,

and I want to explain them to you.

¹⁸These are things that wise people have passed down from their ancestors.

These wise people have declared all these things openly.

¹⁹God gave the land {of Edom} exclusively to my wise ancestors.

No one came from another country and caused them to think wrongly about God.

²⁰Wicked people suffer great pain the whole time that they are alive.

God has determined that this will happen constantly to those who oppress others.

²¹Wicked people constantly experience terrible things.

They may become wealthy, but they will lose that wealth.

²²Wicked people lose hope that their troubles will ever end.

They are always afraid that they are going to die violently.

²³They have to go and search for food to eat. They do not know where to find it.

They know that they will certainly experience disasters soon.

²⁴Wicked people are always afraid that bad things will happen to them.

Their fear keeps them from taking actions that might protect them,

as if an opposing king had defeated them in a battle {and they had become helpless}.

²⁵These things happen to wicked people because they oppose God.

They think they are strong enough to defeat Shaddai.

²⁶Wicked people stubbornly oppose God

as if they had a strong shield to protect themselves against God.

²⁷But they are so fat that they would not be able to fight!

²⁸Wicked people have to live in cities that others have deserted.

They live in homes that others have abandoned.

Those homes are about to collapse into a pile of ruins.

²⁹Few wicked people become rich, and those who do become rich do not stay rich for very long.

No, they do not acquire great wealth.

³⁰Wicked people will always be in trouble.

They will be like trees whose branches burn up.

When God gives the command, they will die.

³¹Wicked people are often foolish and want to get things that are actually worthless.

In the end, all they have are those worthless things.

³²While they are still young, they will die.

They are like branches that have broken off a tree and dried up.

³³Wicked people are like vines whose grapes fall off before they are ripe.

They are like olive trees whose blossoms fall off before they produce any fruit.

³⁴Surely wicked people will not have any descendants.

Those who took money from bribes will not have any money left in the end.

³⁵They plan to cause trouble and to do evil things.

They continually think of ways to deceive other people.”

Chapter 16

¹Then Job replied to Eliphaz and the others. He said,

²“I have heard many things like that before.

All of you, instead of helping me, are only causing me to feel more miserable.

³I wish that you would stop saying these things that are not helping me.

Eliphaz, I do not understand why you feel that you must keep replying to me.

⁴

I could say the same things that you are saying

if you were the ones suffering instead of me.

I could make great speeches to criticize you,

and I could shake my head at you {to ridicule you}.

⁵I would think that I was encouraging you by what I said.

Yes, I would think that I was relieving you by speaking with you

⁶But as it is, if I talk, I continue to suffer just as much,

and if I do not talk, that does not reduce my suffering either.

⁷But now {I will speak to God}.

God, you have taken away all my strength,

and you have killed all of my children.

⁸You have made me sick, and I have lost a lot of weight,

and people think that shows that I am a sinner.

They see how thin I am,

and they think that proves that I am guilty.

⁹God is so angry with me that he has attacked me and hurt me.

Now he is moving his teeth back and forth because he is still so angry with me.

He is watching me closely {to see how he can attack me again}. ¹⁰People look at me with their mouths wide open in order to humiliate me.

They hit me in the face because they think I have done wrong.

They crowd around me to threaten me.

¹¹God has allowed people who do not honor him to mistreat me.

He has allowed wicked people to do whatever they want to me.

¹²Previously, I was living peacefully,

but then God caused great trouble for me.

It is as if he grabbed my neck and shook me to pieces.

It is as if he set me up as a target

¹³and people were surrounding me and shooting arrows at me.

It is as if those arrows cut open my kidneys

and caused the gall from my liver to spill onto the ground.

God is not having any mercy on me at all!

¹⁴It is as if I were a wall that God was breaking down in many places.

It is as if God were rushing at me like a soldier who was attacking his enemy.

¹⁵{I am grieving so deeply that} it is as if I have sewn rough mourning cloth right onto my skin!

I feel weak and humiliated.

¹⁶My face is red because I have cried so much.

I have dark circles around my eyes because I have not been sleeping well.

¹⁷All this has happened to me even though I have not violently harmed anyone

and even though I pray sincerely to God.

¹⁸I feel as if I am the victim of a violent crime, and I want people to show concern about what has happened to me.

I do not want anyone to stop me while I am demanding that God act justly toward me.

¹⁹But even now, I know that there is someone in heaven who will testify for me.

He will confirm that what I have done is right.

²⁰This person in heaven is my friend,

and he will plead with God for me.

{At the same time, I will also plead with God

so earnestly} that I will weep.

²¹My friend will plead with God for me in heaven

the same way one person pleads for another person here on earth.

²²{I want God to treat me justly now, while there is still time,}

because within a few years I will die.

Chapter 17

¹My time to live is almost over. I have no strength left.

I am just about to die.

²The people who are around me are continually making fun of me.

I have to watch them taunt me.

³“God, even though you would be trying my case,

please also guarantee to yourself that I will appear in court and behave as a defendant should.

There is certainly no one else who will do that for me.

⁴My friends will not vouch for me,

because you have prevented them from understanding that I am innocent.

Nevertheless, you will not prove them right by declaring me guilty.

⁵{I know that you will treat me justly because you make sure that people act justly.

{For example,} you punish people who give false testimony against their neighbors in exchange for a bribe.

You make their whole families suffer if they do that.

⁶But because God is punishing me,

people use my name to mean someone who was formerly prosperous but who experienced disaster because he was wicked.

People even spit in my face {to insult me}.

⁷Because I am very sad, it has become hard for me to see.

My whole body has become so thin that it is as if I am not even here.

⁸When people who are truly righteous see what has happened to me, it shocks them.

It makes them want to punish people who really disobey God.

⁹Those who are truly righteous will continue to do what is right,

and those who are innocent will continue to become stronger.

¹⁰But as for you friends of mine,

we could continue talking,

but I do not think that I will conclude that even one of you is wise.

¹¹My time to live has almost ended.

I have not been able to do the things that I planned to do.

I can no longer hope that the things I most desired will happen.

¹²My friends say that the troubles I am experiencing are actually a good thing {because God is using the troubles to correct me}.

My friends say that because my troubles have become so bad, that means they must nearly be over.

¹³Suppose the only home I could hope to have was the place where dead people go. Suppose I were going to stay in that dark place.

¹⁴Suppose I considered the grave to be my family home, and suppose I considered the worms that live in graves to be my family.

¹⁵Then that would show that I truly do not have good things to hope for. Everyone would recognize that I was not really hoping for anything.

¹⁶It would be as if everything I hoped for were going to the place where dead people go. Yes, it would be as if people were burying the things I have hoped for with me in a grave."

Chapter 18

¹Then Bildad, Job's friend from the Shuhite people group, responded to Job. He said,

²"Please stop talking!

If you would stop talking and listen, we could tell you something.

³You seem to think that we are as stupid as cattle.

⁴But by being so angry, you are only hurting yourself.

You seem to think that everyone should abandon the earth because life on earth is no longer worth living for anyone after what has happened to you.

You seem to think that there should be a great earthquake {as a sign of what an awful thing has happened to you}.

⁵But actually, what has happened to you is not momentous.

Wicked people are bound to lose their prosperity.

They will not continue to enjoy happiness.

⁶It will be as if the light went out in the tent in which they were living, so that they could not enjoy living there.

⁷Wicked people become weaker {because of the troubles they cause for themselves}.

They try to take advantage of other people, but they hurt themselves instead.

⁸Yes, it is as if they walk into a net that they do not realize is there

or fall into a pit that someone has concealed as a trap.

⁹It is as if their feet get caught in a trap
that does not let them go.

¹⁰It is as if a loop of rope that someone has hidden on the ground
springs up and seizes them when they walk onto it.

¹¹Everywhere they go, things cause them to be terrified.
It is as if those things are pursuing them and biting at their heels.

¹²They will become weak, as if they did not have enough food to eat.
They will always be at risk of disaster.

¹³Diseases will spread all over their skin.
Yes, a horrible disease will cause their bodies to decay.

¹⁴They have a secure life, but it ends suddenly.
They die without being able to do anything to save their lives.

¹⁵Then all of their possessions will belong to other people.
Wicked people will have nothing left, as if God had burned up everything they had by making burning stones fall on it.

¹⁶They will be lifeless, like trees whose roots have dried up
and whose branches have all withered.

¹⁷No one on the earth will remember them anymore.
No, no one anywhere in the world will recall what they were like.

¹⁸Suddenly wicked people will die and no longer be alive.
They will no longer be able to live in this world.

¹⁹They will have no children or grandchildren living in their people group after they die.
They will have no descendants living where they previously lived.

²⁰Anyone who hears about what happened to them
will be shocked.

²¹This is certainly what happens to unrighteous people.
Yes, this is what happens to people who do not honor God."

Chapter 19

¹Then Job replied to Bildad and the others. He said,

²"The three of you must stop hurting me
and discouraging me by saying that I am wicked!

³You have insulted me repeatedly.
You should be ashamed for speaking so harshly to me!

⁴Even if it were true that I had done wrong,
that would be my concern, not yours!

⁵If you truly think that you are better than I am,
and if you are claiming that I must be guilty because I am suffering,

⁶you should realize that it is God who has caused me to suffer.
It is as if he had a net and caught me in it, like an animal he wanted to trap.

⁷Listen to me: I protest that God is punishing me unfairly,
but no one agrees with me.
I cry for help, but no one, not even God, treats me fairly.

⁸It is as if God has blocked my road
so that I can not go anywhere.
It is as if God has forced me
to try to find my way in total darkness.

⁹He has taken away my good reputation.
It is as if he has taken a crown of authority off my head.

¹⁰He is ruining everything that I have.
I no longer hope to experience good things in this life.
I expect that I will soon die,
as if I were a tree that he had pulled completely out of the ground.

¹¹He attacks me because he is very angry with me.
He treats me as if I were his enemy.

¹²It is as if he were sending an army against me
that has surrounded me and is getting ready to destroy me.

¹³God has caused my family to abandon me.
Those who know me now act like strangers toward me.

¹⁴My relatives have left me
and my good friends ignore me.

¹⁵People who were guests in my house and even my female servants
act as if they do not recognize me.

They treat me like a foreigner whom they do not know.

¹⁶When I order my servants to come, they do not obey.

I have to beg my servants to help me.

¹⁷My wife stays away from me,
even though I was a good father to our children.

¹⁸Even young children disrespect me.

When I stand up to talk, they laugh at me.

¹⁹All of my intimate friends now detest me.

The people I love are hostile to me.

²⁰I have become so thin that my bones are visible beneath my skin;
I am barely alive.

²¹I plead with you, my three friends, pity me
because God is making me suffer greatly.

²²You should not be making me suffer as well,
as if you were God and had to punish sin.
You seem to think that you need to keep accusing me of doing things wrong!

²³I wish that someone would now write what I have been saying
in a book {so that people could read it}.

²⁴{Or else,} I wish that someone would carve what I have said onto a rock with a chisel
and highlight it with lead so that people could always read it.

²⁵But I know that there is someone who will defend me
and that some day he will appear here on the earth and declare me innocent.

²⁶Even after I die and people bury me and my body decays,
still, in my body I will see God.

²⁷I will see him myself!
Yes, I will see him personally!

My emotions overwhelm me as I think about that!

²⁸But if you three men still think that you need to accuse me of doing wrong
because you believe I am responsible for the sufferings I am experiencing,

²⁹then you should fear that God will punish you,
because God becomes angry with unfair people like you and he punishes them.
When that happens, you will know that God punishes people fairly.”

Chapter 20

¹Then Zophar, Job’s friend from the town of Naamah, responded to Job. He said,

²“What you have said troubles me greatly,
so I want to reply to you right away.

³You have insulted me by what you have said.
But I have had a good idea about how I should respond to you.

⁴People have known this for a long time,
for as long as they have existed:

⁵Wicked people are only briefly successful;
people who refuse to honor God are happy only for a short time.

⁶They may seem for a while to be very great
and very powerful,

⁷but they will disappear forever like refuse that people throw away.
People who knew them will wonder where they have gone.

⁸They will disappear the way a dream ends abruptly when a person wakes up.
They will no longer exist.

Yes, they will vanish just like the dreams that people have at night.

⁹Those who once saw those wicked people will never see them again.
Those wicked people will no longer live where they once lived.

¹⁰They will have to return the valuable things that they stole from poor people.
If they die before they can do that, their children will have to do it.

¹¹Wicked people will die before they grow old
and others will bury them in the ground.

¹²For wicked people, doing wrong things is like having sweet food in their mouths
that they want to continue tasting.

¹³They do not want to stop doing wrong things,
as if those things were delicious food that they enjoyed eating.

¹⁴{But they will regret doing those wrong things.}

They will feel like people who eat what they should not eat
and get a badly upset stomach
that feels as if it is full of poison.

¹⁵Wicked people try to get as much money as they can but they do not keep it,
just as people who eat too much throw up the food that they ate.
God makes sure that they lose their wealth.

¹⁶A person who does evil deeds will die as a result,
as certainly as the bite of a poisonous snake kills a person.

¹⁷A wicked person will not experience the abundant blessings
that flow like a stream from God.

¹⁸Wicked people will have to give back the things that they acquired dishonestly.
They will not be able to continue using those things.
They will not have the opportunity to enjoy the things they got by doing business,

¹⁹because they oppressed poor people and refused to help them,
and they took other people's houses by cheating them.

²⁰No matter how much they got, they still remained greedy,
and as a result, they lost the things that they enjoyed having.

²¹When they finish eating their food, there is never anything left over,
because they greedily eat it all.
That is why they do not remain wealthy.

²²While they are still very wealthy,
they will suddenly experience trouble.
Many people will be hostile to them and hurt them.

²³Even as wicked people are enjoying luxuries,
God will show that he is very angry with them.
He will punish them with great suffering,
even as they are indulging themselves.

²⁴Even as they are trying to escape from smaller punishments,
they will experience greater punishments.

²⁵It will be as if God had shot an arrow through a wicked person's body

and he had to pull it out of his back.

But the shiny point of the arrow would have cut a gash in his liver,
and he would know that he was going to die.

²⁶God has decided that he will destroy the valuable possessions that wicked people have.

It will be as if a fire that God starts will burn them up.

Yes, God will destroy every last thing that they have in their homes.

²⁷The sins that those wicked people have committed will become apparent.

If the sky could speak, it would tell all the wrong things it saw them do.

If the earth could speak, it would also be a witness against them.

²⁸On the day when God punishes people,

he will take away all the possessions of wicked people.

It will be as if a flood had washed them away.

²⁹That is what God will do to wicked people.

That is what God has decreed will happen to them."

Chapter 21

¹Then Job replied to Zophar and the others. He said,

²"Please listen carefully to what I say.

That is something that you can do to comfort me.

³Be patient with me, and allow me to speak.

Then, after I have finished speaking,

you can continue to make fun of me if you wish{, although I hope you will not}.

⁴I am not protesting to people about my suffering, I am protesting to God!

And so it is certainly acceptable for me to be impatient!

⁵If you consider my situation, it will shock you.

That should make you put your hands over your mouths {and say no more}!

⁶When I think about what has happened to me,

I am frightened and my entire body shakes.

⁷I do not understand why wicked people live long lives

and become very powerful.

⁸They live to see their children grow up

and start their own households nearby.

⁹Wicked people live safely in their homes without being afraid.

God does not punish them.

¹⁰Their bulls mate with their cows successfully.

Their cows give birth to calves. They do not miscarry.

¹¹Wicked people are able to send their young children outside to play {without worrying about what will happen to them}.

Their children dance playfully.

¹²The children play tambourines and lyres {as they sing},

and they also play flutes happily.

¹³Wicked people enjoy having good things while they are alive,

and then they die peacefully and go to the place where dead people go.

¹⁴While they are alive, they say to God, 'Leave us alone;

we do not care about how you want us to live our lives!'

¹⁵Those wicked people also say, 'It does not matter whether we worship Shaddai.

We would not get any advantage by praying to him.'

¹⁶Wicked people wrongly think that they have become prosperous because of what they have done.

I want to think completely differently from the way they think.

¹⁷It often happens that wicked people die

without experiencing any disasters.

I do not think that God actually becomes angry with them and punishes them.

¹⁸God does not destroy them like straw that the wind blows away.

It is never as if a whirlwind carries them off.

¹⁹You say, 'When people have committed sins,

God remembers and punishes their children for those sins.'

I say that God should punish the people who sin, not their children.

That way sinners will know that God is punishing them for their own sins.

²⁰Wicked people should have the experience of God destroying them.

They should know what it is like for Shaddai to punish them in his wrath.

²¹After all, once wicked people die,

they are no longer concerned for their families who are still alive.

²²Since God judges everyone, even those who are in heaven,
no one can teach him anything.

²³Some people die while they are still very healthy.
They die when their lives are peaceful and they are not afraid that bad things will happen to them.

²⁴Their bodies are fat.
Their bones are strong.

²⁵Other people are very miserable when they die.
They die before good things have happened to them.

²⁶Both kinds of people die, and other people bury them.
Their bodies all decompose.
{Everyone dies, so it is clear that dying is not always the punishment for being wicked.}

²⁷Listen, I know what you three are thinking about me.
You are wrongly applying to me things that are true about wicked people.

²⁸I know you are wrong because you say, 'God does not allow evil rulers to keep living!
God does not allow wicked people to keep living!'

²⁹If you want to know what life on earth is really like, you should ask people who travel much {and see many things}.
You will have to admit that the things they see and describe show what life is really like.

³⁰{Travelers will report} that wicked people do not suffer when there are great disasters.
{They will report} that wicked people escape from God's punishment.

³¹No one dares to accuse wicked people openly of doing wrong.
No one punishes them for the evil things they have done.

³²When wicked people die, others carry their bodies to their graves in a solemn procession.
Then people guard their graves to protect them.

³³It would please wicked people to see how others build mounds over their graves to honor them.
It would also please them to see how many people take part in their funeral processions.
Many people walk in front of their bodies and many others walk behind them.

³⁴Since all of this is true about wicked people, what you have been telling me does not make sense, and it has not comforted me.
You have been trying to answer me by telling me things that are not true!"

Chapter 22

¹Then Eliphaz, Job's friend from the town of Teman, replied to what Job had said. Eliphaz told him,

²"No one can do anything to benefit God!

No, people can only do things to benefit themselves, and only if they are wise.

³It does not give Shaddai any extra pleasure if you live in the way you are supposed to live anyway.

It does not make him better off if you improve the way you are living.

⁴God would not be punishing you in this way if you truly honored him.

God would not judge you to be guilty for doing that.

⁵No, God must be punishing you because you are very wicked.

You must have done a great number of evil things.

⁶You must have unfairly forced poor people to give you things to guarantee that they would pay money back to you.

You must have taken the cloaks that they needed to keep them warm.

⁷You must not have given water to people who were thirsty.

You must not have given food to people who were hungry.

⁸You must have refused to help others even though you were a wealthy man who owned a lot of land.

You must have enjoyed a life of privilege {without being concerned for others}.

⁹When widows came to you for help, you must have sent them away without giving them anything.

You must have oppressed orphans.

¹⁰Because you did all those things, now you are having difficulties in many different areas of your life.

Things are happening all of a sudden that scare you.

¹¹And so you do not know what to do, as if it had become very dark and you could not see anything.

You cannot solve your problems; it is as if you were drowning in a flood of water.

¹²But God lives high up in the heavens.

He looks at the earth from a place that is even higher than the stars.

¹³So you should not say, 'God does not know what people are doing.'

You should not say, 'Dark clouds keep him from seeing us, so he cannot judge us.'

¹⁴You should not say, 'Since he walks on the dome that covers the sky,

where there are thick clouds around him, and he can not see what we do.'

¹⁵You should not continue to conduct your life

in the way that evil people have done for many years.

¹⁶God makes evil people die suddenly while they are still young.

They go away completely, as if a flood had swept them away.

¹⁷Those evil people told God, 'Leave us alone!'

They also said defiantly, 'Shaddai can do nothing to harm us!'

¹⁸Even so, God mercifully gave them many things to enjoy.

Nevertheless, I want to think completely differently from the way evil people think.

¹⁹When good people see that God punishes evil people, they are glad.

People who have not done wrong say that those evil people are getting what they deserve.

²⁰Those good people say, 'Now God has destroyed our enemies!'

It is as if a fire has burned up everything they owned.'

²¹So, Job, I urge you to ask God to forgive you. Restore your relationship with him.

If you do that, good things will happen to you.

²²Do pay attention to what God teaches you.

Meditate on what he says.

²³If you come humbly to Shaddai, he will restore you.

{God will certainly do that} if you stop doing the evil things that you have been doing.

²⁴Stop trusting in your wealth.

It should be as if you are throwing away your gold,
even the finest gold you have, onto the dirt and rocks.

²⁵If you do that, then Shaddai will be more precious to you than your gold and your silver ever were.

²⁶If you do that, then your relationship with Shaddai will make you very happy.

You will be able to approach God confidently.

²⁷When you pray to God, he will do what you ask him to do.

You will have many things to praise God for.

²⁸The things that you decide to do will be successful.

It will be as if a light were shining on the road in front of you so that you knew just where to walk.

²⁹People may cause great difficulties for you.

But when you pray and humbly ask God to help you,
he will save you.

³⁰God will even help people who have done wrong things if you pray for them.

God will answer your prayer because you will not have done wrong things."

Chapter 23

¹Then Job replied to Eliphaz and the others. He said,

²"I must still complain about many distressing things.

There is much more that I could have protested about.

³I wish that I knew where I could find God.

{If I knew that,} I would go to the place where he lives.

⁴I would present much evidence to God that I am innocent.

I would offer many arguments to prove that.

⁵That way I would know what God would say

in reply to everything I would say to him.

⁶He would not use his great power to defeat me.

He would listen to me fairly.

⁷I am an honest man, so if I met with God personally, I would be able to discuss things with him reasonably.

{If we could do that,} he would declare that I am innocent.

After that, he would not punish me again as if I had sinned.

⁸{But I do not know where to find God.}

If I went to the east, he would not be there.

If I went to the west, I would not see him there.

⁹He makes natural things happen beautifully in the north,

but no one there sees him doing those things.

He must also go to the south,

but no one sees him there either.

¹⁰Still, he knows how I have conducted my life.

When he has finished testing me,

he will see that I am as pure as gold whose impurities fire has burned out.

¹¹I have lived faithfully in the manner that God wants people to live.

I have not stopped living that way.

¹²I have always obeyed the commandments that he has given.

I would rather go without food than disobey what God has told us to do.

¹³But God seems to have made up his mind that I am a sinner,

and no one can make God change his mind.

Whatever he wants to do, he does.

¹⁴So it seems that God will keep on punishing me until I die.

If my present troubles do not kill me, I am sure that God will cause many more troubles for me!

¹⁵So the thought of coming into his presence greatly frightens me.

When I think about what he can do, that makes me very afraid of him.

¹⁶I am afraid because I am no longer brave after what God has done to me.

Shaddai has made me very frightened.

¹⁷I have lived to experience terrible things, and that is why I am so frightened.

I can only imagine that the future will be just as bad as the present.

Chapter 24

¹Shaddai should set times when he judges evil people.

The people who obey God never seem to see him judge evil people.

²Some evil people remove boundary markers so that they can steal other people's land.

Some evil people steal other people's sheep and put them in with their own sheep.

³Some evil people take away donkeys that belong to children who have no fathers to protect them.

They make loans to widows, and then they take oxen that belong to them to guarantee that the widows will pay back the money.

{But without the oxen, the widows cannot grow crops, so they cannot repay the loans, and the evil people keep the oxen.}

⁴Poor people do not want evil people to know where they are, so they do not walk on the main roads.

Poor people stay in hiding places in order to avoid evil people.

⁵In fact, poor people have to search in the desert plain for food to feed their children,
as if they were wild donkeys.

⁶The poor people pick up leftover grain in other people's fields.

They gather leftover grapes from vineyards that evil people own.

⁷During the night they do not have thick garments to cover their bodies,
so they are not able to stay warm.

⁸{Poor people have no homes, so} when rain showers come from the mountains, they get very wet.
They have to huddle under rock ledges to shelter themselves from the rain.

⁹Some evil people even take babies away from their mothers while they are nursing!

They take the babies as a guarantee that their mothers will repay money that they have lent them.

¹⁰Poor people do not have adequate clothing.

They also do not have adequate food,

even though they carry around bundles of grain because they work to bring in other people's harvests.

¹¹Evil people hire poor people to make oil from olives that grow on olive trees on their property.

The evil people also hire poor people to tread on grapes that grow on their vines to make juice for wine.

But they do not allow the poor people to drink any of the wine when they are thirsty.

¹²In the cities, poor people groan because they are suffering.

People whom evil people have wounded cry out to God for help.

But God does not seem to care about what the evil people are doing to them.

¹³These evil people are like others who do not obey God.

They do not try to understand what God wants or to do it.

¹⁴Murderers go out in the dim light of morning so they can kill vulnerable people {without being caught}.

They are like thieves who steal things in the dark of night {in order to avoid being caught}.

¹⁵Men who want to commit adultery watch for evening to come.

They say, 'I am going to make sure that no one recognizes me,' and they disguise themselves.

¹⁶During the night, robbers find ways to get into other people's houses and steal things.

But during the day, they stay in their own homes.

They do not like being out where it is light.

¹⁷These evil people all stay at home during the day because morning is as scary for them as the dark of night is for other people.

They stay up at night because they like being awake at night when things happen that terrify others.

¹⁸However, those wicked people will not live long lives.

God will keep anything from growing on the land that they own.

No one will go and work in their vineyards.

¹⁹Just as water from melting snow dries up when it is hot and there is no rain,
those evil people will go to the place where dead people go.

²⁰When they die, maggots will eat their corpses,
and no one will remember them.

Even their mothers will forget about them!

Those wicked people will be like trees that fall down and rot.

²¹Those evil people mistreat women who do not have children to care for them.

Those evil people never help widows.

²²But God, by his power, gets rid of people who hurt others because they are stronger than those others.

When it is clear that God is going to punish those evil people, they know that they are going to die.

²³God allows them to think that they are secure, and so they do not worry,

but God is carefully watching how they live.

²⁴Those evil people may prosper for a little while,

but suddenly they will be gone.

God will show that they were not greater than others.

God will make them die like all other people.

Then they will be like stalks of grain that farmers have cut off.

²⁵What I have said is certainly true.

Now that I have explained it,

there is no one who can show that I am a liar

and prove me wrong."

Chapter 25

¹Then Bildad, Job's friend from the Shuhite people group, responded to Job. He said,

²"God is very powerful.

Everyone should honor him greatly.

God causes everything to be orderly high up in heaven.

³No one can count all the stars in the sky.

When the sun rises, it shines on everyone.

⁴Since God is so great, no person can be righteous compared with him.

No human being is innocent by his standards.

⁵Consider this: God is so glorious that he does not even consider the full moon to be bright!

Even the white light of the stars does not seem pure to him.

⁶So God would certainly not consider mortal humans to be pure!"

Chapter 26

¹Then Job replied to Bildad and the others. He said,

²"I am struggling, but you have not really helped me.

I am not able to overcome my difficulties, but you have not rescued me.

³I need good advice, but you have not given me any.

You have said many things, but they have not been helpful.

⁴I suppose you think that God helped you tell me important things.

But God was not really speaking through you.

⁵{Let me tell you how great God really is.}

The spirits of dead people tremble with fear at God.

They are deep in the earth,

below the waters where the sea creatures live.

⁶God knows all about those who are in the place where dead people go.

Nothing prevents God from seeing what is there.

⁷God created the dome of the sky to make an orderly world.

God created the dry land where previously there was nowhere for people to live.

⁸God uses clouds as containers for rainwater,

and he prevents that water from bursting the clouds.

⁹God can make clouds so thick that even the bright moon cannot shine through them.

¹⁰God has set the horizon in place as the outer edge of the oceans.

The horizon is at the place where the sky meets the earth.

¹¹Sometimes even the mountains that hold up the sky shake,

as if God were scolding them and they were afraid.

¹²God used his power to restrain the oceans;

by his skill he destroyed Rahab, the huge sea monster.

¹³God can make the sky clear by blowing away the clouds.

{God brings order everywhere in creation} by overcoming the forces of chaos.

¹⁴But I have described only a little bit of what God does.

It is as if we can only hear someone whisper about him.

When we hear mighty thunder, we realize that God is far too great for us to understand.

Chapter 27

¹Job kept speaking to his three friends. He said,

²"I will promise you something as surely as God exists, even though he has treated me unfairly.

I will promise you something as surely as Shaddai exists, even though he has made my life so unpleasant.

³I will insist on it for as long as I am alive.

Yes, for as long as I am still breathing, I will insist on it.

⁴I promise that I will not say the wrong thing!

I promise that I will not say anything to deceive anyone!

⁵And so I will never say that what you three have said about me is true.

Until the day that I die, I will insist that I have been living as God wants people to live.

⁶I will insist that I am innocent. I will never say anything different.

That way, for as long as I live, I will not feel badly about saying something that was not true.

⁷I want to be just the opposite of an evil person.

I want to disagree with the way anyone who is a bad person is living.

⁸I want to be the opposite of an evil person because

when God decides it is time for that person to die,

he can only expect that God will then punish him for the wrong things that he has done.

⁹When evil people are in trouble,

God does not rescue them when they pray for help.

¹⁰Evil people are not happy about what Shaddai does.

They do not speak with God in prayer in good times as well as in bad times.

¹¹I need to teach you three something

about how God actually deals with the people of this world.

¹²You three have certainly seen for yourselves how God treats people.

So you should not have been telling me things that have made so little sense.

¹³I will tell you how God punishes evil people.

This is what Shaddai does to those who mistreat others:

¹⁴Even if they have many children, those children will die in wars,

or they will die because they do not have enough food to eat.

¹⁵Any children who are still alive after their evil parents die will perish from diseases.

Not even the wife of an evil man will mourn for him if he dies.

¹⁶Sometimes evil people accumulate a large amount of money

and they acquire many valuable articles of clothing.

¹⁷But even if evil people become rich, they will die,

and then righteous people will get their clothes.

Honest people will get their money and share it with one another.

¹⁸The houses that they build are as weak as spider webs.

Their houses are flimsy, like the huts that watchmen live in while they guard people's fields.

¹⁹God makes evil people lose their money.

It is as if they are rich when they go to bed one night,

but the next morning they wake up to find that their money is all gone.

²⁰When evil people realize that God is punishing them,

they become very afraid, as if those fears were water in which they were drowning.

God soon destroys the evil people, as if a whirlwind carried them away in the night.

²¹It is as if a windstorm from the desert picks them up and carries them away from their homes.

No one ever sees them again.

²²It is as if a wind like that blows steadily against them

while they are running away, trying to escape from its force.

²³It is as if such a wind were clapping its hands at them to mock them.

It is as if such a wind blew them out of their houses and stayed there laughing at them.

Chapter 28

¹"There certainly are places where people dig to find silver.

There certainly are places where people refine gold that they have dug from the ground.

²People get iron from ore that they dig out of the ground.

They get copper by heating and melting ore that contains it.

³People use lamps so that they can see while they work far down under the ground.

They search for ore in many places where it is very dark.

⁴People dig shafts deep into the ground in places that are far from where other people live,

As they work underground, the people who walk above them are not aware of them.

People have to climb down ropes in order to descend into the deep shafts they have dug.

⁵Food grows on the surface of the ground.

But deep below the ground, miners make fires to break apart the rocks.

⁶The stones that people dig from under the ground contain sapphires.

The dirt they dig up contains bits of gold.

⁷Even birds that have very good eyesight can not see deep down into these mines.

Even birds such as falcons have not looked into them.

⁸Strong beasts can go wherever they want, but they have never gone to those places.

Not even lions have gone there.

⁹Miners dig through even very hard rock.

It is as though they are turning mountains upside down in order to get at the ore that is at the bases of them.

¹⁰Miners cut tunnels through rocks

in order to find many precious things.

¹¹They dam up small streams to stop the water from flowing.

That allows them to find things that were hidden beneath the water of the streams.

¹²{It takes great effort to find valuable ore.} It is even more difficult to obtain wisdom.

Yes, it is very difficult to obtain understanding.

¹³Humans do not know how to obtain wisdom.

Wisdom is not available on earth, where people live.

¹⁴It is as though the ocean depths and the water of the seas said,

'There is no wisdom here!'

¹⁵People can not buy wisdom

by paying for it with gold or silver.

¹⁶Wisdom is worth much more than fine gold that comes from the land of Ophir.

{Wisdom is worth much more} than very valuable stones.

¹⁷Wisdom is worth much more than gold or beautiful quartz.

It is more expensive than an article made of pure gold.

¹⁸Wisdom is worth more than coral or jasper.

The price of wisdom is higher than the price of rubies.

¹⁹Wisdom is worth more than topaz from the land of Cush.

One can not express the value of wisdom even in terms of gold.

²⁰So, then, wisdom is very difficult to obtain;

understanding is indeed a very valuable thing to get.

²¹Living creatures are not able to see it.

Not even the birds can see it while they are up in the sky.

²²Even after people die, they do not have a better experience of wisdom in the different place to which they go.

²³God is the only one who knows how people can become wise.

²⁴God knows this because he can see everything on earth, even in its most remote places. God can see everything that is below the sky.

²⁵He decided how strongly the winds should blow and how much rain should be in the clouds.

²⁶God decided where rain should fall and what path lightning should take from the clouds down to the ground.

²⁷At that time, he identified wisdom and recognized that it was very valuable. He was delighted by its capabilities and made it a permanent part of his creation.

²⁸Then God told human beings, 'Listen! You will become wise to the extent that you respect me. If you want to understand what you should do, you must first decide that you will not do anything wicked.'

Chapter 29

¹Job kept speaking to his three friends. He said,

²"I wish that I could be as I was previously during the time when God was taking care of me.

³During that time, it was as if God was shining a light on me so that I could see where I was going even in the darkness.

⁴At that time I was young and strong. Because God was my friend, he protected where I lived.

⁵Shaddai was still present with me during that time when all my children were still alive and living near me.

⁶My herds provided me with plenty of milk. My olive trees provided me with plenty of oil.

⁷I used to go to the place where the elders gathered at the city gate. The people had reserved a seat for me there, and I would sit in it.

⁸When young men saw me, they stepped aside respectfully. When older men saw me, they stood up respectfully.

⁹The leaders of the people used to stop talking when I arrived.

They made sure they did not say anything{, because they knew it would not be as good as what I was going to say}.

¹⁰Even the most important leaders became quiet.

It was as if they were not even able to speak.

¹¹When people heard what I had to say,

they said good things about me.

They recognized that I had given wise counsel, and they approved of me

¹²{They approved of me} because I had helped those who were poor and who were calling for help.

{They also approved of me because) I aided orphans who had no fathers to help them.

¹³People who had been suffering and were about to die praised me {for rescuing them}.

I made widows very happy by helping them.

¹⁴It was in my character to make sure that I and others did what was right.

Yes, it was in my character to make sure that people treated one another in a way that was just.

¹⁵I helped people who could not see, as if I were seeing for them.

I helped people who could not walk, as if I were walking for them.

¹⁶I protected poor people the way a father protects his children.

In the courts, I defended even people who were strangers to me.

¹⁷I made wicked people stop oppressing others.

It was as if I were breaking the jaws of a wild animal

to make it drop its victim from its teeth.

¹⁸At that time I thought, 'I am certainly going to live a long life,

and then I will die at home with my family.

¹⁹I am like a tree whose roots reach down into the water

and whose branches become wet with dew each night.

²⁰People continually honor me,

and I stay strong like a new bow.'

²¹When I spoke, people waited to hear what I would say.

They remained silent until I advised them what they should do.

²²After I finished speaking, they did not say anything,

because what I had said was so satisfying.

²³They were as eager to hear me speak as farmers are for it to rain.

They listened to me with great appreciation, just as the ground seems to welcome the rain that falls in the spring.

²⁴I helped people who felt discouraged.

I remained cheerful even as I helped them deal with difficult situations.

²⁵As their leader, I decided what things would be good for them to do.

They respected me, just as soldiers respect the king who commands their army.

I was kind and sympathetic, like someone who comforts people who are mourning.

Chapter 30

¹"But now, men who are younger than I am make fun of me.

They are men whose fathers I would not even have hired to help my dogs guard my sheep!

²And I would not hire any of those young men to work for me either.

They are already feeble.

³{No one hires them,} so they are poor and go hungry and have become thin.

They have to eat roots

that they find in places where no crops have grown for a long time.

⁴They look among bushes to find leaves that they can eat.

They pull up broom trees and eat their roots.

⁵{When they come near villages,}

people shout at them, as they would at a thief,

to make them leave their area.

⁶They have to live in riverbeds,

in holes in the ground,

and in caves on the sides of cliffs.

⁷{During the day} they huddle under thorn bushes.

There they howl like animals because they are so hungry.

⁸They are people without good sense,

and they have never achieved anything significant.

People force them to leave their towns.

⁹But these despicable young men sing songs to make fun of me!

If they think God is punishing someone for being a sinner, they call that person 'another Job.'

¹⁰They hate me and they stay away from me,

but if we happen to meet, they spit right in my face.

- ¹¹I am not able to defend myself against these young men, because God has taken away my strength.
He has humiliated me.
So they can do whatever they want to me.
- ¹²Gangs of these young men threaten me.
They shove me aside when they pass by.
They think of new ways to hurt me.
- ¹³I am not able to escape from them,
even as they keep doing worse things to me.
No one else would do the things they do to me.
- ¹⁴It is as if I were a city and they were an army that had broken through its wall
and sent in waves of troops to destroy the city.
- ¹⁵I am afraid of many things.
I have no dignity left,
and I do not expect that I will ever get out of this situation.
- ¹⁶I feel as if I am about to die,
but in the meantime, I am suffering greatly.
- ¹⁷My body aches during the night.
I feel pain continually.
- ¹⁸I have such a serious disease that my skin no longer looks the same.
It seems as if I will always be sick.
- ¹⁹God has made me suffer so much that I have been sitting here on the ground.
I am even beginning to look like the dust and ashes in which I have been sitting.
- ²⁰Even though I pray to you, God, you do not respond.
I try to get your attention, but you do not do anything to help me.
- ²¹You used to be kind to me, but you are not kind to me anymore.
You are using your mighty power to make me suffer.
- ²²It is as if you have sent a great wind to pick me up and carry me away.
It is as if you are making a violent storm blow me around.
- ²³Certainly I know that you are going to make me die.
That is what happens to everyone who ever lives.
- ²⁴However, when someone falls down, he certainly reaches out with his hand for help.

When someone is in trouble, he certainly calls for help.

²⁵{So it is appropriate for me to ask for your help now, God.}

After all, I wept for people myself when they were experiencing troubles.

I felt sorry for poor people.

²⁶I am asking for help because although I expected good things to happen to me, evil things happened instead.

It was as if I was waiting for dawn but another night started instead of a new day.

²⁷I am very distressed all the time.

I suffer during every day.

²⁸I look as if I have to work outside all day to make a living.

I humble myself by pleading openly for people to help me.

²⁹{No one wants to come near me.}

It is as if I am a jackal or ostrich living out in the wilderness.

³⁰My skin has become dark, and it is peeling off.

I have a fever that causes my body to feel as if it were burning up.

³¹Previously, if you came to my house, you would hear musical instruments playing happy songs.

If you came now, you would only hear people crying and singing sad songs.

Chapter 31

¹"I have made a solemn promise to myself that I will not look at a woman in a lustful way.

So I would not look at a woman who was not my wife and want to have sexual relations with her.

²{If I did not do what I promised,}

God who is in heaven would certainly punish me.

Shaddai in heaven would make sure that I got what I deserved.

³{I would not have done wrong in that way, because I know that} unrighteous people experience calamities.

People who do what is wrong experience disasters {when God punishes them}.

⁴I know that God sees everything that I do.

He is aware of each individual action that I take.

⁵I solemnly declare that I have not lied to others

and that I have not tried to deceive others.

⁶I only ask God to judge me fairly.

If he does that, he will find that I am innocent.

⁷I solemnly declare that I have continually acted properly.

I have not seen wrong things to do and then done them.

I am not guilty of committing sin.

⁸If I have been lustful or deceptive, I hope that when I plant seeds, someone else will harvest the crops and eat them.

Or may someone uproot the crops that are growing in my fields!

⁹I solemnly declare that I have not been attracted to another man's wife.

I have not made secret arrangements with a woman to have sexual relations with her while her husband was away.

¹⁰If I have done that, I hope that my own wife will be attracted to another man and that she will have sexual relations with him.

¹¹If I had sexual relations with another man's wife, that would be a terrible sin.

If I were caught and her husband brought me to court, the judges would certainly decide to punish me.

¹²{I would have to pay a fine that would cost me everything I owned.}

It would be as if a fire had burned everything I had right to the ground.

It would be as if someone pulled out all the crops that were growing in my fields.

¹³I solemnly declare that when my male or female servants complained to me about something,

I took their complaint seriously and made sure that I treated them fairly.

¹⁴I knew that if I did not treat my servants fairly,

I could not expect God to be merciful to me when he judged me.

If God came to help my servants,

I could offer no excuse for the way I had treated them. ¹⁵{I am no different from my servants, so I have no right to mistreat them.}

The same God created each one of us.

¹⁶⁻¹⁸I solemnly declare that from the time that I was young,

I have taken care of orphans and I have protected widows.

I have not failed to provide poor people with the things that they needed.

I have not caused widows to lose hope.

I have not eaten all of my food by myself and not shared it with orphans.

¹⁹I solemnly declare that I provided clothes for poor people when I saw that they were suffering from lack of clothing.

I have provided warm outer garments for needy people.

²⁰I gave them warm clothes that my servants had woven from the wool of my sheep.

The poor people thanked me for helping them.

²¹I solemnly declare that I never threatened an orphan who brought a case against me in the public square.

Even if I knew that the other elders would favor me,

I made sure that the orphan received fair treatment.

²²If I have neglected poor people or oppressed orphans,

may the arm {that I did not use to help them but used instead to threaten them}

fall right out of its socket!

²³I have not done wrong things such as I have been describing,

because I respect God and I know that he punishes sin.

I would not sin against such a majestic God!

²⁴I solemnly declare that I have not depended on wealth

as a source of security and power.

²⁵I solemnly declare that I did not think that I was better than other people

because I had many possessions and because I had become very rich.

²⁶I solemnly declare that I never looked at the sun when it was shining

or at the beautiful moon

²⁷and made a gesture to worship them.

I never wanted to do that.

²⁸If I had worshiped the sun or the moon and people found out that I had,

the judges would certainly decide to punish me for that too,

because I would have been worshiping a false god instead of the true God.

²⁹⁻³⁰I solemnly declare that I have not been glad when my enemies have suffered misfortunes.

I have not thought that I was better than they were when they experienced disasters.

I have not sinned by praying that God would curse people who hated me

and cause them to die.

³¹⁻³²I solemnly declare that I have invited travelers to stay in my house.

Visitors have not had to sleep in the streets.

My servants talk about how I give food to anyone who needs it.

³³I know that people generally try to hide their sins.

But I solemnly declare that I have not done that.

³⁴I did not let fear of what people would say about me or think of me

keep me from admitting that I had done wrong and making amends.

³⁵I wish that I had someone who would judge my case against God!

I hereby declare that all that I have just said is true.

Now I wish that Shaddai would state his case.

I would like to see his written statement of charges against me.

³⁶If Shaddai wrote out his charges against me,

I would not be ashamed, because I know that I am innocent.

I would display the charges publicly{, because they would actually list what I had not done}.

³⁷I would explain to God in detail

how I was innocent of each charge.

I would approach him as a ruler would: without being afraid.

³⁸I solemnly declare that I have not defrauded the people who farm my land.

They have no reason to cry out for justice against me.

³⁹I solemnly declare that I have taken only a fair share of the crops that people have grown on my land.

I have made sure that the people who grew crops on my land kept enough of them to feed their families.

⁴⁰If I have cheated the people who farm my land,

then I wish that thorns would grow in my fields instead of wheat.

I wish that bad weeds would grow there instead of barley!"

After this, Job said nothing further to defend himself to his three friends.

Chapter 32

¹Then Job's three friends stopped replying to him, because Job was confident that he was innocent. ²Then a man named Elihu{, who had been listening as Job spoke with his friends,} became very angry with Job. Elihu was the son of Barakel. He was from the Buzite people group. He belonged to the clan of Ram. He became angry because Job continued to claim that he was innocent and that God had been wrong to punish him. ³Elihu also became angry with Job's three friends. He became angry because they had insisted that Job must have done many things that were wrong, but they had not been able to prove any of their accusations. ⁴Now Elihu was much younger than Job's three friends. That was why he had let them speak to Job first. ⁵But when Elihu realized that the three men had nothing more to say to Job, he became very angry.

⁶This is what Elihu said. (He was the son of Barakel. He was from the Buzite people group.)

"I am young, and you all are much older than I am.

So I was hesitant. I was afraid to tell you what I was thinking.

⁷I said to myself, 'I should let the people who are older speak.

Older people should be able to explain how to understand things wisely.'

⁸However, even as I was saying that, I felt the Spirit of God stirring within me.

Yes, I felt Shaddai inspiring me so that I could understand.

⁹Humble people can also be wise.

Younger people can also recognize the right thing to do.

¹⁰So now I want to ask you, 'Please listen to me.

Let me too say what I have been thinking.'

¹¹Now I let the three of you speak first.

I waited while you thought carefully about what you should say,

and I listened to your arguments.

¹²I paid careful attention to what you were saying.

But in the end, none of you was able to prove that what Job said was wrong.

None of you could respond to his arguments.

¹³So do not tell yourselves, 'We have discovered what is wise!'

It is God who must show Job that he is wrong.

Someone relying on human thinking will not be able to do that.

¹⁴You were angry with Job, and so you have not answered him well.

But Job has said nothing to make me angry, so I will not answer him the way you have.

¹⁵The three of you are just sitting there in a daze, not saying anything more,

because you cannot think of what to say to Job.

¹⁶And since you are not speaking, since you have stopped answering Job,

I do not feel that I need to wait any longer before speaking to Job myself.

¹⁷So now I too will respond to Job.

I will share my view of his situation.

¹⁸I must speak, because I have plenty to say,

and something inside me is forcing me to say it.

¹⁹I feel as if I am a container of wine that is stretching more and more

and that will soon burst because of the fermentation.

²⁰I must speak, and then I will be able to rest from the effort of restraining myself from speaking.

So I will now say something in reply to all of you.

²¹I will not favor either Job or you his friends.

I will not try to flatter anyone.

²²Indeed, I have not gotten into the habit of flattering people,
because I believe that if I did that, God would quickly destroy me.

Chapter 33

¹So now, Job, I ask you to listen carefully
to everything that I am going to say.

²I am ready to speak to you and tell you what I think.

³What I say will express my sincere feelings of concern for you.
I will only tell you what is genuinely true.

⁴You can trust me as someone whom God's Spirit created.
You can trust me as someone whom Shaddai made alive.

⁵{Once I have spoken,} respond to me if you can.
Think carefully about how you will reply to me.

⁶Now you wanted God to answer you, and I will do that for him.
But I am human, just like you,

⁷so you do not need to be afraid of me.
I will not speak to you harshly.

⁸I listened carefully to you as you spoke,
and this is what I heard you say:

⁹I am righteous. I have not committed any sins.
I am innocent. I have not done things that are wrong.

¹⁰Nevertheless, God looks for excuses to punish me.
He treats me as if I were his enemy.

¹¹He judges me by very strict standards.
He closely observes everything that I do.'

¹²However, what you have said is incorrect.
I will explain why.

{You do not realize what God is actually doing, since} it is beyond human understanding.

¹³You should not be protesting that God does not respond to what anyone says.

¹⁴God actually does speak to people in various ways.
People just do not realize how he is doing that.

¹⁵Sometimes God speaks to people at night in dreams and visions
when they are sound asleep in bed.

¹⁶God reveals things to people at those times.
He shows them that they need to change the way that they have been living.

¹⁷God speaks in that way to get people to stop doing evil deeds.
God wants to prevent people from sinning because they have become proud.

¹⁸In this way, God prevents people from dying.
Otherwise, someone might kill them violently.

¹⁹God also corrects people by making them so ill that they have to lie in bed.
They feel constant agony in their bodies.

²⁰They feel so sick that they do not want to eat anything,
not even their favorite foods.

²¹They lose so much weight that there appears to be no flesh between their skin and their bones.

²²They become so sick that they are about to die.
The angels who cause people to die start coming to get them.

²³However, sometimes a special kind of angel may come to a person
and tell him on behalf of God how he can change the way that he has been living so that he will not die.

²⁴{If the person changes the way that he has been living,}
then God will forgive him.

God will tell the angels who cause people to die,
'Do not cause this person to die!
I can see that I should allow him to live, because now he will do what is right.'

²⁵When that happens, the person will become healthy again and his skin will appear as fresh as the skin of a child.
He will be as strong again as he was when he was young.

²⁶Then God will once again treat him as a righteous person.
He will pray to God, and God will answer his prayer.
He will come into God's presence joyfully.

²⁷He will sing a song of thanksgiving and tell the people who are listening,
'I sinned; yes, I did things that were not right,
but God did not punish me in the way that I deserved.'

²⁸He has saved me from going to the place where dead people are.

And so I will continue to enjoy being alive!

²⁹Indeed, God does this for many people.

³⁰He keeps them from going to the place where dead people are.

That way they can continue to enjoy being alive.

³¹So Job, please listen to me.

Do not say anything right now; just allow me to speak.

³²{After I have spoken, then} if you have something more that you want to say to me, say it, because I would like to show that you are innocent.

³³However, if you have nothing more that you want to say, then just listen to me.

I will explain to you how you can understand your situation in a wise way."

Chapter 34

¹Then Elihu continued to speak, and he said,

²"I want everyone who is wise to hear what I am about to say.

I want everyone who knows a lot to listen to me.

³I want you to listen carefully to me because when people hear others speak, they need to decide whether what the others are saying is right or wrong.

They do this just as people taste food to decide whether it is good or bad.

⁴I would like all of us to decide together who is right, Job or his friends.

I would like us to find out together what is a good way to understand his situation.

⁵We need to consider this carefully together because Job has said, 'I am innocent, but God has not judged me fairly.'

⁶Job has said he would not lie about whether he has done what is right.

He has spoken as if God had shot him with an arrow and wounded him so badly that he will die, even though he is innocent.

⁷I have not heard anyone else speak the way Job does.

People drink water to satisfy their thirst, and mocking God seems to satisfy Job.

⁸His friends are people who do what is wrong.

He spends time with wicked people.

⁹We know that this is true about him because he has said, 'It is useless for people to want to please God.'

¹⁰So, all of you who understand things well, listen to me!

God would never consider doing anything that was wicked!

No, Shaddai would never consider doing anything that was wrong!

¹¹We can be confident that God treats people fairly because we can see that he rewards or punishes people properly for what they have done.

God gives people what they deserve for the manner in which they have lived.

¹²No, God never does anything wicked.

Shaddai always treats people fairly.

¹³God did not need anyone to give him the authority to rule the people who live on the earth.

He did not need anyone to put him in control of all the people in the world.

¹⁴If God ever thought only about himself and not also about the world he created, if God ever stopped keeping people and animals alive,

¹⁵then every living thing would die immediately,

and the bodies of people would soon become soil again.

¹⁶So, Job, if you truly want to understand,

then listen carefully to what I am about to say.

¹⁷God could certainly not hate what is right and still rule the world.

So you really cannot say that God, who is righteous and powerful, has done something wrong.

¹⁸God tells some kings that they are worthless,

and he says to some officials that they are wicked.

¹⁹God does not treat rulers better than he treats other people.

God does not treat rich people more respectfully than he treats poor people.

After all, God created all people.

²⁰If people use their power to oppress others,

God punishes them by killing them.

Those people are not expecting to have troubles and die, and humans do not kill them,

but God kills them very quickly.

²¹God punishes oppressive people because he sees everything that people do.

God is aware of each individual action that a person does.

²²Wicked people can not escape from God

by hiding in places where it is very dark.

²³Now God does not need to examine a person further

before passing judgment on that person.

²⁴God does not need to investigate what people have done.

He knows whether important people have done wrong, and he destroys them if they have.

He then appoints others to take their places.

²⁵Because he already knows what they have done,

he removes them quickly and gets rid of them.

²⁶God kills them because of the wicked things that they have done.

Many people see him do it.

²⁷God kills them because they stopped doing what he wanted them to do

and did not pay attention to his commands.

²⁸They mistreated poor people.

Those poor people prayed to God for help,

and God answered their prayers.

²⁹Yet even if God decides not to punish wicked people right away,

no one can criticize him.

If God does not reveal what he is doing,

no one can understand it.

God controls every nation and every person.

³⁰God makes sure that those who rule honor him.

He makes sure that rulers do not oppress the people whom they rule.

³¹Suppose someone says to God,

'I recognize that I am suffering because I have sinned.

I do not want to sin any longer.

³²Please show me what sins I have committed.

I will stop doing anything that is evil.'

³³If a person said that to God,

do you think that God would continue to punish him?

Now you have been saying that God does not treat people fairly,

so it is important for you to decide what you think God would do.

I will not suggest the answer myself.

We would like to hear you say what you think about this.

³⁴{But unfortunately, I believe that} when people who have good sense

and people who are wise hear my question and your answer,
they will say to me,

³⁵Job is speaking ignorantly.

What he says does not make sense.'

³⁶It would be good if God put Job on trial
and investigated every last detail of his case.

God should do that because Job has been speaking just as wicked people speak.

³⁷God should put Job on trial because in addition to sinning,
he is saying that God does not treat people fairly.

Knowing that we were watching, he clapped his hands to insult God.

He has made long speeches to say that God has punished him unjustly."

Chapter 35

¹Then Elihu continued to speak, and he said,

²"Job, it is not right for you to say that you have been doing what is right
but God has been doing what is wrong.

³You are basically saying that when you ask,
'What good things have I received because I have not sinned?
How am I better off than I would be if I had sinned?'

⁴I will answer those questions for you,
and I will also respond to what your three friends have said.

⁵Job, look up at the sky.
See how high the clouds are above you!
{God is far higher than that!}

⁶So if you sin, that does not harm God at all.
Even if you do many wrong things, that does not hurt him.

⁷On the other hand, if you do what is right, that does not make God better off.
No, you are not giving God something that he does not already have.

⁸The only ones who suffer if you are wicked are other people.
The only ones you might help by being good are other humans.

⁹People call for others to help them because of the many things that wicked people do that make them suffer.

They call for help because of the things that powerful people do to oppress them.

¹⁰But people do not ask God, their Creator, to help them.

People do not expect God to enable them to sing joyful songs because he has rescued them.

¹¹People do not realize that God wants to teach them how to live wisely.

God does that for people, not for wild animals or for the birds in the sky.

¹²Even when people do pray to God for help,

God does not answer them,

because they arrogantly continue to do what is wrong.

¹³God, the Almighty One, does not respond at all

when people pray but do not really mean what they are saying.

¹⁴You are telling God that you have made your case against him

but that you are still waiting for him to answer your accusations.

You are saying that God has not been helping you.

Since you say those things, you should certainly not expect God to respond to you!

¹⁵You also say that God does not pay much attention when people commit sins,

and so he does not become angry and punish them.

¹⁶My friends, you see that Job has said things that are completely useless.

He says many things without knowing what he is talking about."

Chapter 36

¹Then Elihu said some more things to Job:

²"Job, be patient with me a little longer as I explain things to you.

Be patient, because I have more to say in order to show that God does not do anything wrong.

³I will tell you what I have learned from many sources.

I will show that God, who made me, always does what is right.

⁴You can indeed listen patiently because I will not say anything to you that is false.

I am here with you as someone who understands things well.

⁵Truly, God is very powerful, but he values every person.

He understands everything completely.

⁶He does not allow wicked people to remain alive,

but he helps people whom others have been oppressing.

⁷He always protects people who are righteous.

He makes them prosper as if they were kings,
and he causes others to honor them continually.

⁸Sometimes people suffer great troubles because they have done wrong things.

⁹When they do, God shows them what they have done wrong.

He shows them that they committed these sins because they were proud.

¹⁰He enables them to understand what he is teaching them.

He commands them to stop sinning.

¹¹If they obey him and once again live as he wishes,
they will prosper and be happy for as long as they live.

¹²But if they do not obey him,

they will die violently

because they did not seek to understand how God wanted them to live.

¹³People who do not respect God continue to be angry with God.

They do not ask God to help them

even when they are suffering because of their sins.

¹⁴They can only make a living in a dishonorable way,

and they die while they are still young.

¹⁵God actually uses suffering to keep people from perishing because of their sins.

By making them suffer, he causes them to listen to what he is telling them.

¹⁶Job, I believe that God wants to bring you out of your troubles

and allow you to live without distress.

He wants you to be happy and prosperous.

¹⁷However, you are still saying bad things about God the way a wicked person would.

That is why God is punishing you so severely.

¹⁸You are angry with God, but do not let that lead you to say disrespectful things about God.

If you did that, God would not accept even a very large bribe to pardon you.

¹⁹God would not want your money and so pardon you.

He would not take gold or a great deal of money as a bribe.

²⁰You should not wish that you could die so that your suffering would be over.

Once people die, they are gone.

²¹Be careful not to commit sin.

It seems that you would rather defy God than learn what he wants to teach you through suffering.

²²Truly, God is so powerful that he can do great things.

He is better than any other teacher.

²³No one has ever told him what he should do.

No one has ever had to tell him that what he was doing was wrong.

²⁴People have often sung songs to praise him.

You too should remember what he has done and praise him for it.

²⁵Everyone has seen what God has done,

but even so, people only understand it a little.

²⁶How great God is! We are not able to understand how great he is,

and we are not able to determine how old he is.

²⁷Indeed, God draws water up from the earth and puts it in clouds

and causes it to become rain.

²⁸This rain pours down from the clouds

and abundant showers fall on the earth, where people live.

²⁹No one can really understand how the clouds spread across the sky

or how it thunders in the sky where God lives.

³⁰See how God causes lightning to flash all around him!

The lightning is so bright that it lights up even the deep ocean.

³¹Because his storms are so great, God uses them to punish wicked people.

But he also uses the rain from these storms to provide abundant food for righteous people.

³²It is as if God picks up lightning in his hands

and sends it to strike where he wants it to.

³³God makes thunder to announce that there will be a storm.

We also know that a storm is coming when we hear cattle making extra noise.

Chapter 37

¹My heart really pounds when I think about that!

I feel as if it is jumping around inside me.

²Listen, all of you, to the thunder!

It is as if God is roaring!

³God makes such loud thunder that people can hear it throughout the land.

God makes such bright lighting that people can see it from far away.

⁴After lightning flashes, we hear thunder,

which sounds like God speaking very loudly.

Then, after the thunder, God makes more lightning.

⁵When we hear thunder, it is as if God is shouting in an amazing way.

God does things that are too wonderful for us to understand.

⁶For example, God can cause snow to cover the ground,

and when he tells a rain shower to rain even harder, it becomes a downpour.

⁷When God makes it rain so hard, everyone has to stop working outside.

This shows all people, whom he has made, what great things he is able to do.

⁸When it rains, the animals go into their hiding places

and they stay there until the rain stops.

⁹Storms come from the place where they start,

and cold winds come from the north.

¹⁰In the winter, cold winds turn water into ice.

The water in lakes freezes solid.

¹¹God truly fills the clouds with water droplets.

He makes lightning flash from many clouds.

¹²He causes the clouds to move around over the places where people live

so that they can accomplish everything that he wants them to do.

¹³God may send storms to punish people.

God may send storms to water the land that he made.

God may send storms to help people by providing rain to make their crops grow.

God makes all of these things happen.

¹⁴Job, listen to what I am saying.

Just think about the wonderful things that God does.

¹⁵Are you able to explain how God arranges the clouds in the sky and makes lightning flash down from them?

¹⁶Are you able to explain how God is able to make clouds float in the sky?

Can you understand all of the wonderful things that God does?

God understands everything completely!

¹⁷Are you able to explain how God can bring in stifling air from the desert and make it so hot that you cannot stay cool if you wear clothes?

¹⁸Are you able to explain how God made the sky so that it would stay firmly in place above the earth?

¹⁹I doubt that you could tell us what to say to God.

People do not know enough to be able to defend themselves if they spoke with God.

²⁰I would not dare tell God that I needed to speak with him!

If I did that, then he might destroy me!

²¹You know that people can not look directly at the sun when it shines brightly in the sky after the wind has blown the clouds away.

²²When God appears, he has glittering light all around him.

His glory is so bright that it makes us afraid.

{So if we cannot even look at the sun, how could we look at God?}

²³Shaddai has very great power,
and we do not know how to get near to him.
He always acts righteously,
and he never mistreats anyone.

²⁴That is why everyone should have great respect for him.

Any people who think that they are wise do not impress him."

Chapter 38

¹Then Yahweh spoke to Job from inside the storm that had been approaching. He said to him,

²"You have been speaking ignorantly, and as a result,
you have been making it harder for people to understand my actions.

³I am going to ask you some questions,
so get ready to answer them directly.

⁴Where were you when I began to create the earth?
Since you claim to know so much, tell me how I did that.

⁵Who decided how large the earth would be?
Who made sure that it was the right size?

If you know as much as you claim, you ought to be able to tell me that.

⁶⁻⁷What keeps the earth from collapsing?

Who made sure that everything on the earth would be in the right position?

The earth was so beautiful when I made it that it was as if the first stars all sang a song to celebrate it.

All of the angels gave a great cheer when they saw the earth.

⁸When I made the land, the sea could have flowed over it.

Who prevented the sea from flooding the earth? ⁹Now the clouds in the sky float over the sea as if they were its clothing.

Night and day happen at sea just as they do on land.

¹⁰I decided how much of the area under the sky the sea would cover.

I made barriers at the shore of the sea to keep it off the land.

¹¹I proclaimed that the sea could only come up so far on the shore and not come any farther.

I said that its great waves could only flow up to a certain place on the land.

¹²Job, have you ever commanded a day to begin?

Have you told the sun where it needed to rise on a certain day?

¹³When day comes, wicked people all around the world

stop doing the bad things they do at night when no one can see them.

¹⁴In the light of day, people can see the hills and valleys on earth clearly.

The earth seems to take shape the way clay takes shape when people press a seal onto it or the way folds form in clothing.

¹⁵When daylight comes, wicked people do not have the darkness that they like.

They are no longer able to hurt other people.

¹⁶Job, have you traveled to the springs at the bottom of the sea?

Have you gone and seen what is at the very bottom of the oceans?

¹⁷Has someone shown you how to get to the place where dead people are?

Do you know where the entrance to that dark place is?

¹⁸Do you know how big the earth is?

Tell me, if you know all these things!

¹⁹Do you know how to get to the place where light comes from?

Do you know where darkness comes from?

²⁰Would you know how to get to those places

so that you could bring light and darkness to them?

²¹If you had been alive when I created the world, then you would know the answers to these questions.

But you are not that old, so you certainly do not know the answers.

²²Have you gone into the place where I keep snow,

or have you visited the place where I keep hail?

²³I keep snow and hail so that I can use them to defeat one of the armies

when people are fighting wars.

²⁴Would you know how to get to the place where the sun should rise each morning?

Would you know where the east wind should begin to blow over the earth?

²⁵Could you make rain fall in a certain place?

Could you make a rainstorm go in a certain direction

²⁶so that it would rain out in the desert,

in a place where no one lives?

²⁷Would you be able to send rain there to water those barren areas where nothing has grown,

so that grass would begin to grow again?

²⁸Do you even know where rain comes from?

Do you know how dew forms on the ground overnight?

²⁹Do you know how water becomes ice in the winter?

Do you know why dew turns into the frost that covers the ground in the winter?

³⁰Do you know why the surface of lakes freezes in the winter?

You cannot see the water below the surface; it is as if there is a layer of stone on top of it.

³¹Can you make stars cluster together, as they do in the cluster you call the Pleiades?

Can you make stars move apart so that they no longer make constellations such as the one you call Orion? ³²Can you make the constellations of stars appear in the sky at the right time of the year?

Can you make the Big Dipper with its handle appear in the right place in the sky?

³³Do you know how the sun, moon, and stars should move through the sky?

Do you know how they should provide heat and light on the earth?

³⁴Could you shout an order up to a cloud

to make it pour rain down on you?

³⁵Can you tell flashes of lightning to strike wherever you want?

Would the lightning do what you commanded?

³⁶Can you determine where it should be cloudy and where it should be sunny?

³⁷Are you able to count how many clouds there are?

Can you make it rain

³⁸after it has not rained for such a long time

that the ground is hard and dry?

³⁹⁻⁴⁰Suppose a lioness and her cubs were crouching in their den or hiding in some bushes, waiting for some animal to pass by that they could kill.

Could you make an animal go by that the lioness could kill

so that she and her cubs could eat the meat and not be hungry anymore?

⁴¹Suppose some baby ravens in a nest were chirping loudly because they were hungry.

Suppose they had not eaten in so long that they had become weak.

Could you provide a dead animal whose meat the raven could bring home to its baby birds?

Chapter 39

¹Job, can you tell when female mountain goats are about to give birth?

Have you watched the wild deer while their calves were being born?

²Do you know for how long these female animals will be pregnant? Do you know when they will have their babies?

³They crouch down to give birth,
and their babies come out.

⁴The young animals grow up in the open fields.
Once they are strong enough to leave their mothers,
they do not return to them again.

⁵Do you know why some donkeys wander around wild?
Do you know why they are not still working for people?

⁶I have given them a home in the desert plain.
They are able to live in places where much grass does not grow.

⁷These wild donkeys do not like the noise in the cities.
In the desert, they do not have to listen to the shouts of those who used to force them to work.

⁸They wander over the hills to find food.
They look for any plant that they can eat.

⁹There are also oxen that are wild.

You could not get one of those to work for you!

It would not stay penned up at night by the place where you put food for your animals!

¹⁰You could not make a wild ox pull a plow

so that it would dig furrows in your fields.

¹¹Even though a wild ox is very strong,

you could not depend on it to do difficult farm work.

¹²A wild ox would not help you

to grow more crops than you could grow by yourself.

¹³Now think about ostriches.

They run very fast, flapping their wings as they go.

But they do not take good care of their offspring.

¹⁴Female ostriches are bad mothers, because lay their eggs and leave them on the ground.

The eggs do stay warm in the sand.

¹⁵But this is still not a good thing to do.

Some wild animal could step on the eggs and crush them.

¹⁶Ostriches do not care well for their chicks.

They act as if the chicks do not belong to them.

They do not seem to be concerned that their chicks might die

and they would have laid their eggs for nothing.

¹⁷Ostriches act this way because I did not give them good instincts.

I did not enable them to understand how they should care for their eggs and chicks.

¹⁸However, ostriches are still awesome birds.

When they run, they can easily run faster than horses!

¹⁹But I made horses to be very strong.

I put beautiful flowing manes on their necks.

²⁰I enabled them to leap through the air as if they were locusts.

They snort so loudly that they cause people to be afraid.

²¹As horses prepare to rush into battle,

they paw the ground, showing off their great strength.

²²Horses seem to disregard danger as they go bravely into battle.

They do not run away when enemy soldiers attack them.

²³As horses run into battle,
the quivers containing their riders' arrows rattle against their sides.
The spears and javelins that they are carrying flash in the sunlight.

²⁴Horses rush into battle as soon as an officer blows a horn to signal that the army should advance.
The horses run very quickly, and they speedily reach the enemy lines.

²⁵When they hear someone blow the battle horn, horses neigh excitedly.
They can smell a battle even from a distance.
They hear commanders shouting orders to their soldiers {and they know the battle will begin soon}.

²⁶Now think about birds that hunt small animals and other birds.
Do you know how hawks are able to stay in the air as if they were floating?
Do you know how they sense when it is time to fly to a warmer place for the winter?

²⁷I gave eagles the ability to fly high up into the cliffs and build their nests there.

²⁸Eagles live on cliffs.
They are safe among the high, pointed rocks there because no animals can get to them.

²⁹From that great height, eagles look for animals that they can kill and eat.
They can see animals that are far away.

³⁰Eagles kill small animals and bring them back to their nests to feed their chicks.
Eagles also go and eat dead bodies that they see lying on the ground."

Chapter 40

¹Yahweh continued to speak to Job. He said,
²"Do you still think I am wrong and want to keep arguing with me?
If you want to keep criticizing me, then answer the questions I have asked you!"

³But Job replied to Yahweh,
⁴"Now I realize how insignificant I am. I am not able to answer your questions.
I will not say anything in response to them.

⁵I have already said more than I should have said.
So now I will say nothing more."

⁶Then Yahweh again spoke to Job from inside the storm. He said,
⁷"I am going to ask you some more questions, so get ready to answer them directly.

⁸Do you still want to govern the universe instead of me?

Do you still want to insist that I am doing things wrong and that you would do them right?

⁹Do you have the same amount of power as I do?

Does your voice sound as loud as thunder, as mine does?

¹⁰If you want to govern the universe, you must show that you are dignified and noble.

You must show that your character is glorious and beautiful.

¹¹You must express holy wrath against the people who deserve it.

You must recognize which people are being sinfully arrogant and take them out of important positions.

¹²Yes, you must not allow arrogant people to remain in important positions.

Destroy wicked people quickly!

¹³Punish all of them by killing them.

Then send them to the place where dead people go.

¹⁴If you did that, I would congratulate you
and admit that you could save yourself by your own ability.

¹⁵{But to show you how insignificant you really are,}

I want you to think about a great animal that I created, Behemoth.

I made you, and I also made it.

Even though this great beast has the size and strength to hunt and kill other animals, it eats plants as oxen do.

¹⁶Think about how strong the legs of Behemoth are!

And the muscles in its belly are very powerful.

¹⁷Behemoth can make its tail as stiff as the branch of a cedar tree and hold it up in the air.

It has very strong legs.

¹⁸Its thigh bones are so strong that they are like tubes made of bronze.

Its legs are so strong that they are like bars made of iron.

¹⁹Behemoth is one of the strongest animals that I made.

I gave it sharp tusks so that it could cut down plants and eat them.

²⁰It needs those tusks because it comes out of the river where it lives in order to eat the plants that grow nearby.

But other animals do not have to be afraid of it, so those animals do not run away or hide.

²¹Behemoth lies under the trees that grow near the river where it lives.

It sometimes shelters in the tall reeds that grow in the swamps of the river.

²²Behemoth stays in the shade of trees that grow near the river.

It stays in the midst of the trees that grow near the water.

²³Even when the river in which it lives become strong and turbulent, this does not disturb Behemoth.
It does not mind even if the level of the water in the river rises very high.

²⁴No one could capture Behemoth even if he could get close enough to stand right in front of it.
No one can make Behemoth a tame animal.

Chapter 41

¹{And now I want you to think about another great animal that I created, Leviathan.}

You cannot catch Leviathan with a fishhook,
and you cannot tie rope around its jaws to hold them closed!

²You cannot hook its jaws to catch it
and then put cords through its nose to control it.

³Leviathan would certainly not plead with you to act mercifully toward it!
It would not use sweet talk to try to get you not to harm it!

⁴Leviathan would certainly not make an agreement to work for you
as your slave for as long as it lived!

⁵You could not turn it into a pet, as people do with birds!
You could not put a leash around its neck so that the young women in your household could take it for walks!

⁶People who work together to catch fish could never catch Leviathan and then decide what share of it belonged to each of them.

They would never get the chance to cut Leviathan into pieces and then sell its meat!

⁷People cannot throw harpoons hard enough at Leviathan to pierce its hide!
People cannot throw fishing spears into its head!

⁸If you try to fight with Leviathan, it will give you a battle that you will never forget!
You will never try to do that again!

⁹It is useless even to hope to subdue Leviathan.
Just the sight of it is enough to make a person become so afraid that he falls down.

¹⁰No one is so foolhardy that he would wake up Leviathan if it were sleeping. {It would angrily attack him.}
Since that is true, it is even more foolhardy to challenge me{, as you have done}.

¹¹{Even if people are righteous,} they have not done anything for me
that obligates me to make only good things happen to them.
Everything in the created world belongs to me{, so no one can give me anything that I have to repay.}

¹²And now I want to speak to you further.

{You said that you wanted to wake up Leviathan! As I said, that would be very foolish.}

It has agile legs and great strength and a graceful shape.

¹³It has a tough hide that no one can strip off.

It has powerful jaws.

¹⁴Those jaws have terrible teeth in them!

No one can pry them open when they are closed{, and no one can release them when they bite onto something.}

¹⁵It has rows of scales on its back

with no gaps between them.

¹⁶Those scales are so close together

that it seems as if not even air can get between them.

¹⁷Those scales join very closely to each other

and they do not pull apart.

¹⁸When Leviathan makes a loud sound, fire comes out of its mouth as well as noise.

It has bright, scary eyes that seem to glow with fire.

¹⁹When it breathes,

it shoots out flames and fiery sparks.

²⁰Smoke pours out of its nostrils

the way steam pours out of a pot of boiling water over a hot fire.

²¹Flames shoot out from its mouth,

so when it breathes on wood, the wood catches fire.

²²Its neck is very strong.

Wherever it goes, it makes people very afraid.

²³Leviathan does not have a soft belly as other animals do.

Scales wrap around its belly and hold it tightly to its body.

²⁴It does not feel any compassion,

any more than a stone would feel compassion

or the lower millstone on which people grind grain would feel compassion.

²⁵When Leviathan rises up out of the ocean,

the bravest people become terrified.

When sailors see it churning up the water,

they sail away as fast as they can.

²⁶People cannot injure it with swords.

They cannot injure it with spears, arrows, or other weapons that have sharp points, either.

²⁷An iron weapon could not hurt it any more than straw could.

A bronze weapon could not hurt it any more than a weapon made of rotten wood.

²⁸Shooting arrows at it does not cause it to flee.

Hurling stones at it from a sling is like hurling bits of chaff at it.

²⁹A club that someone might use against it would not hurt it any more than chaff would.

It can ignore any spear that someone might throw at it.

³⁰Scales as sharp as broken pieces of pottery cover its belly.

When it drags itself through the mud,

these scales tear up the ground.

³¹As it swims through the deep water of the ocean,

it churns it into foam,

as if it were boiling water or ointment that someone was stirring.

³²As it swims through the water, it creates a glistening wake.

The churning water is like white hair on top of the deep sea.

³³There is nothing in the world like Leviathan.

I created it in such a way that it would not be afraid of anything.

³⁴Nothing else scares it, no matter how powerful that thing may be.

It is greater than the greatest of other creatures."

Chapter 42

¹Then Job replied to Yahweh. He said,

²"Now I realize that you can do anything you want.

No one can stop you from doing what you want to do.

³You told me that I had been speaking ignorantly, and that as a result, I was making it harder for people to understand your actions.

I will admit that I was speaking about things that I did not understand.

Those things were very amazing,

and I did not really know what I was talking about.

⁴You told me that I should listen and let you talk because you were going to ask me some questions. You wanted me to try to answer them.

{But I will admit that I am not able to answer the questions you asked.}

⁵I had previously heard many things about you.

But now I have actually seen you!

⁶Therefore I am ashamed of myself for what I said.

I am sitting in dust and ashes to show that I am sorry for what I said."

⁷When Yahweh had finished speaking with Job, he spoke to Eliphaz, Job's friend from the town of Teman. He said, "I am very angry with you and your two friends. I am angry because you did not say true things about me the way Job did. He serves me faithfully. ⁸So now you must bring seven young bulls and seven rams to Job, that man who serves me faithfully. While he is with you, kill these animals and burn them as a sacrifice for yourselves. Then Job will pray for you, and I will do what he asks me to do for you. I will not punish you for speaking foolishly about me. You deserve for me to punish you because you did not say the right things about me as Job did. He serves me faithfully." ⁹So Eliphaz, Job's friend from the town of Teman; Bildad, Job's friend from the Shuhite people group; and Zophar, Job's friend from the town of Naamah, did what Yahweh had commanded them to do. Then Job prayed for his friends, and Yahweh forgave them as Job asked him to do.

¹⁰After Job had prayed for his three friends, Yahweh healed him and made him wealthy again. Yahweh gave him twice as much wealth as he had before. ¹¹Then Job's family and friends came to his house and had a feast with him. All of his brothers and sisters came, and all of his former acquaintances also came. They cheered him up now that all of the troubles were over that Yahweh had allowed to happen to him. Each of them gave Job a valuable piece of silver and a gold earring.

¹²Yahweh blessed Job more in the second part of his life than he had blessed him in the first part of his life. Job acquired 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 pairs of oxen, and 1,000 female donkeys. ¹³Job also had seven more sons and three more daughters. ¹⁴He named the first daughter Jemimah. He named the second daughter Keziah. And he named the third daughter Keren Happuch. ¹⁵Job's three daughters were the most beautiful women in the whole land of Uz. As their father, Job declared that his daughters would each receive an inheritance from him, just as their brothers would.

¹⁶After God restored Job's prosperity, he lived for 140 more years. His new children had children of their own. Then his grandchildren had children of their own, so Job was even able to get to know his great-grandchildren. ¹⁷Job finally died after living a good long life.

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