

KEY

Archer = A Survey of Old Testament Introduction (Gleason Archer). Chicago: Moody Press, 2007.

Ash = Job: The Wisdom of the Cross (Christopher Ash). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014.

BBC = The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament. Edited by John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews and Mark W. Chavalas. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

Bush = Bush, Frederick. Ruth/Esther in the Word Biblical Commentary, Vol 9. Edited by David H. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker. Dallas: Word Books, 1996.

Frame = John Frame, Systematic Theology, P&R Publishing, 2013.

Grudem = Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, Zondervan, 1994.

Harrison = Introduction to the Old Testament (R.K. Harrison). Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969.

K&D = Keil, C.F. and Delitzsch, F. in the Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, Vol 2. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989.

Swindoll = A Man of Heroic Endurance: Job (Charles Swindoll). Nashville, TN. W Publishing Group, 2004.

Talbert = *Beyond Suffering: Discovering the Message of Job* (Layton Talbert). Bob Jones University Press, 2007.

TWOT = The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (R. Laird Harris; Gleason L. Archer, Jr.; Bruce Waltke). Chicago: Moody Press, 1980. Two Volumes.

Walton = Old Testament Today. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004.

Basic English Diagram / Structure

See outlines below.

TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

ENGLISH TRANSLATION (NASB95):

Job 22:1–30 1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite responded, 2 “Can a vigorous man be of use to God, Or a wise man be useful to himself? 3 “Is there any pleasure to the Almighty if you are righteous, Or profit if you make your ways perfect? 4 “Is it because of your reverence that He reproves you, That He enters into judgment against you? 5 “Is not your wickedness great, And your iniquities without end? 6 “For you have taken pledges of your brothers without cause, And stripped men naked. 7 “To the weary you have given no water to drink, And from the hungry you have withheld bread. 8 “But the earth belongs to the mighty man, And the honorable man dwells in it. 9 “You have sent widows away empty, And the strength of the orphans has been crushed. 10 “Therefore snares surround you, And sudden dread terrifies you, 11 Or darkness, so that you cannot see, And an abundance of water covers you. 12 “Is not God in the height of heaven? Look also at the distant stars, how high they are! 13 “You say, ‘What does God know? Can He judge through the thick darkness? 14 ‘Clouds are a hiding place for Him, so that He cannot see; And He walks on the vault of heaven.’ 15 “Will you keep to the ancient path Which wicked men have trod, 16 Who were snatched away before their time, Whose foundations were washed away by a river? 17 “They said to God, ‘Depart from us!’ And ‘What can the Almighty do to them?’ 18 “Yet He filled their houses with good things; But the counsel of the wicked is far from me. 19 “The righteous see and are glad, And the innocent mock them, 20 Saying, ‘Truly our adversaries are cut off, And their abundance the fire has consumed.’ 21 “Yield now and be at peace with Him; Thereby good will come to you. 22 “Please receive instruction from His mouth And establish His words in your heart. 23 “If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored; If you remove unrighteousness far from your tent, 24 And place your gold in the dust, And the gold of Ophir among the stones of the brooks, 25 Then the Almighty will be your gold And choice silver to you. 26 “For then you will delight in the Almighty And lift up your face to God. 27 “You will pray to Him, and He will hear you; And you will pay your vows. 28 “You will also decree a thing, and it will be established for you; And light will shine on your ways. 29 “When you are cast down, you will speak with confidence, And the humble person He will save. 30 “He will deliver one who is not innocent, And he will be delivered through the cleanness of your hands.”

PASSAGE OUTLINE:

Bible Knowledge Commentary

- I. ELIPHAZ'S THIRD SPEECH (CHAP. 22)
 - A. God's uninterest in Job (22:1-5)
 - B. Job's social sins (22:6-11)
 - C. Job's spiritual defiance (22:12-20)
 - D. Eliphaz's appeal for repentance (22:21-30)

UBS Handbook Series

- I. Eliphaz Urges Job to Give Up Evil, Return to God, and Be Rewarded Job 22:21-30

The Outline Bible

- I. Eliphaz's Denunciations: Eliphaz Begins the Third Round of Rebukes Toward Job (22:1-30)
 - A. Your Guilt Has No Limit (22:1-5)
 - 1. Eliphaz Accuses Job of Endless Sin
 - B. A List of Possible Sins (22:6-11)
 - 1. Eliphaz Lists Examples of Sins that Job Must Have Committed to Incite God to Punish Him
 - C. You Think God Doesn't See You (22:12-20)
 - 1. Eliphaz Says that Job Must Think that God Does not See or Care about What He Does
 - D. Repent and be Restored (22:21-30)
 - 1. Eliphaz Advises Job to Repent so that God can Bless Him once Again

Biblical Studies: Job (Sam Storms)

- I. Eliphaz's Third Speech (Job 22)

The New American Commentary: Job (Robert L. Alden)

- I. Eliphaz: This Is Why You Suffer, Job (22:1-30)
 - A. God's Detachment from Human Behavior (22:1-3)
 - B. God's Justice (22:4-5)
 - C. Specific Accusations against Job (22:6-9)
 - D. Resultant Woes (22:10-11)
 - E. The Punishing God (22:12-18)
 - F. The Righteous React to the Sinners' Ruin (22:19-20)
 - G. Advice (22:21-24)
 - 1. SUBMISSION (22:21)
 - 2. ACCEPTANCE (22:22)
 - 3. RETURNING (22:23)
 - 4. RESIGNING (22:24-25)

H. Expected Benefits (22:26–30)

Be Patient: Job (Warren W. Wiersbe)

I. Order in the Court!

A. Three false accusations (Job 22:1–30)

1. Job is a sinner (Job 22:1–11)
2. Job is hiding his sins (Job 22:12–20)
3. Job must repent of his sins (Job 22:21–30)

BASIC OUTLINE:

I. Job the Sinner (22:1-5)

A. God's Indifference (1-3)

B. Job's Sinfulness (4-5)

II. Sins and Consequences (22:6-11)

A. Job's Sins Enumerated (6-9)

1. Against the Brethren (6)

2. Against the Weary and Hungry (7)

a. Parenthesis (8)

3. Against Widows and Orphans (9)

III. Job Cannot Hide From God (22:12-20)

A. God's Transcendence (12, 14)

B. Job's Alleged Defiance (13, 15-17)

C. God's Common Grace (18a)

1. Parenthesis: Eliphaz the Righteous (18b)

D. Sinner's Demise Celebrated by the Righteous (19-20)

IV. Repent and be Restored (22:21-30)

A. Repentance (21-24)

1. Submit (21)

2. Learn (22)

3. Return (23-24)

B. Restoration (25-30)

1. God Prized Above All (25)

2. God Cherished Above All (26)

3. Prayers Heard (27a)

4. Vows Kept (27b)

5. Decisions Confirmed / Life Illuminated (28)

6. Usefulness to Others Promised (29-30)

SERMON OUTLINE:

I. False Assumptions: The Depth of Job's Sin in Light of God's Indifference (22:1-5)

A. God's Indifference (1-3)

B. Job's Sinfulness (4-5)

II. False Accusations: The Delineation of Job's Sin in Light of Three Categories (22:6-11)

A. Job's Sins Enumerated (6-9)

1. Against the Brethren (6)

2. Against the Weary and Hungry (7)

- a. Parenthesis (8)
 - 3. Against Widows and Orphans (9)
- III. False Allegations: The Defiance of Job's Sin in Light of God's Transcendence (22:12-20)
 - A. God's Transcendence (12, 14)
 - B. Job's Alleged Defiance (13, 15-17)
 - C. God's Common Grace (18a)
 - 1. Parenthesis: Eliphaz the Righteous (18b)
 - D. Sinner's Demise Celebrated by the Righteous (19-20)
- IV. False Applications: The Direction of Job's Sin in Light of God's Restoration (22:21-30)
 - A. Repentance (21-24)
 - 1. Submit (21)
 - 2. Learn (22)
 - 3. Return (23-24)
 - B. Restoration (25-30)
 - 1. God Prized Above All (25)
 - 2. God Cherished Above All (26)
 - 3. Prayers Heard (27a)
 - 4. Vows Kept (27b)
 - 5. Decisions Confirmed / Life Illuminated (28)
 - 6. Usefulness to Others Promised (29-30)

Concluding Application:

1. When falsely accused find refuge in God who knows the facts.
2. Take accusations and criticisms seriously (check your heart)
3. Be sure of the facts before you accuse or criticize someone else.
4. You cannot apply right what you know wrong.
5. Remember the One who was falsely accused.

PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what is the passage talking about): Eliphaz specifies Job's many sins

PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what is the passage saying about what it's talking about): and promises restoration if Job repents

PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text): Job must repent of his many supposed sins if he is to be restored by God.

CENTRAL PROPOSITION (OR IDEA) OF THE SERMON: You cannot apply right what you know wrong.

SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE: Disorder in the Court: The Last Words of Eliphaz

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

THIS THIRD SERIES OF speeches concludes the dialogue section. As we will see, the friends have much less to say: Bildad has only six verses and Zophar is silent, leaving Eliphaz to carry the main thrust of the sequence. [John H. Walton and Kelly Lemon Vizcaino, *The NIV Application Commentary: Job*, ed. Terry Muck et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 243]

ELIPHAZ'S OPENING LINE SETS the tone for the remainder of his speech as he targets the issue that Job has been holding as his defense. Unfortunately, the Hebrew is extremely difficult. If we follow the NIV translation, Eliphaz is suggesting that it doesn't matter to God whether a person is righteous/blameless or not; God derives no benefit from moral behavior. This interpretation is out-of-character for Eliphaz and does not fit well with the rest of his speech. We are not surprised, then, at the numerous lexical, grammatical, and syntactical problems in verses 2 and 3.

A look at some of the major technical commentaries will confirm the uncertainties.

NIV: "Can a man be of benefit to God? Can even a wise man benefit him? What pleasure would it give the Almighty if you were righteous? What would he gain if your ways were blameless?"

Habel: "Can a hero endanger El? or a sage endanger the Ancient One? Is it a favor to Shaddai if you are righteous, or his gain if you perfect your ways?"

Hartley: "Can a man benefit God, that a wise man should be in harmony with him? What asset is it to Shaddai that you are innocent, or gain that you claim that your ways are blameless?"

Clines: "Can a human be profitable to God? Can even a sage benefit him? Is it an asset to the Almighty if you are righteous? Does he gain if your conduct is blameless?"

I would propose the following translation:

"Can a wise mediator do any good for a human being [serving] on behalf of God? Can such a mediator bring a human any benefit? Will God respond favorably when you justify yourself? Will there be a gain when you give full account of your ways?" [The NIV Application Commentary: Job, 243–244]

This is the third speech of Eliphaz, the other two being chapters 4–5 and 15. The remarks of Eliphaz may be divided into three parts. In the first section (verses 2–11) he accuses Job of being one of the wicked. He makes no attempt to conceal his accusations through generalities and indirect address. He accuses Job directly. In the second part (verses 12–20) Eliphaz describes the wicked as thinking of God as being far removed and therefore having no control over them. In the third section (verses 21–30) he counsels Job to humble himself and receive instruction from God, and so be delivered from his

misfortune. [William David Reyburn, *A Handbook on the Book of Job*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 409]

Eliphaz continues his basic theme of 1) Job suffers because of his sin; 2) If Job repents and humbles himself; 3) Job will be delivered and useful to God.

The contentions of the 3 friends are generally true. However, their application is wrong. Cf. the NT exhortations to “Draw near to God and he will draw near to you” - “Humble yourself under the hand of God and he will lift you up.”

There is not much new in Eliphaz’s third speech. He touched on most of the themes that the friends had used. For the first time we read of specific accusations (vv. 6–9), a move that represents a further emboldening on his part and a wider rift between him and Job. Toward the end of the speech (vv. 21–30) is a fine evangelistic sermon with several well-turned phrases. While it would be applicable for many situations, Job was not the one who needed to hear it. It is another example of good medicine given to the wrong patient. [Robert L. Alden, *Job*, vol. 11, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 229]

These are the last words of the 3 friends (2 as Zophar remains silent).

VERSES 22:1-5

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite responded, 2 “Can a vigorous man be of use to God, Or a wise man be useful to himself? 3 “Is there any pleasure to the Almighty if you are righteous, Or profit if you make your ways perfect? 4 “Is it because of your reverence that He reproves you, That He enters into judgment against you? 5 “Is not your wickedness great, And your iniquities without end?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said: 2 “Can a man be profitable to God? Surely he who is wise is profitable to himself. 3 Is it any pleasure to the Almighty if you are in the right, or is it gain to him if you make your ways blameless? 4 Is it for your fear of him that he reproves you and enters into judgment with you? 5 Is not your evil abundant? There is no end to your iniquities.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied: 2 Can a man be of any use to God? Can even a wise man be of use to Him? 3 Does it delight the Almighty if you are righteous? Does He profit if you perfect your behavior? 4 Does He correct you and take you to court because of your piety? 5 Isn't your wickedness abundant and aren't your iniquities endless?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied: 2 “Can a man be of benefit to God? Can even a wise person benefit him? 3 What pleasure would it give the Almighty if you were righteous? What would he gain if your ways were blameless? 4 “Is it for your piety that he rebukes you and brings charges against you? 5 Is not your wickedness great? Are not your sins endless?

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite responded,

See 2:11 and previous addresses by Eliphaz. He “responded” to Job’s words in chapter 21.

2 “Can a vigorous man be of use to God, Or a wise man be useful to himself?”

Rhetorical parallel to Job’s claims of God’s indifference to the happenings of men in 7:20:

7:20 “Have I sinned? What have I done to You, O watcher of men? Why have You set me as Your target, So that I am a burden to myself?”

Verse 2 may also be translated, for example, “Job, do you think even a very wise person could be useful to God?” [UBS Handbook]

God’s aseity . . . Acts 17:25: “The God who made the world and all that is in it . . . is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything.”

“When men do worse than they could, do they take away the righteousness that is in God? Can they subtract from His majesty? Can they annihilate His glory and His honor? Can they shorten the boundaries of His kingdom? Not at all! . . . But as for us, let us consider whether or not it is our blessedness to take His side and to render ourselves His subjects in obedience.” [John Calvin, Sermons from Job, 142]

Heb. word for ‘man’ = ‘geber’ (cf. El Gibbor). Note Eliphaz’ practical deism (Deism - 19th c.).

3 “Is there any pleasure to the Almighty if you are righteous, Or profit if you make your ways perfect? 4 “Is it because of your reverence that He reproves you, That He enters into judgment against you? 5 “Is not your wickedness great, And your iniquities without end?”

ELIPHAZ’S OPENING LINE SETS the tone for the remainder of his speech as he targets the issue that Job has been holding as his defense. Unfortunately, the Hebrew is extremely difficult. If we follow the NIV translation, Eliphaz is suggesting that it doesn’t matter to God whether a person is righteous/blameless or not; God derives no benefit from moral behavior. This interpretation is out-of-character for Eliphaz and does not fit well with the rest of his speech. We are not surprised, then, at the numerous lexical, grammatical, and syntactical problems in verses 2 and 3.

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Clines: “Can a human be profitable to God? Can even a sage benefit him? Is it an asset to the Almighty if you are righteous? Does he gain if your conduct is blameless?”

I would propose the following translation:

“Can a wise mediator do any good for a human being [serving] on behalf of God? Can such a mediator bring a human any benefit? Will God respond favorably when you justify yourself? Will there be a gain when you give full account of your ways?”

In 22:2–3 Eliphaz is in effect saying, “A mediator will do you no good; your proposed lawsuit would have no chance of success.” In 22:4 this rhetoric is continued with: “Is it for your piety that he argues his case against you?” Of course not! Circumstances have made it clear to Eliphaz that Job has no piety, so he should not press this lawsuit idea or expect that it would succeed if he did manage to get a hearing. Eliphaz concludes his point in 22:5 with the rhetorical question that offers the alternative: “[Instead] isn’t your wickedness great?” This then leads to the enumeration of Job’s many sins (all presumed, not observed). [John H. Walton and Kelly Lemon Vizcaino, *The NIV Application Commentary: Job*, ed. Terry Muck et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 243-244]

Verses 3-4 may be sarcasm. Or a statement that God is not impressed by piety. I think the former in that E. is using biting irony.

“Reverence” = “fear.” 3x in chaps 1-2 we are told that Job feared G.

Eliphaz in chapter 22:5ff echoes Zophar in chapter 20.

Verse 5 turns a corner to Eliphaz’ main contention . . . expanded upon on vv. 6-9. Note the change in Eliphaz from 4:3-4 -

“Behold you have admonished many, And you have strengthened weak hands. 4 “Your words have helped the tottering to stand, And you have strengthened feeble knees.

There has been a progression of frustration. In the 1st cycle of speeches the 3 friends talked in generalities, even with a rare hint of sympathy. In the 2d cycle they focus on the dire fate of the wicked. In this the 3d cycle Eliphaz gets personal. Progression from bad to worse. Not “he” / “him” but “you.”

VERSES 22:6-11

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

6 “For you have taken pledges of your brothers without cause, And stripped men naked. 7 “To the weary you have given no water to drink, And from the hungry you have withheld bread. 8 “But the earth belongs to the mighty man, And the honorable man dwells in it. 9 “You have sent widows away empty, And the strength of the orphans has been crushed. 10 “Therefore snares surround you, And sudden dread terrifies you, 11 Or darkness, so that you cannot see, And an abundance of water covers you.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

6 You demanded security from your relatives for no reason; you stripped people of their clothing, leaving them naked. 7 You gave no water to the weary and you withheld food from the hungry, 8 though you were a powerful man, owning land— an honored man, living on it. 9 And you sent widows away empty-handed and broke the strength of the fatherless. 10 That is why snares are all around you, why sudden peril terrifies you, 11 why it is so dark you cannot see, and why a flood of water covers you.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

6 For you took collateral from your brothers without cause, stripping off their clothes and leaving them naked. 7 You gave no water to the thirsty and withheld food from the famished, 8 while the land belonged to a powerful man and an influential man lived on it. 9 You sent widows away empty-handed, and the strength of the fatherless was crushed. 10 Therefore snares surround you, and sudden dread terrifies you, 11 or darkness, so you cannot see, and a flood of water covers you.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

6 You demanded security from your relatives for no reason; you stripped people of their clothing, leaving them naked. 7 You gave no water to the weary and you withheld food from the hungry, 8 though you were a powerful man, owning land— an honored man, living on it. 9 And you sent widows away empty-handed and broke the strength of the fatherless. 10 That is why snares are all around you, why sudden peril terrifies you, 11 why it is so dark you cannot see, and why a flood of water covers you.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Job asked for specifics in 6:24, 19:3-4. Eliphaz offers unfounded specifics of Job’s sin here.

**6 “For you have taken pledges of your brothers without cause, And stripped men naked.
7 “To the weary you have given no water to drink, And from the hungry you have withheld bread.**

Note the Law in Exo. 22:25-26, cf. Eze 18:12. “Water” cf. Deut. 23:3-4.

Job denies these charges later (31:16-22).

Job’s sins are those of omission . . . Social sins.

8 “But the earth belongs to the mighty man, And the honorable man dwells in it.

This verse is a parenthesis. Difficult; may be a question, “Does . . .?” The accusation, then, may be toward Job: “Does the earth belong to the mighty (Job)? Does an honorable man (Job who is not in E eyes) dwell upon it?” Or may be that E is telling Job that honorable men (Job, not you!) dwell upon and possess the earth.

Note the translation of Clines:

6a You must have been taking pledges from your kinsfolk without cause,
stripping them naked of their clothing.

7 You must have even been refusing water to the weary,
denying bread to the hungry,

8a as if the land belonged to the powerful,
as if only the privileged should occupy it.

[David J. A. Clines, Job 21–37, vol. 18a, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), 538]

9 “You have sent widows away empty, And the strength of the orphans has been crushed.

The oppression of widows and orphans is condemned in the Old Testament (Exo 22:22; Deut 27:19; Jer 7:6; 22:3; Zech 7:10). Eliphaz returns to the use of the second person singular in the first line of this verse. The verb in the second line is in the passive, but many translators translate that line also with “you (singular),” referring to Job as the subject. [UBS Handbook]

Widows and orphans in the O.T. Cf. N.T. reference in James 1:27.

In 22:6–9 we find the friends’ only attempt to accuse Job of specific sins. The list alleges injustice toward three vulnerable classes: the debtor (22:6), the hungry/thirsty (22:7–8), and the widow/orphan (22:9). We know that these are generic offenses (rather than demonstrably Israelite in nature) from the standpoint of ancient Near Eastern legal texts that regularly address the obligations of society to care for these vulnerable people. [John H. Walton and Kelly Lemon Vizcaino, The NIV Application Commentary: Job, ed. Terry Muck et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 244.]

22:6–9. With no evidence, Eliphaz indicted Job for several social evils: (1) Job took security from others (brothers here, as in 19:13, means countrymen), leaving them naked. If a debtor gave his outer garment to a creditor as a pledge of payment, the garment was

to be returned at night to protect the debtor from the cold (Ex. 22:26–27; Deut. 24:10–13). Failing to return such a garment was a sin. Later Job answered this false charge specifically (Job 31:19–22).

(2) Job refused to give water and food to people in need, even though he was powerful and honored and could obviously afford to give occasional meals to hungry travelers. Job also answered this false arraignment (31:16, 22).

(3) Abuse of widows and orphans, an atrocious felony (Ex. 22:22; Deut. 27:19; Jer. 7:6; 22:3; Zech. 7:10), was another indictment from Eliphaz. Again Job responded to this accusation (Job 31:16, 21–22). Certainly Eliphaz’s theology was wrong when he lied in order to back up his position about Job’s conduct. [Roy B. Zuck, “Job,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 745]

22:9 “Widows” and “the fatherless” (not “orphans” who have neither parent) were among the most defenseless of an ancient community’s citizenry. Their families lacked the one who at that time was expected to own the land, make the decisions, and support the family. They were special objects of God’s care and the subject of many admonitions to charity. To abuse them was relatively easy, and for that reason there were special laws to protect them. Eliphaz charged Job with being lazy and greedy toward the widows and with outright cruelty to those without parents (i.e., orphans; cf. Deut 10:12–11:32; 1 Kgs 17:17–24).⁷ The prologue and epilogue inform us, however, that Job was innocent of these charges. Eliphaz was only guessing, perhaps based on practices that were common at the time. [Robert L. Alden, *Job*, vol. 11, *The New American Commentary*]

Fallacy of assuming the cause (examples).

Job denied guilt in these areas: 29:12–16; 31:13, 16–17, 21.

10 “Therefore snares surround you, And sudden dread terrifies you, 11 Or darkness, so that you cannot see, And an abundance of water covers you.

“Snares” is trans. “trap” in 18:9. Danger and suffocation.

Snares are round about you recalls the figurative language used by Bildad in chapter 18. In 18:11 Bildad said “terrors frighten him on every side.” The word translated snares is the same word translated “trap” in 18:9a (RSV). [UBS Handbook]

Thought of this line is expressed in Psalm 69:1–2. Darkness and floods are common images for the threats of death.

VERSES 22:12-20

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

12 “Is not God in the height of heaven? Look also at the distant stars, how high they are! 13 “You say, ‘What does God know? Can He judge through the thick darkness? 14 ‘Clouds are a hiding place for Him, so that He cannot see; And He walks on the vault of heaven.’ 15 “Will you keep to the ancient path Which wicked men have trod, 16 Who were snatched away before their time, Whose foundations were washed away by a river? 17 “They said to God, ‘Depart from us!’ And ‘What can the Almighty do to them?’ 18 “Yet He filled their houses with good things; But the counsel of the wicked is far from me. 19 “The righteous see and are glad, And the innocent mock them, 20 Saying, ‘Truly our adversaries are cut off, And their abundance the fire has consumed.’

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

12 “Is not God high in the heavens? See the highest stars, how lofty they are! 13 But you say, ‘What does God know? Can he judge through the deep darkness? 14 Thick clouds veil him, so that he does not see, and he walks on the vault of heaven.’ 15 Will you keep to the old way that wicked men have trod? 16 They were snatched away before their time; their foundation was washed away. 17 They said to God, ‘Depart from us,’ and ‘What can the Almighty do to us?’ 18 Yet he filled their houses with good things— but the counsel of the wicked is far from me. 19 The righteous see it and are glad; the innocent one mocks at them, 20 saying, ‘Surely our adversaries are cut off, and what they left the fire has consumed.’

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

12 Isn't God as high as the heavens? And look at the highest stars—how lofty they are! 13 Yet you say: “What does God know? Can He judge through thick darkness? 14 Clouds veil Him so that He cannot see, as He walks on the circle of the sky.” 15 Will you continue on the ancient path that wicked men have walked? 16 They were snatched away before their time, and their foundations were washed away by a river. 17 They were the ones who said to God, “Leave us alone!” and “What can the Almighty do to us?” 18 But it was He who filled their houses with good things. The counsel of the wicked is far from me! 19 The righteous see this and rejoice; the innocent mock them, saying, 20 “Surely our opponents are destroyed, and fire has consumed what they left behind.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

12 “Is not God in the heights of heaven? And see how lofty are the highest stars! 13 Yet you say, ‘What does God know? Does he judge through such darkness? 14 Thick clouds veil him, so he does not see us as he goes about in the vaulted heavens.’ 15 Will you keep to the old path that the wicked have trod? 16 They were carried off before their time, their foundations washed away by a flood. 17 They said to God, ‘Leave us alone! What can the Almighty do to us?’ 18 Yet it was he who filled their houses with good things, so I stand aloof from the plans of the wicked. 19 The

righteous see their ruin and rejoice; the innocent mock them, saying, 20 'Surely our foes are destroyed, and fire devours their wealth.'

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

12 "Is not God in the height of heaven? Look also at the distant stars, how high they are! 13 "You say, 'What does God know? Can He judge through the thick darkness? 14 'Clouds are a hiding place for Him, so that He cannot see; And He walks on the vault of heaven.'

God's transcendence. E uses the stars as a reference point (note how high and how many are the stars). God look down upon the stars and transcends them! Job affirms this in 12:13-25.

Did Job say, "What does God know?" No evidence for this (cf. Genesis and the woman adding "you shall not touch it" to the prohibition). Cf. Psalm 73:11 and 139.

15 "Will you keep to the ancient path Which wicked men have trod, 16 Who were snatched away before their time, Whose foundations were washed away by a river? 17 "They said to God, 'Depart from us!' And 'What can the Almighty do to them?' 18 "Yet He filled their houses with good things; But the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

Ancient path used negatively here. For positive use, see Jeremiah 6:16 (cf. Math. 7:13-14).

Job is accused of following the ways of evil men. They were washed away like a building in a raging flood.

God's common grace toward the wicked. Acts 14:17.

I stand aloof from the counsel of the wicked, an exact quotation of Job's words (21:16), mockingly belittling Job for rejecting the wicked. Eliphaz wanted it known that he was rejecting the ideas of the wicked, but that he was doing so by not agreeing with wicked Job! [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

As Eliphaz continues his discourse, we see further connections to Job's last speech. In 22:15 he is urging Job not to think that he can follow the path of the wicked that Job has just described. His comments in 22:17-18 contain the same wording that Job attributes to the wicked in 21:14-16. [NIV Application Commentary: Job, 245]

The way of the wicked in v. 7 finds a parallel in the words of Asaph in Psa. 73:11.

The last line (But the counsel of the wicked is far from me) is the thought of Eliphaz. See Job's use of the phrase in 21.16.

19 "The righteous see and are glad, And the innocent mock them, 20 Saying, 'Truly our adversaries are cut off, And their abundance the fire has consumed.'

These two verses may be taken together as a description of the way in which the righteous react when they see the wicked experiencing disasters such as those referred to in verse 16. In Psalm 52:6–7 and 69:32 the psalmist speaks of the righteous rejoicing over the misfortunes of the wicked. The first line is the same as Psalm 107:42a. [UBS Handbook]

“Fire” cf. the fire that burned up Job’ sheep / servants.

“Glad” could be rendered “laugh.” Note imprecatory Psalms.

Cf. however Prov 24:17, “Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice.”

Job 31:29-30 29 “Have I rejoiced at the extinction of my enemy, Or exulted when evil befell him? 30 “No, I have not allowed my mouth to sin By asking for his life in a curse.

Matthew 5:44 “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,”

Note the fact that God alone has the right to laugh:

Psalm 2:1–4 1 Why are the nations in an uproar And the peoples devising a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, 3 “Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!” 4 He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them.

Psalm 37:13 The Lord laughs at him, For He sees his day is coming.

Proverbs 1:26 I will also laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your dread comes,

VERSES 22:21-30

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

21 “Yield now and be at peace with Him; Thereby good will come to you. 22 “Please receive instruction from His mouth And establish His words in your heart. 23 “If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored; If you remove unrighteousness far from your tent, 24 And place your gold in the dust, And the gold of Ophir among the stones of the brooks, 25 Then the Almighty will be your gold And choice silver to you. 26 “For then you will delight in the Almighty And lift up your face to God. 27 “You will pray to Him, and He will hear you; And you will pay your vows. 28 “You will also decree a thing, and it will be established for you; And light will shine on your ways. 29 “When you are cast down, you will speak with confidence, And the humble person He will save. 30 “He will deliver one who is not innocent, And he will be delivered through the cleanness of your hands.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

21 “Agree with God, and be at peace; thereby good will come to you. 22 Receive instruction from his mouth, and lay up his words in your heart. 23 If you return to the Almighty you will be built up; if you remove injustice far from your tents, 24 if you lay gold in the dust, and gold of Ophir among the stones of the torrent-bed, 25 then the Almighty will be your gold and your precious silver. 26 For then you will delight yourself in the Almighty and lift up your face to God. 27 You will make your prayer to him, and he will hear you, and you will pay your vows. 28 You will decide on a matter, and it will be established for you, and light will shine on your ways. 29 For when they are humbled you say, ‘It is because of pride’; but he saves the lowly. 30 He delivers even the one who is not innocent, who will be delivered through the cleanness of your hands.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

21 Come to terms with God and be at peace; in this way good will come to you. 22 Receive instruction from His mouth, and place His sayings in your heart. 23 If you return to the Almighty, you will be renewed. If you banish injustice from your tent 24 and consign your gold to the dust, the gold of Ophir to the stones in the wadis, 25 the Almighty will be your gold and your finest silver. 26 Then you will delight in the Almighty and lift up your face to God. 27 You will pray to Him, and He will hear you, and you will fulfill your vows. 28 When you make a decision, it will be carried out, and light will shine on your ways. 29 When others are humiliated and you say, “Lift them up,” God will save the humble. 30 He will even rescue the guilty one, who will be rescued by the purity of your hands.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

21 “Submit to God and be at peace with him; in this way prosperity will come to you. 22 Accept instruction from his mouth and lay up his words in your heart. 23 If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored: If you remove wickedness far from your tent 24 and assign your nuggets to the dust, your gold of Ophir to the rocks in the ravines, 25 then the Almighty will be your gold,

the choicest silver for you. 26 Surely then you will find delight in the Almighty and will lift up your face to God. 27 You will pray to him, and he will hear you, and you will fulfill your vows. 28 What you decide on will be done, and light will shine on your ways. 29 When people are brought low and you say, ‘Lift them up!’ then he will save the downcast. 30 He will deliver even one who is not innocent, who will be delivered through the cleanness of your hands.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

The following four subpoints of Eliphaz’s admonition to Job could easily be turned into a sermon for today. Results from these imperatives (“submit, accept, return, assign”) are all desirable outcomes (“peace, prosperity, restoration, [spiritual] gold and silver”). Eliphaz’s error, which could be ours, was preaching this fine sermon to one already saved. The message that Job needed God himself would deliver in chaps. 38–41. These verses form another high point of the book, though sadly they are inappropriately applied. [Robert L. Alden, Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary]

21 “Yield now and be at peace with Him; Thereby good will come to you. 22 “Please receive instruction from His mouth And establish His words in your heart. 23 “If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored; If you remove unrighteousness far from your tent,

“Return” = Heb. “Shub.”

24 And place your gold in the dust, And the gold of Ophir among the stones of the brooks, 25 Then the Almighty will be your gold And choice silver to you. 26 “For then you will delight in the Almighty And lift up your face to God.

“Gold” may also refer to those things Job cherishes, including that which he lost. “gold of Ophir” refers to the legendary gold of the east. Cf. the often misused and erroneous evangelism requirement to sinners: repent and give up everything, then come to Christ.

Verses 24–25 are clearly linked in grammar and sense. If you lay gold in the dust: the Hebrew text of this verse has had two major interpretations. The first is “You will gather gold in the dust,” in which Eliphaz is promising Job that he will be rich again. In 5:17–27 Eliphaz told Job that he would be restored to greatness. The other major understanding of the verse is that Eliphaz is urging Job to renounce wealth, and the consequence in verse 25 is that Shaddai, “Almighty God” (TEV), will take the place of his wealth. . . . Among all the translations of this passage, only KJV views Eliphaz’s words as a promise for the future, “Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust.” In other words, to Job gold will be as common as dust. Most modern translations understand verse 24 to mean that Job is told to get rid of his gold. [UBS Handbook Series]

Note the “if” / “then” clauses. Cf. 1 Peter 1:7.

Job 31 - 24 “If I have put my confidence in gold, And called fine gold my trust, 25 If I have gloated because my wealth was great, And because my hand had secured so much; 26 If I have looked at the sun when it shone Or the moon going in splendor, 27 And my

heart became secretly enticed, And my hand threw a kiss from my mouth, 28 That too would have been an iniquity calling for judgment, For I would have denied God above.

27 “You will pray to Him, and He will hear you; And you will pay your vows. 28 “You will also decree a thing, and it will be established for you; And light will shine on your ways.

“Decree” = “decide.” Note Job prays for the 3 friends at the end of the book!

29 “When you are cast down, you will speak with confidence, And the humble person He will save. 30 “He will deliver one who is not innocent, And he will be delivered through the cleanness of your hands.”

“The Hebrew text is a thicket of thorns, and AV pays the price of honesty by being largely unintelligible. Solutions are almost as numerous as commentaries.” [Anderson, p. 206 as cited by Talbert in a fn., p. 330]