

# Job

## [Part 5]

**Job 23:1-2** [New King James] *“Then Job answered and said: ‘Even today my complaint is bitter; my hand is listless because of my groaning.’”*

**Job is no rebel against God, he does not complain for the sheer joy of complaining. Job is making a real effort to restrain his cries of protest, but his misery has wrung them out of him.**

**Job 23:3-7** [New King James] *“Oh, that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come to His seat! I would present my case before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which He would answer me, and understand what He would say to me. Would He contend with me in His great power? No! But He would take note of me. There the upright could reason with Him, and I would be delivered forever from my Judge.”*

If Job does rebel, it is against what seems to be God’s arbitrary wrath. Thus he expresses a passionate longing to find the God of grace. Such a God would deal intelligibly with him, meeting out justice to his cause and not numbing him by a parade of sheer power.

**The wistful cry of these verses from a man seeking to find God can only be answered by Jesus Christ, in Whom God takes the initiative to find human beings, [John 14:6-11].**

**Job 23:8-9** [New King James] *“Look, I go forward, but He is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; when He works on the left hand, I cannot behold Him; when He turns to the right hand, I cannot see Him.”*

The frustration of Job’s longing to find God is expressed, yet his untiring efforts are fruitless.

**Job 23:10-12** [New King James] *“But He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot has held fast to His steps; I have kept His way and not turned aside. I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.”*

**Job understands his life is “wide open” to God and Job knows that gold comes from refining fires of suffering, not as his friends maintain, Job being punished for his sins.**

As always, Job comes back to his complete trust in the Eternal Creator God, and a deep respect for Who and What He is, [**Job 23:13-17**].

**Job 24:1** [New King James] *“Since times are not hidden from the Almighty, why do those who know Him see not His days?”*

Job puts his problem in a world setting, various classes of wrongdoers are mentioned. Why is God not intervening and bringing about justice?

**Job 24:25** [New King James] *“Now if it is not so, who will prove me a liar, and make my speech worth nothing?”*

**Job points to a future where God will change what is happening on this earth. That is at present under the influence of Satan, limited by God as we have seen, until the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, [1 John 5:19; Revelation 20:1-3, 10].**

The Eternal Creator God, as we are seeing in the life experience of Job, is using Satan as a means of causing us to draw near to Him as we fight against Satan’s attacks.

**1 Peter 5:6-9** [New King James] *“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.”*

**God will give us victory over Satan if we humble ourselves before Him and look for His help in this fight against the sin that Satan prompts in our minds.**

**Job 25:1-6** [New King James] *“Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said: ‘Dominion and fear belong to Him; He makes peace in His high places. Is there any number to His armies? Upon whom does His light not rise? How then can man be righteous before God? Or how can he be pure who is born of a woman? If even the moon does not shine, and the stars are not pure in His sight, how much less man, who is a maggot, and a son of man, who is a worm?’”*

Bildad strives to bring Job to his knees before the might of God, reminding him that even the mightiest heavenly bodies must tremble before Him. Subdued and convicted how can insignificant and corrupt human beings hope to look up unafraid of what the light may reveal in their darkened world, the product of Satan’s lies? [**John 8:44**]

**2 Corinthians 4:3-4** [New King James] *“But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.”*

Satan who is the present ruler of human beings has blinded or caused darkness to cover the good news of what God has done for all humanity through the life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**Job 26:1-4** [New King James] *“But Job answered and said: ‘How have you helped him who is without power? How have you saved the arm that has no strength? How have you counselled one who has no wisdom? And how have you declared sound advice to many? To whom have you uttered words? And whose spirit came from you?’”*

**Embodied with pointed sarcasm, Job asks how words of wisdom offered by his friends has helped him who has lost all family and possessions and sits there wracked with pain. What spirit motivated their words?**

Job then speaks of the great divine power to Whom he is looking for help and vindication, [**Job 26:5-14**].

**Job 27:1-6** [New King James] *“Moreover Job continued his discourse, and said: ‘As God lives, who has taken away my justice, and the Almighty, who has made my soul bitter, as long as my breath is in me, and the breath of God in my nostrils, my lips will not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit. Far be it from me that I should say you are right; till I die I will not put away my integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me as long as I live.’”*

Job again repudiates the charges insinuated directly affirmed by his friends. Job still calls God “my God,” the God who gave him life, the God whom he is tempted to imagine is forsaking him. Job’s faith in God does **not** falter, he cannot doubt the reality of the Eternal Almighty Creator God, or the fact that He is in total control of all that happens.

**What puzzles Job is the application of God’s government towards him, which cannot be explained by his sinfulness.**

Job then between the affirmation of his innocence, he gives us a picture of the end of the wicked, [**Job 27:8-23**].

We have no parallel to these verses in Job's speeches in any part of the book, on the other hand, this passage would sound perfectly in place on the lips of Job's friends.

"*Like a booth,*" [verse 18] refers to the flimsy construction erected by the night-watchman in a vineyard.

"*Clap their hands,*" is a token of indignation, [Numbers 24:10].

**Job chapter 28** is a fine poem on wisdom which is meant to teach that wisdom is beyond the reach of human beings unless their quest is carried on within the fear of the Eternal Creator God, [Job 28:28].

The physical earth cannot work out the answer to the question, "*where is wisdom found?*" [verse 12].

Wisdom cannot be bought, [verses 15-19].

**Job 28:22** [New King James] "*Destruction and Death say, 'We have heard a report about it with our ears.'*"

**No humans in the past who have died and in their graves knew wisdom, only a rumour of its existence was theirs.**

**Job 28:23-28** [New King James] "*God understands its way, and He knows its place. For He looks to the ends of the earth, and sees under the whole heavens, to establish a weight for the wind, and apportion the waters by measure. When He made a law for the rain, and a path for the thunderbolt, then He saw wisdom and declared it; He prepared it, indeed, He searched it out. And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.'*"

**God alone knows wisdom and He will make it available only to those who fear Him and are obedient to Him.**

**James 3:13-17** [New King James] "*Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.*"

**Any human wisdom is influenced by Satan and is based on lies, [John 8:44] and cannot have good and righteous results.**

**Only wisdom from the Holy Spirit, Who is only available to those who obey God, [Acts 5:32] will have good and righteous results.**

This Godly wisdom is only found in the Word of God, the Christian Bible, especially in the wisdom books, Job, Psalms, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

The starting point of Godly wisdom is shown to us in **Proverbs 1:7-9**.

**Job 29:1** [New King James] "*Job further continued his discourse, and said:*"

Job looks back to the days before the tragic and painful events destroyed this past life. The sources of Job's happiness are portrayed skilfully.

**Job 29:2-4** [New King James] "*Oh, that I were as in months past, as in the days when God watched over me; when His lamp shone upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness; just as I was in the days of my prime, when the friendly counsel of God was over my tent;*"

"*In the days when God watched over me,*" was at the heart of past happiness.

Job's present misery is explained by his feeling that God was no longer watching over him positively, or if watching, only with unreasonably critical eyes.

Job had been a domestically happy person, [verse 5].

Job had been a prosperous man. The "rock pouring out oil" refers to the fact that olive trees thrive in rocky soil and that oil presses are hewn out of the rock.

Job had been a universally respected man, [verses 7-10, 21-25].

Job who was a man "watched over by God" was scrupulous in watching over the interests of the needy, even strangers could depend on his help, [verses 11-17].

In all his activities, righteousness was Job's garment and justice his turban.

**Job's anticipations for the future at that time had been rudely shattered by the calamities that suddenly destroyed his way of life.**

**Job 30:1** [New King James] *"But now they mock at me, men younger than I, whose fathers I disdained to put with the dogs of my flock."*

The very young ignorant youths who in the past he would have never employed, were now mocking his condition.

The "grey" life now stands in deep contrast to the past "golden days."

These young men who were mocking Job were still unemployable by other families, [verses 2-8] refusing them even a place to lay their head.

Such is the lot of people who are unknown and unloved, who take revenge by targeting Job with crude contempt, [verses 9-10].

**Job 30:11** [New King James] *"Because He has loosed my bowstring and afflicted me, they have cast off restraint before me."*

Job links this onslaught of the rabble with unrestrained humiliation at the hands of God.

**Job 30:12-15** [New King James] *"At my right hand the rabble arises; they push away my feet, and they raise against me their ways of destruction. They break up my path, they promote my calamity; they have no helper. They come as broad breakers; under the ruinous storm they roll along. Terrors are turned upon me; they pursue my honour as the wind, and my prosperity has passed like a cloud."*

The rabble distressing Job appears as a beleaguered city making escape impossible and pouring through breached city walls.

**Job 30:16-18, 30** [New King James] *"And now my soul is poured out because of my plight; the days of affliction take hold of me. My bones are pierced in me at night, and my gnawing pains take no rest. By great force my garment is disfigured; it binds me about as the collar of my coat." ... "My skin grows black and falls from me; my bones burn with fever."*

Misery is also from within in the form of tormenting burning pains of his disease.

Job's shrunken frame causes his garments to hang loosely on him, [verse 18] or it could mean that certain abnormally swollen parts of his otherwise emancipated body cause the garment to fit tightly.

**Job 30:19** [New King James] *"He has cast me into the mire, and I have become like dust and ashes."*

This tempest of trouble is sweeping Job forward to the house of death, [verses 20-23].

**Job 30:24** [New King James] *“Surely He would not stretch out His hand against a heap of ruins, if they cry out when He destroys it.”*

The Hebrew gives us the sense of a drowning person who is grasping at a straw.

**Job 30:25-26** [New King James] *“Have I not wept for him who was in trouble? Has not my soul grieved for the poor? But when I looked for good, evil came to me; and when I waited for light, then came darkness.”*

Underlying these verses we hear, *“if only God has dealt with me as generously as I have dealt with others, how different my present position would be!”*

Job’s feelings are in ferment, [**verse 27**] and sorrow has taken the place of the gladness of old, [**verses 28 and 31**].

Job makes six main claims for his former life.

Job was untainted by immorality, [**Job 31:1-3**].

Job’s external conduct had been no purer than his secret thoughts, [**verses 7-9**].

Adultery appears in a terrible light and deserves punishment of God.

The purity of Job’s actions emerged from a background of the *“fear of God, that is wisdom,”* [**Job 28:28**].

Adultery also deserves the punishment of human beings, for it is an offence not only to God but also to society.

*“Grind for another”* [**verse 10**] refers to the lowest form of bondage, that of a slave woman at the mill, [**Exodus 11:5**] and other men may sleep with her.

**Job 31:12** [New King James] *“For that would be a fire that consumes to destruction, and would root out all my increase.”*

Adultery is a fire that has in it the threat of indiscriminate destruction, a man’s health, home and happiness, [**Proverbs 6:27-28**].

Job’s servants always received fair pay from him, for he remembers that there was a God in heaven to whom he was answerable, the Creator of both master and servant, [**verses 13-15**]. This stands out as a gem because of its social consciousness, [**Proverbs 14:31; Proverbs 22:2**].

Job’s kindness was **not** confined to the walls of his own household, it went out to seek and save the needy, the poor, the widows and the fatherless, [**Job 31:16-21**].

No Lazarus was allowed to lie at Job’s gate, unnoticed and un-helped, [**Luke 16:20**].

Job was given to hospitality, [**Job 31:31-32**] when there was no chance of any return, [**Luke 14:12-14**].

Job was untainted by riches, Job made friends by means of *“the unrighteous mammon,”* [**Luke 16:9**] but his attitude towards his riches **never** ran the risk of the warning in **Matthew 6:19-21, 24**.

Job was untainted by secret hankering after idols, [**Job 31:26-28**].

Job was untainted by bitterness towards his enemies, [**Job 31:29-30**].

Job was untainted by insincerity, never cloaking offences because he dreaded the disapproval of great families, [**Job 31:33-34**].

Job had **no** fear of an indictment, he would carry it into court with a princely, confident step, entering the presence of the adversary whom he had found so elusive, ready to give him an exact account of his daily walk, [**Job 31:35-37**].

Job is claiming that he is guiltless of such charges as his friends have sought to fasten on him; he even goes further and says in effect, “*even if the land had a voice, no more could it condemn me,*” [**verses 38-40**].

### **The speeches of Elihu –**

There is no mention of Elihu in the prologue or epilogue, there are also linguistic and stylistic differences from the rest, also it is maintained that these speeches add nothing to what has gone before, so some scholars maintain this Elihu section was an interpolation, writing with the knowledge of the activities of Satan mentioned in the prologue.

**Job 32:1-5** [New King James] “*So these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. Then the wrath of Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, was aroused against Job; his wrath was aroused because he justified himself rather than God. Also against his three friends his wrath was aroused, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job. Now because they were years older than he, Elihu had waited to speak to Job. When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, his wrath was aroused.*”

Elihu respected the age difference between him and the other three friends of Job and remained silent until the three failed to answer Job’s needs.

Characteristics of the Elihu speeches are a profound atmosphere of reverence for the Eternal Creator God, a view of sin deeper than that which appears elsewhere in the speeches of Job’s other friends and the appearance of God as a Teacher, [**Job 35:11; Job 36:22**] intent on leading humans through the discipline of suffering to a wiser way of life.

**These speeches also expose Job’s most potentially dangerous characteristic, that of spiritual pride, [**Job 33:17; Job 35:12; Job 36:22**].**

**Job 32:6-9** [New King James] “*So Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, answered and said: ‘I am young in years, and you are very old; therefore I was afraid, and dared not declare my opinion to you. I said, “Age should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.” But there is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding. Great men are not always wise, nor do the aged always understand justice.’”*

The “*spirit in man*” is what separates humans from other mammals, **not** understood by science or evolution.

[Please download and study the article ‘*What Science Cannot Tell Us About Human Life*’ listed under main heading ‘*Life*.’ You will be eternally grateful you did.]

**Job 32:10-12** [New King James] “*Therefore I say, ‘Listen to me, I also will declare my opinion.’ Indeed I waited for your words, I listened to your reasonings, while you searched out what to say. I paid close attention to you; and surely not one of you convinced Job, or answered his words,”*

Elihu reminds Job’s three friends that they have failed to pierce Job’s defence and solve his lack of understanding why he was in the situation he was.

Elihu is bursting with a desire to explain what is Job’s main problem, [**Job 32:13-22**].

**Job 33:1-6** [New King James] *“But please, Job, hear my speech, and listen to all my words. Now, I open my mouth; my tongue speaks in my mouth. My words come from my upright heart; my lips utter pure knowledge. The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life. If you can answer me, set your words in order before me; take your stand. Truly I am as your spokesman before God; I also have been formed out of clay.”*

Elihu has great confidence that what he is about to say has been given to him by the Holy Spirit.

Elihu rebukes Job for maintaining his integrity and for charging God with hostility towards him.

Such a charge against the Great God whose greatness immeasurably transcends the power or wisdom of humans is totally unfounded, [**Isaiah 55:8**].

**Job 33:12-14** [New King James] *“Look, in this you are not righteous. I will answer you, for God is greater than man. Why do you contend with Him? For He does not give an accounting of any of His words. For God may speak in one way, or in another, yet man does not perceive it.”*

God is **not** prepared to assume the role of a disputant like some party in a petty human squabble.

While God will **not** speak as a disputant, He will speak as the Mighty God that He is in His ministries of mercy towards human beings.

Yet Job has denied this very fact, out of his personal pride in the righteous life he had led.

Elihu then refers to the various ways through which a patient God seeks to give an account of Himself in human affairs.

**Job 33:14-18** [New King James] *“For God may speak in one way, or in another, yet man does not perceive it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls upon men, while slumbering on their beds, then He opens the ears of men, and seals their instruction. In order to turn man from his deed, and conceal pride from man, He keeps back his soul from the Pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.”*

Elihu gives first the example of dreams and visions that seal His instructions upon human minds, we have many examples of this in the Old Covenant.

God saves people from premature death, God also speaks through pain, [**Job 33:19**].

**Hebrews 12:6-11** [New King James] *“For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives. If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”*

In Job’s case this extended to depriving him of his appetite and healthy flesh, bringing him near to death, [**Job 33:20-22**].

**Job 33:23-30** [New King James] *“If there is a messenger for him, a mediator, one among a thousand, to show man His uprightness, then He is gracious to him, and says, ‘Deliver him from going down to the Pit; I have found a ransom’; his flesh shall be young like a child’s, he shall return to the days of his youth. He shall pray to God, and He will delight in him, he shall see His face with joy, for He restores to man His righteousness. Then he looks at men and says, ‘I have sinned, and perverted what was right, and it did not profit me.’ He will redeem his soul from going down to the Pit, and his life*

*shall see the light. 'Behold, God works all these things, twice, in fact, three times with a man, to bring back his soul from the Pit, that he may be enlightened with the light of life.'*"

Elihu then tells Job what will happen if he repents of his vain attitude of mind, and admits that he as a human being was **not** perfect.

Elihu then gives Job time to consider what he had told him, before he made a reply.

**Never be quick to justify ourselves when God uses another human being as a vehicle of His correction.**

Elihu then reminds Job and his friends what they had been assuming was the reason for Job's situation, [**Job 34:1-9**].

Elihu then proclaims God's justice, [**Job 34:10-30**] reminding Job and his friends exactly Who they are contending with, the Eternal Creator God who holds all life in His hands.

Elihu then places Job and his friends among every other human being who speaks without the knowledge and wisdom that their Creator God has, [**Job 34:34-37**].

**Elihu then condemns the self-righteousness of Job and his friends –**

**Job 35:1-16** [New King James] *"Moreover Elihu answered and said: 'Do you think this is right? Do you say, "My righteousness is more than God's"? For you say, "What advantage will it be to You? What profit shall I have, more than if I had sinned?" I will answer you, and your companions with you. Look to the heavens and see; and behold the clouds, they are higher than you. If you sin, what do you accomplish against Him? Or, if your transgressions are multiplied, what do you do to Him? If you are righteous, what do you give Him? Or what does He receive from your hand? Your wickedness affects a man such as you, and your righteousness a son of man. Because of the multitude of oppressions they cry out; they cry out for help because of the arm of the mighty. But no one says, "Where is God my Maker, Who gives songs in the night, Who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth, and makes us wiser than the birds of heaven?" There they cry out, but He does not answer, because of the pride of evil men. Surely God will not listen to empty talk, nor will the Almighty regard it. Although you say you do not see Him, yet justice is before Him, and you must wait for Him. And now, because He has not punished in His anger, nor taken much notice of folly, therefore Job opens his mouth in vain; He multiplies words without knowledge.'*"

Elihu tells Job and his friends just what their self-righteous statements had really accomplished.

Sometimes we wonder if being faithful to our convictions really does any good at all.

The problem, for example, of unanswered prayer, [**verses 9 and 12**] but Elihu's final conclusion is that even if God does not intervene immediately in every situation, in the broad scope of time God executes justice. It could be that because of our lack of understanding we are not as yet asking rightly, [**James 4:3**].

**Job 36:1-4** [New King James] *"Elihu also proceeded and said: 'Bear with me a little, and I will show you that there are yet words to speak on God's behalf. I will fetch my knowledge from afar; I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker. For truly my words are not false; one who is perfect in knowledge is with you.'*"

"From afar" means that his statements are going to range widely through the realm of truth.

Elihu tells how mighty and gracious God is, [**verses 5-7**] that even when our lives are constrained by affliction, the Divine Teacher is intent on leading us through to a place where there is no restraint, [**verse 16**] when we renounce the transgressions that had brought us to this affliction, [**verses 8-10**].

Obedience to the Teacher leads to happiness, disobedience to ruin, [**verses 11-15**].



Resentment against God by not praying to God in an attitude of trust, [**verse 13**].

The action of a mighty and gracious God is then applied to Job's particular case, [**Job 36:17-25**].

**Job 36:18** [New King James] *“Because there is wrath, beware lest He take you away with one blow; for a large ransom would not help you avoid it.”*

The greatness of the ransom is evidently a reference to the severity of the afflictions through which Job is passing, Job's own strength cannot see him through such a time.

**Job 36:22-23** [New King James] *“Behold, God is exalted by His power; Who teaches like Him? Who has assigned Him His way, or who has said, ‘You have done wrong’?”*

Elihu tells Job that there would be a change in circumstances, if he only beheld God as Sovereign, a mighty Teacher Who is answerable to no-one.

Elihu continues to expound the power and glory of God, [**Job 36:24-33; Job 37:1-23**].

**Job 37:24** [New King James] *“Therefore men fear Him; He shows no partiality to any who are wise of heart.”*

This is the only response any wise human being can have to the one and only Eternal Creator God.