

The
~~Suffering~~
~~Patience~~
Poetry
of
Job

by
Robert Hawkins

The Poetry of Job

	page		page
Job 3	4	Job's First Speech	<i>Job's Lament</i> 5
Job 4	10	Eliphaz's First Response to Job	<i>You Reap What You Sow</i> 11
Job 5	14	Eliphaz's Response Continues	<i>God is Just</i> 15
Job 6	20	Job's Second Speech: A Response to Eliphaz	<i>With Friends Like These</i> 21
Job 7	26	Job Cries Out to God	<i>Life is Hard</i> 27
Job 8	30	Bildad's First Response to Job	<i>Born Yesterday</i> 31
Job 9	36	Job's Third Speech: A Response to Bildad	<i>The Arbiter</i> 37
Job 10	42	Job Frames His Plea to God	<i>Created for This?</i> 43
Job 11	46	Zophar's First Response to Job	<i>More Grace than Deserved</i> 47
Job 12	50	Job's Fourth Speech: A Response to Zophar	<i>God is Great</i> 51
Job 13	56	Job Wants to Argue His Case with God	<i>Maxims and Proverbs</i> 57
Job 14	62	Job Speaks to the Finality of Death	<i>Till Death</i> 63
Job 15	66	Eliphaz's Second Response to Job	<i>You Presume Too Much</i> 67
Job 16	74	Job's Fifth Speech: A Response to Eliphaz	<i>Les Miserables</i> 75
Job 17	78	Job Contemplates Death	<i>A Byword</i> 79
Job 18	82	Bildad's Second Response to Job	<i>Wicked Ways</i> 83
Job 19	86	Job's Sixth Speech: A Response to Bildad	<i>By the Skin of my Teeth</i> 87
Job 20	92	Zophar's Second Response to Job	<i>Wicked Ways 2.0</i> 93
Job 21	98	Job's Seventh Speech: A Response to Zophar	<i>Healthy, Wealthy and Whys</i> 99
Job 22	104	Eliphaz's Third Response to Job	<i>Before and After</i> 105
Job 23	110	Job's Eighth Speech: A Response to Eliphaz	<i>Where is God?</i> 111
Job 24	114	Job Asks Why the Wicked Are Not Punished.	<i>When Will the Wicked?</i> 115
Job 25	120	Bildad's Third Response to Job	<i>Are we not Worms?</i> 121
Job 26	122	Job's Ninth Speech: A Response to Bildad	<i>He's Got the Whole World</i> 123
Job 27	126	Job's Final Speech	<i>Closing Arguments</i> 127
Job 28	130	Job Speaks of Wisdom and Understanding	<i>Got Wisdom?</i> 131
Job 29	136	Job Speaks of His Former Blessings	<i>Those Were the Days</i> 137
Job 30	142	Job Speaks of His Anguish	<i>Gone With the Wind</i> 143

	page		page
Job 31	148	Job's Final Protest of Innocence	<i>That is All</i> 149
Job 32	156	Elihu Responds to Job's Friends	<i>Age-Old Wisdom</i> 157
Job 33	160	Elihu Presents His Case Against Job	<i>Thrice</i> 161
Job 34	166	Elihu Accuses Job of Arrogance	<i>The Chutzpah of Job</i> 167
Job 35	172	Elihu Reminds Job of God's Justice	<i>Judge, Jury and Executioner</i> 173
Job 36	176	Elihu Reminds Job of God's Power, part 1. <i>Like Cattle Announcing A Squall</i>	177
Job 37	182	Elihu Reminds Job of God's Power, part 2.	<i>The Wonder of Thunder</i> 183
Job 38	186	The Lord Challenges Job	<i>Who Dare?</i> 187
Job 39	194	The Lord's Challenges Continue	<i>Pinions and Plumage</i> 195
Job 40	200	Job Cannot Repond to God	<i>Behold, Behemoth</i> 201
Job 41	206	The Lord's Final Challenge	<i>Regarding Leviathan</i> 207
Job 42	212	Job's Final Response to the Lord	<i>Dust and Ashes</i> 213

Job 3

Job's First Speech

At last Job spoke, and he cursed the day of his birth. He said:

"Let the day of my birth be erased,
and the night I was conceived. (3:3)

That day—may it turn to darkness;
may God above not care about it; may no light shine on it. (3:4 - NIV)
Let the darkness and utter gloom claim that day for its own.
Let a black cloud overshadow it, and let the darkness terrify it. (3:5)

Let that night be blotted off the calendar,
never again to be counted among the days of the year,
never again to appear among the months. (3:6)
May that night be barren; may no shout of joy be heard in it. (3:7 - NIV)

Let those who are experts at cursing—
whose cursing could rouse Leviathan—curse that day. (3:8)
Let its morning stars remain dark. Let it hope for light, but in vain;
may it never see the morning light. (3:9)

For that night did not shut the doors of the womb
to hide the sorrow from my eyes. (3:10 - BSB)

Job 3

Job's Lament

let the day of my birth be erased
Job 3:3

At last Job spoke, and he cursed the day of his birth. He said:

Let the day of my birth disappear from the earth;
how I wish I had never been born!
You don't know how I'm grieved that my mother conceived,
and I hold my conception in scorn.

May that morning be dark and the dawning embark
without light as if God did not care.
Let the gloom, like a cloud, and the darkness enshroud
that one day like it never was there.

Let that day disappear from the calendar year,
and the month be excluded for spite;
it would silence their voice — any chance to rejoice —
if the world could be barren that night.

Given time to rehearse, let those experts whose curse
raise Leviathan just curse away.
Let the stars turn their back and the twilight go black
and the morning ignore the new day.

For my own mother's womb had refused me a tomb,
so I breathed in my very first breath.

Why wasn't I born dead? Why didn't I die as I came from the womb? (3:11)
Why was I laid on my mother's lap? Why did she nurse me at her breasts? (3:12)

Had I died at birth, I would now be at peace. I would be asleep and at rest. (3:13)

I would rest with the world's kings and prime ministers,
whose great buildings now lie in ruins. (3:14)

I would rest with princes, rich in gold, whose palaces were filled with silver. (3:15)

Or why was I not hidden like a stillborn child,
Like infants who never saw light? (3:16 - NKJV)

For in death the wicked cause no trouble,
and the weary are at rest. (3:17)

Even captives are at ease in death, with no guards to curse them. (3:18)

Rich and poor are both there, and the slave is free from his master. (3:19)

Oh, why give light to those in misery,
and life to those who are bitter? (3:20)

They long for death, and it won't come.

They search for death more eagerly than for hidden treasure. (3:21)

They're filled with joy when they finally die,
and rejoice when they find the grave. (3:22)

Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden,
whom God has hedged in? (3:23 - ESV)

I cannot eat for sighing;

my groans pour out like water. (3:24)

What I always feared has happened to me.

What I dreaded has come true. (3:25)

Why'd I lay in her lap? Why'd I nurse at her pap?
Why'd I choose to live life over death?

If I'd died there somehow I'd be resting right now
with the kings and the princes of old,
in the houses they've built and their palaces filled
with their treasures of silver and gold.

Could I not remain hid like the fetus they've rid
and the stillborn they've buried away;
like the infants who died before they ever cried,
and whose eyes never saw light of day?

For in death troubles cease and the weary find peace
and the captives and guards are the same;
there, you cannot tell which are the poor or the rich,
and the master of slaves has no claim.

Why does God give a light to a man without sight
and a life to the bitter of soul?
For he digs in the ground beyond treasures he's found,
as he seeks for his grave in the hole.

With great joy are they filled and exceedingly thrilled
when they find they are at the grave's edge.
Why is light even shown when their paths are unknown —
for whom God has surrounded his hedge?

Now my sighing is great at the sight of my plate
and my crying pours out like the sea;
for the thing I most fear is now actually here
and I dread what has happened to me.

I have no peace, no quietness.
I have no rest; only trouble comes." (3:26)

There's no quiet, no ease — I'm a stranger to these,
I have feelings I can't even name;
with the peace in my head now replaced by the dread
since this trouble and turmoil came.

Job 4

Eliphaz's First Response to Job

Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied to Job:

"If one ventures a word with you, will you be wearied?

Yet who can keep from speaking? (4:2 - **BSB**)

In the past you have encouraged many people;
you have strengthened those who were weak. (4:3)

Your words have supported those who were falling;
you encouraged those with shaky knees. (4:4)

But now trouble comes to you, and you are discouraged;
it strikes you, and you are dismayed. (4:5 - **NIV**)

Doesn't your reverence for God give you confidence?

Doesn't your life of integrity give you hope? (4:6)

Stop and think! Do the innocent die?

When have the upright been destroyed? (4:7)

My experience shows that those who plant trouble
and cultivate evil will harvest the same. (4:8)

A breath from God destroys them.

They vanish in a blast of his anger. (4:9)

The lion may roar,
and the fierce lion may growl,

Job 4

You Reap What You Sow

those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it
Job 4:8 (NIV)

Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied to Job:

You may find my words somewhat distressing.
But, regardless — I really must speak.
You have been to so many, a blessing,
and have strengthened the hands of the weak.

And your words have upheld those who've stumbled;
you've encouraged the frail and afraid.
Oh, but now that your world has crumbled,
you are troubled and greatly dismayed.

Can your God-fearing life not be cherished,
with your hope and your blameless of ways?
Has one innocent soul ever perished?
Or the righteous been shortened of days?

I have noticed that those who sow trouble
are the ones who would harvest the same.
For God's breath can turn all things to rubble,
and consumed by the blast of his flame.

Now, the lion who's roaring has spoken,
and the fierce lion growls as he may;

yet the teeth of the young lions are broken. (4:10 - BSB)
The old lion perishes for lack of prey, and the cubs of the lioness are scattered. (4:11 - BSB)

This truth was given to me in secret,
as though whispered in my ear. (4:12)
It came to me in a disturbing vision at night,
when people are in a deep sleep. (4:13)

Fear gripped me,
and my bones trembled. (4:14)
A spirit swept past my face,
and my hair stood on end. (4:15)

The spirit stopped,
but I couldn't see its shape.
There was a form before my eyes.
In the silence I heard a voice say, (4:16)

'Can a mortal be innocent before God?
Can anyone be pure before the Creator?' (4:17)
If God does not trust his own angels
and has charged his messengers with foolishness, (4:18)

how much less will he trust people made of clay!
They are made of dust, crushed as easily as a moth. (4:19)

They are alive in the morning but dead by evening,
gone forever without a trace. (4:20)
Are not the cords of their tent pulled up,
so that they die without wisdom?" (4:21 - NIV)

yet the teeth of young lions lay broken,
while the older ones die without prey.

But a secret was whispered in silence,
amid thoughts and my dreams did it creep.
So disturbing — I woke with some violence,
when all men should be soundly asleep.

And the dread made me tremble and fear it —
and my bones rattled once and again.
Then a breath brushed my face like a spirit,
and the hair of my flesh stood on end.

It stood still, there before me — this being,
just as formless and strange as could be.
Still in shock at the sight I was seeing,
it then suddenly whispered to me:

*Can a man be more righteous and fervent —
is there anyone purer than God?*
For, if God doesn't trust his own servant,
nor the messenger he's sent abroad,

how much less will he trust the ones living
in their houses built simply of dust;
their own fragile frames far less forgiving
than a moth who is easily crushed!

They announce their *Hello* in the morning;
then by evening, unnoticed, *Goodbye*.
Are their tent cords not pulled without warning,
so without any wisdom they die?

Job 11

Zophar's First Response to Job

Then Zophar the Naamathite replied to Job:

"Should this stream of words go unanswered
and such a speaker be vindicated? (11:2 - **BSB**)

Should I remain silent while you babble on?

When you mock God, shouldn't someone make you ashamed? (11:3)

You claim, 'My beliefs are pure,'
and 'I am clean in the sight of God.' (11:4)

If only God would speak;
if only he would tell you what he thinks! (11:5)

If only he would tell you the secrets of wisdom,
for true wisdom is not a simple matter.

Listen! God is doubtless punishing you
far less than you deserve! (11:6)

Can you solve the mysteries of God?
Can you discover everything about the Almighty? (11:7)

They are higher than the heavens—what can you do?
They are deeper than Sheol—what can you know? (11:8 - **BSB**)

It is broader than the earth
and wider than the sea. (11:9)

Job 11

More Grace than Deserved

God is doubtless punishing you far less than you deserve
Job 11:6

Then Zophar the Naamathite replied to Job:

If the stream from your mouth went unanswered, we'd drown!
Do you think that your volume of words makes you right?
Should your babbling cause men to sit by without sound,
and your mocking persist without even a fight?

You have said, *My beliefs are as pure as the snow,*
and *I'm blameless and clean before God's holy eyes.*
But if only God opened his mouth would we know,
for his lips would declare what are truths, what are lies.

And he'd lay out his secrets of wisdom for you
in a straightforward fashion that you'd understand.
In his wisdom so manifold, perfect and true
you've been punished far less than your sin would demand!

Can you fathom the sheer depth of God in your mind?
Or discover the limits and bounds of Shaddai?
They are high — so much higher than heaven, you'll find.
They are deep — so much deeper than Sheol, they lie.

They are long — so much longer than earth can attest.
They are broad — so much broader than ocean or sea.

If God comes and puts a person in prison
or calls the court to order, who can stop him? (11:10)

For he knows those who are false,
and he takes note of all their sins. (11:11)
But the witless can no more become wise
than a wild donkey's colt can be born human. (11:12 - NIV)

If only you would prepare your heart
and lift up your hands to him in prayer! (11:13)
if you put away the sin that is in your hand
and allow no evil to dwell in your tent, (11:14 - NIV)

then, free of fault, you will lift up your face;
you will stand firm and without fear. (11:15 - NIV)
You will forget your misery;
it will be like water flowing away. (11:16)

Your life will be brighter than the noonday.
Even darkness will be as bright as morning. (11:17)
Having hope will give you courage.
You will be protected and will rest in safety. (11:18)

You will lie down unafraid,
and many will look to you for help. (11:19)
But the eyes of the wicked will fail,
and escape will elude them; their hope will become a dying gasp." (11:20 - NIV)

If a court was convened and God came to arrest
you, then who could restrain him? Not you, and not me!

For he knows the most worthless deceitful of men,
and he notes every sin, evil deed and revolt.
And the fool can no more be intelligent than
any child can be born as a wild donkey's colt.

As for you, if you'd only surrender your heart
and you'd stretch out your hands in a prayer of assent;
let your sinful intentions and evil depart
and allow no injustice to dwell in your tent.

Surely then you will brighten and lift up your face
without blemish and shame you will stand without fear.
And, forgetting your troubles — they'll all be erased,
unremembered as waters that soon disappear.

And your life will be brighter than noon every day;
even darkness will seem like the morning to you.
Gaining courage from hope in a confident way,
you will rest in security you never knew.

You will lie down at night and you won't be afraid;
you'll be sought out by others for counsel and aid.
For the wicked despair — no escape to be made;
with their last breath of air comes the last prayer they prayed.

Job 25

Bildad's Third Response to Job

Then Bildad the Shuhite replied:

"Dominion and awe belong to God;
he establishes order in the heights of heaven. (25:2 - NIV)

Is there any number to his armies?
Upon whom does his light not arise? (25:3 - ESV)

How then can a mortal be righteous before God?
How can one born of woman be pure? (25:4 - NIV)

Behold, even the moon is not bright,
and the stars are not pure in his eyes; (25:5 - ESV)

how much less man, who is a maggot,
and the son of man, who is a worm!" (25:6 - ESV)

Job 25

Are we not Worms?

we mortals are mere worms

Job 25:6

Then Bildad the Shuhite replied:

Dominion and awe rest alone with Shaddai;
establishing order in heaven on high.

Can anyone number his armies in size?
On whom does his glorious light not arise?

Can mortals be righteous before God Supreme?
Can anyone born of a woman be clean?

If, even the moon cannot shine half as bright,
nor stars in the heavens be pure in his sight;

then how much less man, like the maggots that squirm;
the son of a man, who's but merely a worm!

Job 32

Elihu Responds to Job's Friends

Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite said,

"I am young
and you are old,
so I held back from
telling you what I think. (32:6)

I said,
'Let days speak,
and many years
teach wisdom.' (32:7 - ESV)

But there is a spirit within people,
the breath of the Almighty
within them,
that makes them intelligent. (32:8)

Sometimes the elders
are not wise.
Sometimes the aged
do not understand justice. (32:9)

So listen to me, and let me tell you what I think. (32:10)
I have waited all this time,

Job 32

Age-Old Wisdom

wisdom comes with age

Job 32:7

Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite said,

As any can see: I am young and you're old,
and that is the reason I haven't been bold:
not daring to share in the thoughts that I hold,
not airing the things that I knew.

I thought, *Let days speak — this experienced sage,*
for wisdom is often a product of age.
Respectfully, I've not encroached on your stage,
but quietly listened to you.

A spirit exists in all men — you and I,
dispensed from the breath of Almighty, Shaddai:
the gift of instruction from heaven on high,
and wisdom that's pure from the start.

But, sometimes our elders are not always wise,
nor should we allow some with age to advise;
when honor and love are not seen in their eyes,
then wisdom is not in their heart.

So, listen to me as I won't be deterred,
your insights and reasons I've already heard,

listening very carefully to your arguments,
listening to you grope for words. (32:11)

I have listened,
but not one of you
has refuted Job
or answered his arguments. (32:12)

Do not say, 'We have found wisdom;
God will rout him, not man.' (32:13 - NAS)
If Job had been arguing with me,
I would not answer with your kind of logic! (32:14)

You sit there baffled, with nothing more to say. (32:15)
Should I continue to wait, now that you are silent?
Must I also remain silent? (32:16)
No, I will say my piece. I will speak my mind. (32:17)

For I am full of words, and my spirit within me compels me. (32:18 - BSB)
I am like a cask of wine without a vent,
like a new wineskin ready to burst! (32:19)
I must speak and find relief; I must open my lips and reply. (32:20 - NIV)

I will not show partiality to any man
or use flattery toward any person. (32:21 - ESV)
For I do not know how to flatter,
or my Maker would remove me in an instant." (32:22 - BSB)

I've waited while you groped for just the right word;
no longer will I remain mute.

I've paid close attention to you all along,
with none of you proving where Job might be wrong;
your answers to queries were not very strong:
Job's questions — you could not refute.

Don't claim to me, *Wisdom has finally been found;*
by God — and not man — will Job's life be cast down.
Job spoke not to me so I shall not be bound
by logic that you failed to use.

You're baffled, and silent. In fact, you look stunned!
Have words finally failed you since I have heard none?
Should I remain quiet because you are done?
No, I will now give you my views.

The spirit compels me, I'm filled up with words.
Like wineskin that's new and is ready to burst.
I'll speak now to find my relief for this thirst:
I'll open my lips and reply.

Impartial and true will my words ever be;
for never was I good at skilled flattery.
If tried, then my Maker would soon destroy me,
and harshly judge me when I die.

Job 39

The Lord's Challenges Continue

"Do you know when the wild goats give birth?
Have you watched as deer are born in the wild? (39:1)
Can you count the months they fulfill,
Or do you know the time they give birth? (39:2 - NAS)

They crouch down and bring forth their young;
their labor pains are ended. (39:3 - NIV)
Their young thrive and grow strong in the wilds;
they leave and do not return. (39:4 - NIV)

Who gives the wild donkey its freedom?
Who untied its ropes? (39:5)
I gave it the wasteland as its home,
the salt flats as its habitat. (39:6 - NIV)

It scoffs at the noise of the village
and never hears the shouts of a driver. (39:7 - CSB)
He ranges the mountains as his pasture,
and he searches after every green thing. (39:8 - ESV)

Will the wild ox consent to being tamed?
Will it spend the night in your stall? (39:9)
Can you bind him in the furrow with ropes,
or will he harrow the valleys after you? (39:10 - ESV)

Job 39

Pinions and Plumage

the pinions and plumage of love
Job 39:13 (ESV)

Do you know when the wild goats are birthing?
Have you seen the faun born of the deer?
Do you have any skill to know when they fulfill?
Do you know when their times' finally here?

They will crouch down when bearing their offspring;
only then will their birth pangs adjourn.
Then the ones who survive will grow stronger and thrive;
when they leave, they will never return.

Tell me, who gave the wild ass its freedom;
loosed the rope and allowed it to roam?
For I've given it land that is nothing but sand,
making salt flats and wasteland its home.

And it scoffs at the noise in the village;
drivers' shouts never reaching its ears.
Through the mountains, the ass roams in search of green grass,
then moves on when its food disappears.

Will the wild ox consent to your service?
Will it stay for the night in your stall?
Will it furrow a length if you harness its strength?
Will it harrow your valleys at all?

Given its strength, can you trust it?
Can you leave and trust the ox to do your work? (39:11)

Can you trust it to haul in your grain
and bring it to your threshing floor? (39:12 - NIV)

The wings of the ostrich wave proudly, (39:13a - ESV)
but cannot match the pinions and feathers of the stork. (39:13b - BSB)

She lays her eggs on top of the earth,
letting them be warmed in the dust. (39:14)

forgetting that a foot may crush them
and that the wild beast may trample them. (39:15 - ESV)

She treats her young harshly, as if not her own,
with no concern that her labor was in vain. (39:16 - BSB)

for God did not endow her with wisdom
or give her a share of good sense. (39:17 - NIV)

But once she starts running,
she laughs at a rider on the fastest horse. (39:18 - CEV)

Have you given the horse its strength
or clothed its neck with a flowing mane? (39:19)

Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper?
the glory of his nostrils is terrible. (39:20 - KJV)

He paws in the valley and rejoices in his strength; (39:21a - BSB)
and charges into the fray. (39:21b - NIV)

It laughs at fear and is unafraid.
It does not run from the sword. (39:22)

The arrows rattle against it,
and the spear and javelin flash. (39:23)

Can you count and rely on such power?
Will you leave it to manage your chores?
Will your trust be in vain lest it gathers your grain
and then brings it to your threshing floors?

Now the wings of the ostrich wave proudly,
but compared with the stork's — there's no match!
For her eggs can be found there on top of the ground,
keeping warm in the dust till they hatch.

That the eggs might be crushed is forgotten;
or be trampled by some wild beast.
Her young's treatment infers that they're not really hers;
that she labored for naught in the least.

For God did not endow her with wisdom,
neither gave her a share of good sense.
But the contest is done once she gets up to run,
and she laughs at the horseman's expense.

Have you given the horse strength and vigor;
or the mane flowing down from his head?
Will he take off in fright like a grasshopper might?
His proud snorting strikes terror and dread!

He paws fiercely the ground in the valley;
and he charges hard into the fray.
And he laughs, unafraid, and is never dismayed;
from the sword, he does not turn away.

And against him, the arrows will rattle,
as will javelin, lance and the spear.

Trembling with excitement, he devours the distance;
he cannot stand still when the trumpet sounds. (39:24 - **BSB**)

At the blast of the trumpet, he snorts with fervor. He catches the scent of battle from afar—
the shouts of captains and the cry of war. (39:25 - **BSB**)

Is it your wisdom that makes the hawk soar
and spread its wings toward the south? (39:26)

Is it at your command that the eagle
mounts up and makes his nest on high? (39:27 - **ESV**)

He dwells on a cliff and lodges there;
his stronghold is on a rocky crag. (39:28 - **BSB**)

From there it hunts its prey,
keeping watch with piercing eyes. (39:29)

Its young gulp down blood.
Where there's a carcass, there you'll find it." (39:30)

He cannot stand around but devours the ground
at the blast of the horn in his ear.

He defiantly snorts at the trumpet;
breathes the battle's scent into his mouth.
Is it by your insight that the hawk soars in flight,
as it stretches its wings to the south?

Does the eagle mount up at your bidding;
building nests in the crags of the sky?
It elects to abide on the steep mountainside
on the cliffs in its fortress on high.

And from there, for its prey it keeps searching;
keeping watch with its eyes on the ground.
And its young make a feast on the blood of a beast;
near the slain, it will surely be found.

*This is dedicated
to all of the Jobs
of the world.*

And their friends.

*And to those who question why
bad things happen to good people.*

— Robert Hawkins

*I wish that my words were recorded
and inscribed in a book,
by an iron stylus on lead,
or chiseled in stone forever.*

— Job

Job 19:23-24