

JOB

Prologue

1 In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. ²He had seven sons and three daughters, ³and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.

⁴His sons used to hold feasts in their homes on their birthdays, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. ⁵When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would make arrangements for them to be purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, 'Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.' This was Job's regular custom.

⁶One day the angels^a came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan^b also came with them. ⁷The LORD said to Satan, 'Where have you come from?'

Satan answered the LORD, 'From roaming throughout the earth, going to and fro on it.'

⁸Then the LORD said to Satan, 'Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.'

⁹'Does Job fear God for nothing?' Satan replied. ¹⁰'Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. ¹¹But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.'

¹²The LORD said to Satan, 'Very well,

then, everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.'

Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

¹³One day when Job's sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the eldest brother's house, ^{14a}a messenger came to Job and said, 'The oxen were ploughing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, ¹⁵and the Sabeans attacked and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!'

¹⁶While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, 'The fire of God fell from the heavens and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!'

¹⁷While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, 'The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!'

¹⁸While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, 'Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the eldest brother's house, ¹⁹when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!'

²⁰At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship ²¹and said:

'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall depart.^c

The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away;
may the name of the LORD be praised.'

^a 6 Hebrew the sons of God

^b 6 Hebrew satan means adversary.

^c 21 Or shall return there



²²In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.

2 On another day the angels^a came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them to present himself before him. ²And the LORD said to Satan, 'Where have you come from?'

Satan answered the LORD, 'From roaming throughout the earth, going to and fro on it.'

³Then the LORD said to Satan, 'Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason.'

⁴'Skin for skin!' Satan replied. 'A man will give all he has for his own life. ⁵But now stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face.'

⁶The LORD said to Satan, 'Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life.'

⁷So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. ⁸Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes.

⁹His wife said to him, 'Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!'

¹⁰He replied, 'You are talking like a foolish^b woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?'

In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

¹¹When Job's three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathise with him and comfort him. ¹²When they saw

him from a distance, they could hardly recognise him; they began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads. ¹³Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was.

Job speaks

3 After this, Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. ²He said:

³'May the day of my birth perish,
and the night that said, "A boy is
conceived!"

⁴That day – may it turn to darkness;
may God above not care about it;
may no light shine on it.

⁵May gloom and utter darkness claim it
once more;
may a cloud settle over it;
may blackness overwhelm it.

⁶That night – may thick darkness seize it;
may it not be included among the
days of the year

nor be entered in any of the months.

⁷May that night be barren;
may no shout of joy be heard in it.

⁸May those who curse days^a curse that
day,
those who are ready to rouse
Leviathan.

⁹May its morning stars become dark;
may it wait for daylight in vain
and not see the first rays of dawn,

¹⁰for it did not shut the doors of the
womb on me
to hide trouble from my eyes.

¹¹'Why did I not perish at birth,
and die as I came from the womb?

¹²Why were there knees to receive me
and breasts that I might be nursed?

¹³For now I would be lying down in peace;
I would be asleep and at rest

¹⁴with kings and rulers of the earth,
who built for themselves places now
lying in ruins,

¹⁵with princes who had gold,

^a 1 Hebrew the sons of God

^b 10 The Hebrew word rendered foolish denotes moral deficiency.

^a 8 Or curse the sea



- who filled their houses with silver.
- 16 Or why was I not hidden away in the ground like a stillborn child, like an infant who never saw the light of day?
- 17 There the wicked cease from turmoil, and there the weary are at rest.
- 18 Captives also enjoy their ease; they no longer hear the slave driver's shout.
- 19 The small and the great are there, and the slaves are freed from their owners.
- 20 'Why is light given to those in misery, and life to the bitter of soul,
- 21 to those who long for death that does not come, who search for it more than for hidden treasure,
- 22 who are filled with gladness and rejoice when they reach the grave?
- 23 Why is life given to a man whose way is hidden, whom God has hedged in?
- 24 For sighing has become my daily food; my groans pour out like water.
- 25 What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me.
- 26 I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil.'
- Eliphaz**
- 4** Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied:
- 2 'If someone ventures a word with you, will you be impatient? But who can keep from speaking?
- 3 Think how you have instructed many, how you have strengthened feeble hands.
- 4 Your words have supported those who stumbled; you have strengthened faltering knees.
- 5 But now trouble comes to you, and you are discouraged; it strikes you, and you are dismayed.
- 6 Should not your piety be your confidence and your blameless ways your hope?
- 7 'Consider now: who, being innocent, has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed?
- 8 As I have observed, those who plough evil and those who sow trouble reap it.
- 9 At the breath of God they perish; at the blast of his anger they are no more.
- 10 The lions may roar and growl, yet the teeth of the great lions are broken.
- 11 The lion perishes for lack of prey, and the cubs of the lioness are scattered.
- 12 'A word was secretly brought to me, my ears caught a whisper of it.
- 13 Amid disquieting dreams in the night, when deep sleep falls on people,
- 14 fear and trembling seized me and made all my bones shake.
- 15 A spirit glided past my face, and the hair on my body stood on end.
- 16 It stopped, but I could not tell what it was. A form stood before my eyes, and I heard a hushed voice:
- 17 "Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can even a strong man be more pure than his Maker?
- 18 If God places no trust in his servants, if he charges his angels with error,
- 19 how much more those who live in houses of clay, whose foundations are in the dust, who are crushed more readily than a moth!
- 20 Between dawn and dusk they are broken to pieces; unnoticed, they perish for ever.
- 21 Are not the cords of their tent pulled up, so that they die without wisdom?"
- 5** 'Call if you will, but who will answer you? To which of the holy ones will you turn?
- 2 Resentment kills a fool,



- and envy slays the simple.
- ³ I myself have seen a fool taking root,
but suddenly his house was cursed.
- ⁴ His children are far from safety,
crushed in court without a defender.
- ⁵ The hungry consume his harvest,
taking it even from among thorns,
and the thirsty pant after his wealth.
- ⁶ For hardship does not spring from the soil,
nor does trouble sprout from the ground.
- ⁷ Yet man is born to trouble
as surely as sparks fly upwards.
- ⁸ 'But if I were you, I would appeal to God;
I would lay my cause before him.
- ⁹ He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed,
miracles that cannot be counted.
- ¹⁰ He provides rain for the earth;
he sends water on the countryside.
- ¹¹ The lowly he sets on high,
and those who mourn are lifted to safety.
- ¹² He thwarts the plans of the crafty,
so that their hands achieve no success.
- ¹³ He catches the wise in their craftiness,
and the schemes of the wily are swept away.
- ¹⁴ Darkness comes upon them in the daytime;
at noon they grope as in the night.
- ¹⁵ He saves the needy from the sword in their mouth;
he saves them from the clutches of the powerful.
- ¹⁶ So the poor have hope,
and injustice shuts its mouth.
- ¹⁷ 'Blessed is the one whom God corrects;
so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.^a
- ¹⁸ For he wounds, but he also binds up;
he injures, but his hands also heal.
- ¹⁹ From six calamities he will rescue you;
in seven no harm will touch you.
- ²⁰ In famine he will deliver you from death,

^a 17 Hebrew *Shaddai*; here and throughout Job

- and in battle from the stroke of the sword.
- ²¹ You will be protected from the lash of the tongue,
and need not fear when destruction comes.
- ²² You will laugh at destruction and famine,
and need not fear the wild animals.
- ²³ For you will have a covenant with the stones of the field,
and the wild animals will be at peace with you.
- ²⁴ You will know that your tent is secure;
you will take stock of your property
and find nothing missing.
- ²⁵ You will know that your children will be many,
and your descendants like the grass of the earth.
- ²⁶ You will come to the grave in full vigour,
like sheaves gathered in season.
- ²⁷ 'We have examined this, and it is true.
So hear it and apply it to yourself.'

Job

6 Then Job replied:

- ¹ 'If only my anguish could be weighed
and all my misery be placed on the scales!
- ² It would surely outweigh the sand of the seas –
no wonder my words have been impetuous.
- ³ The arrows of the Almighty are in me,
my spirit drinks in their poison;
God's terrors are marshalled against me.
- ⁴ Does a wild donkey bray when it has grass,
or an ox bellow when it has fodder?
- ⁵ Is tasteless food eaten without salt,
or is there flavour in the sap of the mallow^a?
- ⁶ I refuse to touch it;
such food makes me ill.

^a 6 The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain.





- 8 Oh, that I might have my request,
that God would grant what I hope for,
9 that God would be willing to crush me,
to let loose his hand and cut off my
life!
- 10 Then I would still have this consolation –
my joy in unrelenting pain –
that I had not denied the words of the
Holy One.
- 11 ‘What strength do I have, that I should
still hope?
What prospects, that I should be
patient?’
- 12 Do I have the strength of stone?
Is my flesh bronze?
- 13 Do I have any power to help myself,
now that success has been driven
from me?
- 14 ‘Anyone who withholds kindness from a
friend
forsakes the fear of the Almighty.
15 But my brothers are as undependable as
intermittent streams,
as the streams that overflow
16 when darkened by thawing ice
and swollen with melting snow,
17 but that stop flowing in the dry season,
and in the heat vanish from their
channels.
18 Caravans turn aside from their routes;
they go off into the wasteland and
perish.
19 The caravans of Tema look for water,
the travelling merchants of Sheba
look in hope.
20 They are distressed, because they had
been confident;
they arrive there, only to be
disappointed.
21 Now you too have proved to be of no
help;
you see something dreadful and are
afraid.
22 Have I ever said, “Give something on my
behalf,
pay a ransom for me from your
wealth,
23 deliver me from the hand of the enemy,
rescue me from the clutches of the
ruthless?”
- 24 Teach me, and I will be quiet;
show me where I have been wrong.
25 How painful are honest words!
But what do your arguments prove?
26 Do you mean to correct what I say,
and treat my desperate words as
wind?
27 You would even cast lots for the
fatherless
and barter away your friend.
- 28 ‘But now be so kind as to look at me.
Would I lie to your face?
29 Relent, do not be unjust;
reconsider, for my integrity is at
stake.^b
30 Is there any wickedness on my lips?
Can my mouth not discern malice?’
- 7** ‘Do not mortals have hard service on
earth?
Are not their days like those of hired
labourers?
2 Like a slave longing for the evening
shadows,
or a hired labourer waiting to be paid,
3 so I have been allotted months of
futility,
and nights of misery have been
assigned to me.
4 When I lie down I think, “How long
before I get up?”
The night drags on, and I toss and
turn until dawn.
5 My body is clothed with worms and
scabs,
my skin is broken and festering.
6 ‘My days are swifter than a weaver’s
shuttle,
and they come to an end without
hope.
7 Remember, O God, that my life is but a
breath;
my eyes will never see happiness
again.
8 The eye that now sees me will see me no
longer;
you will look for me, but I will be no
more.

^b 29 Or my righteousness still stands





- ⁹As a cloud vanishes and is gone,
so one who goes down to the grave
does not return.
- ¹⁰He will never come to his house again;
his place will know him no more.
- ¹¹Therefore I will not keep silent;
I will speak out in the anguish of my
spirit,
I will complain in the bitterness of
my soul.
- ¹²Am I the sea, or the monster of the
deep,
that you put me under guard?
- ¹³When I think my bed will comfort me
and my couch will ease my
complaint,
- ¹⁴even then you frighten me with dreams
and terrify me with visions,
- ¹⁵so that I prefer strangling and death,
rather than this body of mine.
- ¹⁶I despise my life; I would not live for
ever.
Let me alone; my days have no
meaning.
- ¹⁷What is mankind that you make so
much of them,
that you give them so much
attention,
- ¹⁸that you examine them every morning
and test them every moment?
- ¹⁹Will you never look away from me,
or let me alone even for an instant?
- ²⁰If I have sinned, what have I done to you,
you who see everything we do?
Why have you made me your target?
Have I become a burden to you?^a
- ²¹Why do you not pardon my offences
and forgive my sins?
For I shall soon lie down in the dust;
you will search for me, but I shall be
no more.'

Bildad**8**

Then Bildad the Shuhite replied:

- ²'How long will you say such things?

^a 20 A few manuscripts of the Masoretic Text, an ancient Hebrew scribal tradition and Septuagint; most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text I have become a burden to myself.

- Your words are a blustering wind.
- ³Does God pervert justice?
Does the Almighty pervert what is
right?
- ⁴When your children sinned against him,
he gave them over to the penalty of
their sin.
- ⁵But if you will seek God earnestly
and plead with the Almighty,
⁶if you are pure and upright,
even now he will rouse himself on
your behalf
and restore you to your prosperous
state.
- ⁷Your beginnings will seem humble,
so prosperous will your future be.
- ⁸'Ask the former generations
and find out what their ancestors
learned,
⁹for we were born only yesterday and
know nothing,
and our days on earth are but a
shadow.
- ¹⁰Will they not instruct you and tell you?
Will they not bring forth words from
their understanding?
- ¹¹Can papyrus grow tall where there is no
marsh?
Can reeds thrive without water?
- ¹²While still growing and uncut,
they wither more quickly than grass.
- ¹³Such is the destiny of all who forget
God;
so perishes the hope of the goddess.
- ¹⁴What they trust in is fragile;
what they rely on is a spider's web.
- ¹⁵They lean on the web, but it gives way;
they cling to it, but it does not hold.
- ¹⁶They are like a well-watered plant in the
sunshine,
spreading its shoots over the garden;
- ¹⁷it entwines its roots round a pile of
rocks
and looks for a place among the
stones.
- ¹⁸But when it is torn from its spot,
that place disowns it and says, "I
never saw you."

^a 14 The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.



¹⁹ Surely its life withers away,
and^b from the soil other plants grow.

²⁰ Surely God does not reject one who is blameless
or strengthen the hands of evildoers.

²¹ He will yet fill your mouth with laughter
and your lips with shouts of joy.

²² Your enemies will be clothed in shame,
and the tents of the wicked will be no more.'

Job

9 Then Job replied:

² 'Indeed, I know that this is true.

But how can mere mortals prove their
innocence before God?

³ Though they wished to dispute with
him,
they could not answer him once in a
thousand times.

⁴ His wisdom is profound, his power is
vast.

Who has resisted him and come out
unscathed?

⁵ He moves mountains without their
knowing it
and overturns them in his anger.

⁶ He shakes the earth from its place
and makes its pillars tremble.

⁷ He speaks to the sun and it does not
shine;
he seals off the light of the stars.

⁸ He alone stretches out the heavens
and treads on the waves of the sea.

⁹ He is the Maker of the Bear^a and Orion,
the Pleiades and the constellations of
the south.

¹⁰ He performs wonders that cannot be
fathomed,
miracles that cannot be counted.

¹¹ When he passes me, I cannot see him;
when he goes by, I cannot perceive
him.

¹² If he snatches away, who can stop him?
Who can say to him, "What are you
doing?"

¹³ God does not restrain his anger;

even the cohorts of Rahab cowered at
his feet.

¹⁴ 'How then can I dispute with him?
How can I find words to argue with
him?

¹⁵ Though I were innocent, I could not
answer him;
I could only plead with my Judge for
mercy.

¹⁶ Even if I summoned him and he
responded,
I do not believe he would give me a
hearing.

¹⁷ He would crush me with a storm
and multiply my wounds for no
reason.

¹⁸ He would not let me catch my breath
but would overwhelm me with
misery.

¹⁹ If it is a matter of strength, he is mighty!
And if it is a matter of justice, who can
challenge him^b?

²⁰ Even if I were innocent, my mouth
would condemn me;
if I were blameless, it would
pronounce me guilty.

²¹ 'Although I am blameless,
I have no concern for myself;
I despise my own life.

²² It is all the same; that is why I say,
"He destroys both the blameless and
the wicked."

²³ When a scourge brings sudden death,
he mocks the despair of the innocent.

²⁴ When a land falls into the hands of the
wicked,
he blindfolds its judges.
If it is not he, then who is it?

²⁵ 'My days are swifter than a runner;
they fly away without a glimpse of joy.

²⁶ They skim past like boats of papyrus,
like eagles swooping down on their
prey.

²⁷ If I say, "I will forget my complaint,
I will change my expression, and
smile,"

²⁸ I still dread all my sufferings,

^b 19 Or Surely all the joy it has / is that
^a 9 Or of Leo

^b 19 See Septuagint; Hebrew *me*.



- for I know you will not hold me innocent.
- ²⁹ Since I am already found guilty, why should I struggle in vain?
- ³⁰ Even if I washed myself with soap and my hands with cleansing powder,
- ³¹ you would plunge me into a slime pit so that even my clothes would detest me.
- ³² 'He is not a mere mortal like me that I might answer him, that we might confront each other in court.
- ³³ If only there were someone to mediate between us, someone to bring us together,
- ³⁴ someone to remove God's rod from me, so that his terror would frighten me no more.
- ³⁵ Then I would speak up without fear of him, but as it now stands with me, I cannot.

10 'I loathe my very life; therefore I will give free rein to my complaint and speak out in the bitterness of my soul.

- ² I say to God: do not declare me guilty, but tell me what charges you have against me.
- ³ Does it please you to oppress me, to spurn the work of your hands, while you smile on the plans of the wicked?
- ⁴ Do you have eyes of flesh? Do you see as a mortal sees?
- ⁵ Are your days like those of a mortal or your years like those of a strong man,
- ⁶ that you must search out my faults and probe after my sin –
- ⁷ though you know that I am not guilty and that no one can rescue me from your hand?
- ⁸ 'Your hands shaped me and made me. Will you now turn and destroy me?
- ⁹ Remember that you moulded me like clay.

- Will you now turn me to dust again?
- ¹⁰ Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese,
- ¹¹ clothe me with skin and flesh and knit me together with bones and sinews?
- ¹² You gave me life and showed me kindness, and in your providence watched over my spirit.
- ¹³ 'But this is what you concealed in your heart, and I know that this was in your mind:
- ¹⁴ If I sinned, you would be watching me and would not let my offence go unpunished,
- ¹⁵ If I am guilty – woe to me! Even if I am innocent, I cannot lift my head, for I am full of shame and drowned in^a my affliction.
- ¹⁶ If I hold my head high, you stalk me like a lion and again display your awesome power against me.
- ¹⁷ You bring new witnesses against me and increase your anger towards me; your forces come against me wave upon wave.
- ¹⁸ 'Why then did you bring me out of the womb? I wish I had died before any eye saw me.
- ¹⁹ If only I had never come into being, or had been carried straight from the womb to the grave!
- ²⁰ Are not my few days almost over? Turn away from me so that I can have a moment's joy
- ²¹ before I go to the place of no return, to the land of gloom and utter darkness,
- ²² to the land of deepest night, of utter darkness and disorder, where even the light is like darkness.'

^a 15 Or and aware of



Zophar

11 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.

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 recognises 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.^a

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,

^a 12 Or wild donkey can be born tame

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 favour.

²⁰ But the eyes of the wicked will fail, and escape will elude them; their hope will become a dying gasp.^a

Job

12 Then Job replied:

² Doubtless you are the only people who matter,

and wisdom will die with you!

³ But I have a mind as well as you; I am not inferior to you.

Who does not know all these things?

⁴ I have become a laughing-stock to my friends,

though I called on God and he answered –

a mere laughing-stock, though righteous and blameless!

⁵ Those who are at ease have contempt for misfortune

as the fate of those whose feet are slipping.

⁶ The tents of marauders are undisturbed, and those who provoke God are

secure – those whom God has in his hand.^a

⁷ But ask the animals, and they will teach you,

or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you;

⁸ or speak to the earth, and it will teach you,

^a 6 Or those whose god is in their own hand



- or let the fish in the sea inform you.
- ⁹ Which of all these does not know
that the hand of the LORD has done
this?
- ¹⁰ In his hand is the life of every creature
and the breath of all mankind.
- ¹¹ Does not the ear test words
as the tongue tastes food?
- ¹² Is not wisdom found among the aged?
Does not long life bring
understanding?
- ¹³ To God belong wisdom and power;
counsel and understanding are his.
- ¹⁴ What he tears down cannot be rebuilt;
those he imprisons cannot be
released.
- ¹⁵ If he holds back the waters, there is
drought;
if he lets them loose, they devastate
the land.
- ¹⁶ To him belong strength and insight;
both deceived and deceiver are his.
- ¹⁷ He leads rulers away stripped
and makes fools of judges.
- ¹⁸ He takes off the shackles put on by kings
and ties a loincloth^b round their
waist.
- ¹⁹ He leads priests away stripped
and overthrows officials long
established.
- ²⁰ He silences the lips of trusted advisors
and takes away the discernment of
elders.
- ²¹ He pours contempt on nobles
and disarms the mighty.
- ²² He reveals the deep things of darkness
and brings utter darkness into the
light.
- ²³ He makes nations great, and destroys
them;
he enlarges nations, and disperses
them.
- ²⁴ He deprives the leaders of the earth of
their reason;
he makes them wander in a trackless
waste.
- ²⁵ They grope in darkness with no light;
he makes them stagger like
drunkards.

^b 18 Or shackles of kings; / and ties a belt

- 13** My eyes have seen all this,
my ears have heard and understood
it.
- ² What you know, I also know;
I am not inferior to you.
- ³ But I desire to speak to the Almighty
and to argue my case with God.
- ⁴ You, however, smear me with lies;
you are worthless physicians, all of
you!
- ⁵ If only you would be altogether silent!
For you, that would be wisdom.
- ⁶ Hear now my argument;
listen to the pleas of my lips.
- ⁷ Will you speak wickedly on God's
behalf?
Will you speak deceitfully for him?
- ⁸ Will you show him partiality?
Will you argue the case for God?
- ⁹ Would it turn out well if he examined
you?
Could you deceive him as you might
deceive a mortal?
- ¹⁰ He would surely call you to account
if you secretly showed partiality.
- ¹¹ Would not his splendour terrify you?
Would not the dread of him fall on
you?
- ¹² Your maxims are proverbs of ashes;
your defences are defences of clay.
- ¹³ Keep silent and let me speak;
then let come to me what may.
- ¹⁴ Why do I put myself in jeopardy
and take my life in my hands?
- ¹⁵ Though he slay me, yet will I hope in
him;
I will surely^a defend my ways to his
face.
- ¹⁶ Indeed, this will turn out for my
deliverance,
for no godless person would dare
come before him!
- ¹⁷ Listen carefully to what I say;
let my words ring in your ears.
- ¹⁸ Now that I have prepared my case,
I know I will be vindicated.
- ¹⁹ Can anyone bring charges against me?
If so, I will be silent and die.

^a 15 Or He will surely slay me; I have no hope – / yet I will

