

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

- 1 Then Zophar the Naamathite answered,
2 * “Shall a multitude of words go *unanswered*,
* And a talkative man *be acquitted*?
3 * “Shall your boasts *silence men*?
* And shall you scoff and *none rebuke*?
- 4 “For you have said,
* ‘My teaching is pure,
* And I am innocent in your eyes.’
- 5 “But would that
God might speak,
And open **His** lips against you,
6 And
show you the *secrets* of wisdom!
For
sound wisdom has *two sides*.
- Know then that **God** forgets a part of your iniquity.
- 7 * “Can *you* discover the depths of **God**?
* Can *you* discover the limits of the **Almighty**?
8 * “They are high as the heavens, what can *you* do?
* Deeper than Sheol, what can *you* know?
- 9 “Its measure is longer than the earth
And broader than the sea.
- 10 “If **He** passes by
or shuts up,
Or calls an assembly,
who can restrain **Him**?
- 11 “For
He knows false men,
And
He sees iniquity without investigating.
- 12 [“An idiot will become intelligent
When the foal of a wild donkey is born a man.]
- 13 * “If *you* would direct your heart right
* And spread out *your* hand to **Him**,
14 * If iniquity is in *your* hand, put it far away,
* And do not let wickedness dwell in *your* tents;

- 15 “Then, indeed,
you could lift up *your* face without moral defect,
And *you* would be steadfast and not fear.
- 16 “For *you* would forget your trouble,
As waters that have passed by, *you* would remember it.
- 17 “*Your* life would be brighter than noonday;
Darkness would be like the morning.
- 18 “Then *you* would trust,
because there is hope;
And *you* would look around and rest securely.
- 19 “*You* would lie down and none would disturb you,
And many would entreat *your* favor.
- 20 “But the eyes of the wicked will fail,
And there will be no escape for them;
And their hope is to breathe their last.”

TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

ENGLISH TRANSLATION (NASB95):

Job 11:1–20 1 Then Zophar the Naamathite answered, 2 “Shall a multitude of words go unanswered, And a talkative man be acquitted? 3 “Shall your boasts silence men? And shall you scoff and none rebuke? 4 “For you have said, ‘My teaching is pure, And I am innocent in your eyes.’ 5 “But would that God might speak, And open His lips against you, 6 And show you the secrets of wisdom! For sound wisdom has two sides. Know then that God forgets a part of your iniquity. 7 “Can you discover the depths of God? Can you discover the limits of the Almighty? 8 “They are high as the heavens, what can you do? Deeper than Sheol, what can you know? 9 “Its measure is longer than the earth And broader than the sea. 10 “If He passes by or shuts up, Or calls an assembly, who can restrain Him? 11 “For He knows false men, And He sees iniquity without investigating. 12 “An idiot will become intelligent When the foal of a wild donkey is born a man. 13 “If you would direct your heart right And spread out your hand to Him, 14 If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away, And do not let wickedness dwell in your tents; 15 “Then, indeed, you could lift up your face without moral defect, And you would be steadfast and not fear. 16 “For you would forget your trouble, As waters that have passed by, you would remember it. 17 “Your life would be brighter than noonday; Darkness would be like the morning. 18 “Then you would trust, because there is hope; And you would look around and rest securely. 19 “You would lie down and none would disturb you, And many would entreat your favor. 20 “But the eyes of the wicked will fail, And there will be no escape for them; And their hope is to breathe their last.”

PASSAGE OUTLINE:

Bible Knowledge Commentary

- I. ZOPHAR’S FIRST SPEECH (CHAP. 11)
 - A. His rebuke of Job’s words (11:1–6)
 - B. His praise of God’s wisdom (11:7–12)
 - C. His plea for Job’s repentance (11:13–20)

UBS Handbook Series

- I. Zophar Assures Job That God Will Reward Him If He Will Renounce His Evil (11:13–20)

The Outline Bible

- I. Zophar’s Denunciations (11:1-20): Zophar Begins his Rebuke
 - A. God is Punishing You Less than You Deserve (11:1-6)
 - 1. Zophar wishes that Job could see himself as God does
 - B. You Cannot Comprehend God’s Ways (11:7-12)
 - 1. God’s ways are beyond human understanding
 - C. Confess Your Sins and Find Hope (11:13-20)
 - 1. Zophar - like the other friends - assumes Job is suffering because of his sin

Biblical Studies: Job (Sam Storms)

- I. Zophar's First Speech (Job 11)
 - A. His accusation—11:1–4
 - B. His appeal—11:5–12
 - C. His advice—11:13–20

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

- I. Zophar: Repent, Job (11:1–20)
 - A. Rebuke (11:1–6)
 - B. Rhetorical Examination (11:7–12)
 - 1. God's Incomprehensibility (11:7–9)
 - 2. God's Incontrovertible Justice (11:10–12)
 - C. Advice (11:13–20)
 - 1. The Protasis—Repent (11:13–14)
 - 2. The Apodosis—Benefits (11:15–20)

Be Patient: Job (Warren W. Wiersbe)

- I. Zophar's three accusations (Job 11:1–20)
 - A. Job is guilty (11:1–4)
 - B. Job is ignorant of God (11:5–12)
 - C. Job is stubborn and should repent (11:13–20)

BASIC OUTLINE:

- I. Zophar's Zingers: His First Reply to Job (11:1-20)
 - A. Job It Should Be Worse (11:1-6)
 - B. Job You Are an Idiot (11:7-12)
 - C. Job Just Repent Already (11:13-20)

SERMON OUTLINE:

- I. Zophar's Zingers: His First Reply to Job (11:1-20)
 - A. Job It Should Be Worse (11:1-6)
 - 1. Fourfold Rebuke (2-3)
 - 2. False Accusation (4)
 - 3. Feckless Desire (5-6)

- B. Job You Are an Idiot (11:7-12)
 - 1. God's Transcendent Greatness (7-9)
 - 2. God's Immanent Awareness (10-11)
 - 3. Job's Sinful Idiocy (12)
- C. Job Just Repent Already (11:13-20)
 - 1. Protasis: Zophar's fourfold advice (13-14)
 - 2. Apodosis: Zophar's Promise of Hope (15-19)
 - 3. Zophar's Concluding Warning (20)

Seven Final Thoughts:

1. Be Thankful for Good Friends—Especially During Bad Times.
2. There Is a Friend Who Sticks Closer than a Brother and There Is a Friend Who Sticks the Knife.
3. Beware of the Brashness That Often Comes with Youth.
4. Beware of Doctrinal Legalism.
5. Be Thankful That We Don't Get What We All .
6. God's Grace Wins Even When Everything (and Everyone) Fails.
7. What a Friend We Have in Jesus (cf. James 2:23; John 15:14).

PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what is the passage talking about): Job is fortunate he didn't get all he deserves

PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what is the passage saying about what it's talking about): And Job deserves every bit of the suffering he received (and he still needs to repent)!

PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text): Job didn't get all he deserved for his sin so repent while there's still hope.

CENTRAL PROPOSITION (OR IDEA) OF THE SERMON: God's grace wins even when everything (and everyone) fails.

SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE: Zophar's Zingers: His First Reply to Job (11:1-20)

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

11:1–6. Zophar was furious because of Job’s many idle words (vv. 2–3), his mocking of God (v. 3), and his boast that he was blameless (v. 4). In stinging sarcasm, Zophar said he wished God would answer Job (cf. 9:3, 16) and give him insight into true wisdom, which is difficult to penetrate (has two sides is lit., “double, folded over”). Zophar said God was letting Job off easy, giving him less punishment than he deserved! This certainly was a heartless jab. [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), 733]

Zophar is the youngest (cf. earlier commentary on the 3 friends) and the most brash, something that is often accompanied by youth. He’s also the consummate legalist (cf. Bildad).

Zophar probably was the youngest of the three friends. He was impetuous, tactless, direct, unsympathetic, but not altogether without some contribution to make to the friends’ case. His speeches are the shortest; in fact, he has only two. His opening speech contains three characteristic motifs: rebuke, remarks on God’s sovereign justice, and advice. [Robert L. Alden, *Job*, vol. 11, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 141]

So locked into the retributionist dogma is Zophar that he cannot see Job as a sufferer but only as a guilty man. His language to describe what is happening to Job is legal because he has moved instantly from his perception of Job’s distress to a theological interpretation of that distress as divine judgment. And though he speaks quite generally of what God habitually does with “worthless” individuals it is evident that he is directing his attention primarily to Job and proffering Job an explanation for his suffering. [David J. A. Clines, *Job 1–20*, vol. 17, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1989), 264]

Zophar’s language here continues to support the courtroom analogy of the previous section.

VERSES 11:1-6

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

1 Then Zophar the Naamathite answered, 2 “Shall a multitude of words go unanswered, And a talkative man be acquitted? 3 “Shall your boasts silence men? And shall you scoff and none rebuke? 4 “For you have said, ‘My teaching is pure, And I am innocent in your eyes.’ 5 “But would that God might speak, And open His lips against you, 6 And show you the secrets of wisdom! For sound wisdom has two sides. Know then that God forgets a part of your iniquity.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

1 Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said: 2 “Should a multitude of words go unanswered, and a man full of talk be judged right? 3 Should your babble silence men, and when you mock, shall no one shame you? 4 For you say, ‘My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in God’s eyes.’ 5 But oh, that God would speak and open his lips to you, 6 and that he would tell you the secrets of wisdom! For he is manifold in understanding. Know then that God exacts of you less than your guilt deserves.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

1 Then Zophar the Naamathite replied: 2 Should this stream of words go unanswered and such a talker be acquitted? 3 Should your babbling put others to silence, so that you can keep on ridiculing with no one to humiliate you? 4 You have said, “My teaching is sound, and I am pure in Your sight.” 5 But if only God would speak and declare His case against you, 6 He would show you the secrets of wisdom, for true wisdom has two sides. Know then that God has chosen to overlook some of your sin.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

1 Then Zophar the Naamathite replied: 2 “Are all these words to go unanswered? Is this talker to be vindicated? 3 Will your idle talk reduce others to silence? Will no one rebuke you when you mock? 4 You say to God, ‘My beliefs are flawless and I am pure in your sight.’ 5 Oh, how I wish that God would speak, that he would open his lips against you 6 and disclose to you the secrets of wisdom, for true wisdom has two sides. Know this: God has even forgotten some of your sin.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

1 Then Zophar the Naamathite answered, 2 “Shall a multitude of words go unanswered, And a talkative man be acquitted? 3 “Shall your boasts silence men? And shall you scoff and none rebuke?

On Zophar, see chapter 2.

4 questions asked by Zophar, ea. expecting a “no” answer. Z. accuses J. of many words, which we also see in how Bildad began his first two speeches (8:2; 18:2) and how Eliphaz began his second speech (15:2).

Vindicated/Acquitted translates Hebrew TsaDaq = “to be right, justified, acquitted of doing something wrong.” See 9:15.

4 **“For you have said, ‘My teaching is pure, And I am innocent in your eyes.’**

Z. accuses J. of justifying his doctrine and his person. Cf. 10:7 where Job declares his innocence. However, as for defending his doctrine, this is inferred.

For you say, “My doctrine is pure”: this verse begins with the Hebrew word meaning “you have said” followed by direct speech, so that the impression given is of a quotation from Job. However, Job did not actually say these words. He has only claimed that he is innocent, not that his doctrine is pure. The word translated doctrine is the usual term for teaching found in Wisdom literature (see Prov 1:5, “learning”; 4:2, “precepts”). Some scholars suggest a change in the Hebrew text, to get “conduct.” This is probably unnecessary. Job has clearly rejected the traditional teaching or doctrine of his friends and has claimed to have as good knowledge as they have about such things. TEV has avoided both the words doctrine and teaching and has translated “what you say.” NEB has “opinions” and NIV “beliefs,” which are preferable to TEV. Pure translates a different word than the one used in 4:17, “Can a man be pure before his maker?” Pure as a description of something abstract such as doctrine refers to its being “authentic, original, not mixed with false teachings,” and may sometimes be translated as being “all good” or “having nothing false in it.” [UBS Handbook Series, 216–217]

Where Zophar wrongs Job is in the word, “my doctrine is pure.” “Doctrine” (דָּבָר) is a familiar term in wisdom literature (Prov 1:5; 4:2; 9:9; 16:21, 23; Eccles 8:8; cf. Isa 29:24), and Job has indeed been pictured by Eliphaz as a “teacher” who has “instructed” many and whose “words” have upheld the despondent (4:3–4). But the Job of these agonized speeches has been anything but didactic or professorial, and it is the gravest misapprehension for Zophar to cast Job’s speeches as classroom lectures or theoretical disquisitions. This term “doctrine” by itself is enough to show how little empathy Zophar is capable of. [David J. A. Clines, Job 1–20, vol. 17, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1989), 260]

Note Job’s words in 6:24 - “Teach me, and I will be silent; And show me how I have erred.

5 “But would that God might speak, And open His lips against you, 6 And show you the secrets of wisdom! For sound wisdom has two sides. Know then that God forgets a part of your iniquity.

God will speak! Cf. chapters 38-42.

‘Zophar did not spell out what the “two sides” are. Perhaps he was alluding to our adage that there are two sides to every story (Prov 18:17). Some say that it has to do with the overt and covert dimensions of wisdom, the obvious and the hidden or deeper dimensions.⁴ The thrust of Zophar’s last line seems to be that God was punishing Job for only some of his sins and that Job should be glad that he was not getting all that he deserved. While Ezra recognized the same leniency on God’s part (Ezra 9:13), the remark was inappropriate under the circumstances. [New American Commentary, 143]

Maybe that wisdom is “manifold.”

For the last line, cf. HCSB: “ Know then that God has chosen to overlook some of your sin.”

VERSES 11:7-12

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

7 “Can you discover the depths of God? Can you discover the limits of the Almighty? 8 “They are high as the heavens, what can you do? Deeper than Sheol, what can you know? 9 “Its measure is longer than the earth And broader than the sea. 10 “If He passes by or shuts up, Or calls an assembly, who can restrain Him? 11 “For He knows false men, And He sees iniquity without investigating. 12 “An idiot will become intelligent When the foal of a wild donkey is born a man.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

7 “Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty? 8 It is higher than heaven—what can you do? Deeper than Sheol—what can you know? 9 Its measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea. 10 If he passes through and imprisons and summons the court, who can turn him back? 11 For he knows worthless men; when he sees iniquity, will he not consider it? 12 But a stupid man will get understanding when a wild donkey’s colt is born a man!

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

7 Can you fathom the depths of God or discover the limits of the Almighty? 8 They are higher than the heavens—what can you do? They are deeper than Sheol—what can you know? 9 Their measure is longer than the earth and wider than the sea. 10 If He passes by and throws someone in prison or convenes a court, who can stop Him? 11 Surely He knows which people are worthless. If He sees iniquity, will He not take note of it? 12 But a stupid man will gain understanding as soon as a wild donkey is born a man!

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

7 “Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty? 8 They are higher than the heavens above—what can you do? They are deeper than the depths below—what can you know? 9 Their measure is longer than the earth and wider than the sea. 10 “If he comes along and confines you in prison and convenes a court, who can oppose him? 11 Surely he recognizes deceivers; and when he sees evil, does he not take note? 12 But the witless can no more become wise than a wild donkey’s colt can be born human.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

7 “Can you discover the depths of God? Can you discover the limits of the Almighty? 8 “They are high as the heavens, what can you do? Deeper than Sheol, what can you know?

These 4 rhetorical questions parallel the questions of vv. 1 & 2. The answer is that no one can, but Zophar seeks to humiliate Job further.

9 “Its measure is longer than the earth And broader than the sea. 10 “If He passes by or shuts up, Or calls an assembly, who can restrain Him?”

Cf. shuts up = imprisons; assembly = court.

11 “For He knows false men, And He sees iniquity without investigating. 12 “An idiot will become intelligent When the foal of a wild donkey is born a man.

Zophar points out God’s majestic greatness. In light of that (8b), “Zophar called Job a nitwit (a witless man, lit., “a man who is hollowed out,” i.e., empty in the head).” [BKC]

Almighty translates Hebrew shaDDai; for a discussion of Almighty see 5:17.

Sheol, cf. 7:9. The Babylonians divided the universe into four zones, each having its own lord: heaven, earth, sea, and underworld. [UBS Handbook Series]

On v. 11:

This line may also be expressed as “God knows a liar when he sees one,” “God knows if you are worthless,” or “God knows which people are deceitful.” When he sees iniquity: in 7:8, 20; 10:14 Job sees God as a spy working against him. Now, however, Zophar tells Job that what God is seeing is iniquity, Job’s sin. In Zophar’s view God knows deceitful men and sees their sins. RSV, NIV, and NEB express the final part of this verse as a question, will he not consider it? Will he not implies a positive reply is expected: “Yes, he will.” Some scholars suggest that the negative particle should be read with a different vowel as an object pronoun, giving “he does consider it.” Rowley suggests it be read “without considering it.” A good translation model is “When God sees iniquity (sees a person sin), he takes note of it, pays attention to it, does not let it pass unnoticed,” or “When God sees people do bad things, he does not forget what they have done,” or “God knows when people do bad things, and he keeps these in his heart.” [UBS Handbook]

12 But first a proverb-like saying will conclude Zophar’s excursus on the wisdom of God. On the surface it is not a very difficult proverb: “A ‘hollow’ man will get understanding; and the colt of a wild ass will be born a man” or preferably, following Pope, “... and a wild ass will be born tame.” Formally, the sentence has something in common with 5:7, “Man begets suffering for himself, and the sons of Pestilence fly high”—another proverbial utterance in which the relationship of the two halves of the line (joined simply by “and”) is rather problematic. Here rather than an act and its consequence we seem to have two statements of impossibility which we could well represent as RSV does: “A stupid man will get understanding, when a wild ass’s colt is born a man”—“when pigs fly,” “dans la semaine des quatre jeudis,” that is. Peake objected that “a hollow man is void of understanding” is a mere tautology; but we must stress that the verb is not a

statement of a generalized present, but refers to a future acquisition of wisdom: an “empty” man will as soon gain understanding as a wild ass be a tame donkey. [Clines, Job 1–20, vol. 17, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1989), 266]

“The word for “idiot” comes from a term that means, "to be hollow, empty." When used of a person, it's referring to one who is “empty-headed,” like our colloquialism “airhead.” He's calling Job, by implication, an "empty-headed man," suggesting there is no more possibility a person like that could ever become wise, than a donkey could give birth to a human.” [Swindoll]

VERSES 11:13-20

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

13 “If you would direct your heart right And spread out your hand to Him, 14 If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away, And do not let wickedness dwell in your tents; 15 “Then, indeed, you could lift up your face without moral defect, And you would be steadfast and not fear. 16 “For you would forget your trouble, As waters that have passed by, you would remember it. 17 “Your life would be brighter than noonday; Darkness would be like the morning. 18 “Then you would trust, because there is hope; And you would look around and rest securely. 19 “You would lie down and none would disturb you, And many would entreat your favor. 20 “But the eyes of the wicked will fail, And there will be no escape for them; And their hope is to breathe their last.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

13 “If you prepare your heart, you will stretch out your hands toward him. 14 If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away, and let not injustice dwell in your tents. 15 Surely then you will lift up your face without blemish; you will be secure and will not fear. 16 You will forget your misery; you will remember it as waters that have passed away. 17 And your life will be brighter than the noonday; its darkness will be like the morning. 18 And you will feel secure, because there is hope; you will look around and take your rest in security. 19 You will lie down, and none will make you afraid; many will court your favor. 20 But the eyes of the wicked will fail; all way of escape will be lost to them, and their hope is to breathe their last.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

13 As for you, if you redirect your heart and lift up your hands to Him in prayer— 14 if there is iniquity in your hand, remove it, and don’t allow injustice to dwell in your tents— 15 then you will hold your head high, free from fault. You will be firmly established and unafraid. 16 For you will forget your suffering, recalling it only as waters that have flowed by. 17 Your life will be brighter than noonday; its darkness will be like the morning. 18 You will be confident, because there is hope. You will look carefully about and lie down in safety. 19 You will lie down without fear, and many will seek your favor. 20 But the sight of the wicked will fail. Their way of escape will be cut off, and their only hope is their last breath.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

13 “Yet if you devote your heart to him and stretch out your hands to him, 14 if you put away the sin that is in your hand and allow no evil to dwell in your tent, 15 then, free of fault, you will lift up your face; you will stand firm and without fear. 16 You will surely forget your trouble, recalling it only as waters gone by. 17 Life will be brighter than noonday, and darkness will become like morning. 18 You will be secure, because there is hope; you will look about you and take your rest in safety. 19 You will lie down, with no one to make you afraid, and many will court your favor. 20 But the eyes of the wicked will fail, and escape will elude them; their hope will become a dying gasp.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

13 “If you would direct your heart right And spread out your hand to Him, 14 If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away, And do not let wickedness dwell in your tents;

x4 conditions here (cf. 4 questions repeated above). “lifting up holy hands” (1 Tim. 2:8; cf. Isa. 1:15). “If/Then” clause. Verses 13/14 are the protasis.

The two conditions of v. 13 are positive; the third and fourth in v. 14 are negative—“put away sin” and “allow no evil.” This verse is a chiasmus.

- A If sin
- B in your hand
- C you put away
- C’ and allow not to dwell
- B’ in your tent
- A’ evil

15 “Then, indeed, you could lift up your face without moral defect, And you would be steadfast and not fear. 16 “For you would forget your trouble, As waters that have passed by, you would remember it. 17 “Your life would be brighter than noonday; Darkness would be like the morning. 18 “Then you would trust, because there is hope; And you would look around and rest securely. 19 “You would lie down and none would disturb you, And many would entreat your favor.

These verses form the apodosis.

Zophar cataloged ten benefits that would come to Job if he met the conditions of the preceding verses. While what he said was not incorrect, he failed to note that sometimes God’s good people suffer. That is the mistake that characterizes all the friends’ speeches and makes their basic premise flawed. In their tight system of theology there was no room for suffering that was not caused by sin or for bliss that was not based on goodness. [New American Commentary, 146–147]

You will be secure, and will not fear: secure translates a Hebrew verb applied to casting molten metal to form a statue. The form of the verb used here has the sense of being “hard, firm, solid,” not in a physical sense but socially, spiritually, emotionally. NEB translates “man of iron,” that is, of iron-like character, a solid, sound personality. The text does not say what it is that Job will not fear. But in languages which must provide an object, it will be best to keep the object general and say, for example, “You will be afraid of nothing,” or “Nothing or no one will cause you to be afraid.” [UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 226.]

He will become “firm,” lit. “cast” (as of metal); hence NEB “a man of iron”; the metaphorical sense is rarely attested, but cf. 41:23 [15], 24 [16]. His firmness lies simply in his freedom from fear (cf. 5:21, 22) in that he knows he has done nothing to call down upon him the divine retribution (for the imagery of the steadfastness of metal for fearlessness, cf. Jer 1:17–18; Ezek 3:8–9).

In all this delightful picture the reader cannot miss an irony, however far it may be from Zophar’s intention; for everything that he has been commending to Job has, according to the prologue, been entirely true of Job from the very beginning (1:1). [Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1989), 269]

One can only imagine what it’s like to have anyone, much less a friend, accuse you of doing something that you didn’t do.

“Stand firm” is from a verb meaning “to pour out” as in the case of molten metal. Few commentators seem bothered by this odd use; they explain it as a comparison to metal once molten but now solidified.¹³ Freedom from fear is one of the benefits of the gospel as well (1 John 4:18). [New American Commentary, 147]

Hope (v. 18), cf. 7:6. Verse 19, cf. Leviticus 26:6.

There is a close parallel in Gen 41:51 where Joseph, in naming his first born Manasseh (מְנַשֶּׁה, menasseh) “[God] causes to forget,” explains the name as meaning “God has caused me to forget (נָשִׁיחַ, nashanî) all my suffering (עַל as here) and all my father’s house.” Of course, in the very act of naming the child “Forgetting” Joseph is remembering. Here, the very parallelism of “forget” with “remember” is a striking confirmation of a psychological truth, that pain that has been thoroughly worked through is not totally forgotten—as it might be if it were merely repressed—but is remembered as powerless. [Word Biblical Commentary, 269]

20 “But the eyes of the wicked will fail, And there will be no escape for them; And their hope is to breathe their last.”

Zophar’s concluding warning to Job.