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# Study Questions for the *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible*

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## The Book of Job

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## STUDY QUESTIONS

## Chapter 1

*For understanding*

- 1:1. Where is the land of Uz in relation to Canaan? What characteristics of Job are established at the outset? Since in later dialogues Job adamantly defends himself against charges of wrongdoing, what point is being made about him?
- 1:5. What role does Job play in his family? What does his ministry of sacrifice reveal about him? For what does this information lay the groundwork in later chapters?
- Word Study: Satan (1:6).** (See p. 18.) What is the meaning of Satan as a legal term? To what can it refer? Even though Satan appears alongside the angels of God in Job 1–2, is there reason to suspect that he is not a benevolent spirit? Though given authority over Job's circumstances, how much influence can he exercise?
- 1:9. What does Satan question? What is at issue? Why is Job to be tested? According to a homily of St. Basil, what did the devil charge with respect to Job? Why, then, did God strip Job of his belongings?
- 1:21. To what does his mother's womb refer? What does Job mean by saying he is naked? How is death presented in Job and elsewhere? What analogy is thus implied about the earth?

*For application*

- 1:1–4. Are you satisfied with your level of wealth? What do your resources enable you to do or prevent you from doing? What are some of the spiritual dangers of great wealth?
- 1:5. How often do you pray for members of your family? For what kinds of things do you pray in their regard? How long have you been praying for them, and how consistent are you?
- 1:13–21. What are some of the worst losses (other than illness) you have sustained? What was your attitude toward God when these losses occurred? What can Job's response of worshipping and blessing the Lord in the face of loss teach you about handling your own losses?

## Chapter 2

*For understanding*

- 2:3. What point does the expression "without cause" reiterate? According to Tertullian, why does Job's example of patience in soul and body matter to us?
- 2:4. What does the expression "skin for skin" mean? What is Satan insinuating?
- 2:9. What does Job's wife have in mind by telling Job to "curse God and die"? In what way are Job's wife and Eve (Adam's wife) similar?
- 2:11–13. From where do Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar probably come? For what was Edom renowned in antiquity?

*For application*

- 2:4. Is Satan's remark true of your concern for your life? For what would you lay down your life (be willing to die)?
- 2:5–7. What illness or disability do you most dread? Why? If tomorrow you were diagnosed with that illness, what would you do?
- 2:9–10. Have setbacks and disasters in your family affected family members' attitude toward God? How might Job's reply to his wife be an appropriate response to such events?

## Chapter 3

*For understanding*

- 3:1–26. What is the subject of Job's first monologue? Though Job stops short of cursing God, what does he curse? What other biblical figure did the same thing?
- 3:8. What could professional soothsayers be hired to do? What is Leviathan?
- 3:23. What is indicated by Job's feeling that God has hedged him in? By what kind of "hedge" was he formerly surrounded?
- Chart: The Dialogues of Job.** Of what kind of debate does much of the Book of Job consist? In chaps. 4–27, how are the conversations arranged? In each rotation, what is the sequence? How does the third cycle differ from the other two?

*For application*

- 3:1–10. In cursing the day of his birth—an event long past—what is Job really cursing? Assuming that a curse is a prayer that evil might befall someone or something, how likely is it that God would answer such a prayer?
- 3:11–13. What is the attraction of death among those who entertain suicidal thoughts? How does Job's vision of death compare with your own?
- 3:16. How do you respond when someone miscarries a pregnancy? How do you respond when someone chooses to abort a child? If there is a difference in your response, why?
- 3:20–22. Have you ever known someone who was lingering in life but either wanted to die or wondered why he was kept alive? What was his reason for wanting death? What kinds of comfort or advice did he typically receive from you or from others?

## Study Questions

### Chapter 4

#### For understanding

1. **4:1–5:27.** In his first speech, what does Eliphaz argue? To what traditional doctrine does he adhere? What does Eliphaz imply that Job needs to do? According to St. Ambrose, why is Job's third "trial by words" not a trivial one?
2. **4:10.** Who is the "lion" to which Eliphaz refers? What point is he making? What sort of persons are often compared to lions in Scripture?
3. **4:12–21.** What does Eliphaz claim to have received? Of what did it assure him? Why is man a lesser being than the angels here?
4. **4:19.** What are the "houses of clay" to which Eliphaz refers? What biblical imagery does his remark about dust recall?

#### For application

1. **4:3–5.** Eliphaz accuses Job of failing to heed his own advice. Under what circumstances might you have been guilty of applying a double standard, one to others' behavior and another to your own? Did your behavior change when you became aware of it?
2. **4:8.** Eliphaz seems to quote a proverb, similar to "Sow the wind, reap the whirlwind" (Hos 8:7). In your experience, how true is this? What exceptions have you noticed?
3. **4:17.** How would you answer the question Eliphaz puts to Job? With the help of grace, can anyone attain moral purity? If so, can you think of any examples? How do these examples encourage you?
4. **4:18.** Who might the angels be that God has charged with error? According to CCC 391–93, what caused their fall from grace? Why does the Catechism say that the choices they made are irrevocable? What is the extent of their power (395)?

### Chapter 5

#### For understanding

1. **5:7.** What does the Hebrew literally say instead of "sparks"? What kind of Canaanite god is this? How is he sometimes depicted?
2. **5:13.** According to Eliphaz, how does God deal with the wicked? In the end, what will God do with the scales of justice? By appealing to this verse, what does Paul urge the proud and sophisticated Corinthians to do?
3. **5:17.** If suffering is not the vengeance of an irascible deity, what is it? What is divine discipline meant to do? Although Eliphaz enunciates a true principle, why is he wrong in applying it to Job? What term for the Almighty is used over 30 times in the book of Job, and in what era was it used?
4. **5:19.** For what is the expression "six troubles . . . seven" an idiom? What are the seven troubles Job has already suffered?

#### For application

1. **5:8.** What does it mean to "seek God"? How does one seek him? How does one know when he has found him?
2. **5:17a.** Why would a person whom God reproves be happy? According to the note for this verse, what is the purpose of God's discipline? Aside from physical suffering, how might his discipline reveal itself in one's life?
3. **5:17b.** Read Heb 12:5–8. Do you tend to receive the discipline of the Lord as a cause for discouragement or as an opportunity for improvement?

### Chapters 6–7

#### For understanding

1. **6:1–7:21.** What emotions take hold of Job in his reply to Eliphaz? What does he wish to know? What is the only hope he appears to have?
2. **6:7.** What food does Job find loathsome? Why?
3. **7:9.** What is Sheol? What does experience teach about it? What is Job not denying about God, and what hope may he express? When was the doctrine of bodily resurrection revealed?
4. **7:12.** To what does Job allude in referring to the sea or the sea monster? As what were these things personified?
5. **7:17.** How does the Psalter use the expression "what is man"? On the other hand, how has Job allowed suffering to shape his attitude toward God?

#### For application

1. **6:15–17.** What is a "fair weather friend"? How does such a friendship compare with the command of Jesus to love one another as he loves us?
2. **6:21–23.** If Job has not asked his friends for anything, as he says, what does he want from them? Have you ever been in a situation where all you wanted was a listening ear? If so, what value were you seeking from it?
3. **7:17–18.** Job does not want God to pay so much attention to him or to test him, whereas the Psalmist wants exactly that (see Ps 26:2 and Ps 139:33). What kind of attention do you want God to give you? How open are you to his probing and testing?
4. **7:20.** What harm does one's sin do to God? Why is God concerned when someone sins?

### Chapter 8

#### For understanding

1. **8:1–22.** How is Bildad's counsel basically the same as that of Eliphaz? What does Bildad assume about Job, in contrast to the prologue?
2. **8:3.** What possibility finds no place in Bildad's theology? About what is he right, and about what is he wrong? What does Scripture teach about trials?
3. **8:7.** What do Bildad's words foreshadow in the story?

*For application*

1. **8:5–7.** Bildad seems to suggest that a pure and upright life will attract God's attention and merit a reward. According to CCC 2008, what right does man have to any merit with regard to God? What earthly benefits do you think a person actually receives for living a pure and upright life?
2. **8:15.** Assuming that the word *house* in this verse can refer not merely to a building but to one's family (parents, children, and other relatives), what might "leaning on his house" mean? In what ways might the "house" in that sense fail to stand?

**Chapters 9–10***For understanding*

1. **9:1–10:22.** In his reply to Bildad, what does Job desire? What does he dread? Where does this conflict leave him? What kind of language permeates the discourse?
2. **9:8.** How are the heavens pictured? How did the Creator demonstrate his Lordship over the sea? Which miracle of Jesus resembles the image of God treading upon the waters? Which evangelist seems to bring this out most clearly?
3. **9:13.** What is Rahab? What is the Lord said to have done to it at creation and at the Exodus?
4. **9:24.** For what is Job insinuating that God is responsible? What is it truer to say about Job himself?
5. **10:8–11.** In these verses, what do the images portray? What similar expressions recall other Old Testament passages?

*For application*

1. **9:3–14.** What are Job's reasons for believing that he cannot win an argument with God? From a spiritual perspective, what would be the point of trying to argue with him?
2. **9:22–24.** In view of the many genocidal events of the past century, how would you answer Job's question in v. 24?
3. **10:2.** When it seems that God will not give reasons for the bad things that happen, what challenges to faith are likely to arise? How can a faithful Christian protect his faith at such a time?
4. **10:18–22.** People suffering from depression may think or speak as Job does here. If reason and persuasion do not lift their spirits, what kind of human interaction might? How would you encourage someone who is going through a "down" spell?

**Chapters 11–12***For understanding*

1. **11:1–20.** In his first speech, what is Zophar's attitude to Job? What does he think Job is trying to accomplish by declaring his innocence? Among other problems, how does Zophar overstate his accusations?
2. **11:7–9.** What cannot compare with the limitless scope of God's wisdom? On what does Paul insist in making a similar point in 1 Cor 2:10?
3. **12:1–14:22.** In his reply to Zophar, what complaints does Job make against his friends? Deprived of a fair hearing before his peers, what does Job wish to do?
4. **12:7–25.** What does Job recognize about God? How is that different from what his friends acknowledge?

*For application*

1. **11:4.** How do people tend to react when the wrong they have done is pointed out to them? What is the best way to respond when someone corrects you for a genuine fault?
2. **11:6.** As a Christian, how would you respond to Zophar's statement that God exacts less of us than our guilt deserves? How does God deal with our guilt in Jesus Christ? Under what circumstances might we get what our guilt deserves?
3. **12:4.** Has your Christian faith ever been an object of ridicule or amusement among people who know you? How prepared are you to face ridicule or mockery for your faith? How do you think God wants you to confront it?
4. **12:13–25.** How do Zophar's comments about God's reversal of the fortunes of the mighty and the lowly compare with similar verses in Mary's *Magnificat* (Lk 1:51–53)? What is Zophar's intent in saying what he does, and what is Mary's?

**Chapter 13***For understanding*

1. **13:3.** For what two things does Job long? What evidence is there that he still maintains a clear conscience?
2. **13:7.** How does Job turn the tables on his friends? In the end, what will God do to them? According to Thomas Aquinas, what did Job's accusers have to adopt in order to defend God's justice? What does one who defends the truth with lies actually do?
3. **13:16.** What is the logic of Job's statement here? When does Paul allude to the Greek LXX version of this passage?
4. **13:26.** What do Job's words about the "iniquities of my youth" make clear? According to St. Ambrose, how is the conduct of youth different from the innocence of childhood and the prudence of old age?

*For application*

1. **13:7.** What must we do in order to defend God's goodness in the face of evil without resorting to lies? Have you considered the question of why God allows evil? What was your response?
2. **13:15–18.** Is Job exhibiting bravery or bravado? Mounting a defense or being defensive? When a person knowingly sins, which is he doing when he defends his actions? When he admits that he sinned?
3. **13:20–21.** Whom is Job addressing here? What two things does he want granted to him? Given the biblical attitude to the danger of seeing the face of God, what risk is Job taking in saying that he will not hide himself from God's face?
4. **13:26.** How have the iniquities of your youth contributed to making you the kind of person you are? Have they ever hindered or constrained your relationship with God?

## Study Questions

### Chapter 14

#### For understanding

1. **14:4.** To what do some read this verse as a reference? In connection with what has Catholic tradition often read it?
2. **14:7–17.** In considering a tree that is felled but that can later revive and experience new life, what is Job wishing aloud for himself? What kind of possibility is he considering? According to St. Gregory the Great, how does the analogy of the tree show what the just man can expect? How, like branches sprouting forth, can his suffering influence others?
3. **14:22.** According to ancient speculation, what does man retain even in death?

#### For application

1. **14:4.** G.K. Chesterton has said that the doctrine of Original Sin is the only one that can be proven from experience. What does your experience tell you about it?
2. **14:5.** Modern biological sciences are always looking for ways to extend man's normal life-span. In your view, what is the value of such efforts? What should one do with the span of life that he has?
3. **14:14–17.** Job speculates that, if he were to die and then live again, God would "long for the work of [his] hands" and Job's sin would be no more—possibly a minimalist idea of heaven. What is your picture of heaven? How often do you think of it? What do you expect of it?
4. **14:14.** How would you answer Job's question in this verse? How do you understand the doctrine expressed in the Apostles' Creed on the resurrection of the body?

### Chapter 15

#### For understanding

1. **15:1–35.** In his second speech, with what does Eliphaz charge Job? As far as he can tell, what is Job doing, and how?
2. **15:4.** What is the foundation of true wisdom? What should the reader recall about the description of Job at the start of the book?
3. **15:15.** Who are God's holy ones? What is unclear about the reason Eliphaz thinks the way he does? What perhaps underlies his reasoning?
4. **15:20–35.** What conventional wisdom does Eliphaz reiterate? About what does he remind Job? What in his remarks is clearly overstated?

#### For application

1. **15:4.** Christian meditation is a form of mental prayer, as described in CCC 2705–8. Do you have any experience with it? If so, has it been fruitful for you? If you have never tried meditation in the sense described in the Catechism, is there anything that prevents you from trying it?
2. **15:11.** Describing the effects of the Sacrament of Penance, the Catechism (1468) hints at consolations like: "peace and serenity of conscience". From where do spiritual consolations come? Since they often accompany prayer, what importance might they have for one's prayer? What dangers might arise from frequent consolations?
3. **15:20–24.** St. Ignatius Loyola contrasts spiritual consolations with spiritual desolations, periods when prayer is hard for any number of reasons. While spiritual desolation is not always a result of sin (as Eliphaz might think), what else might cause one to struggle with prayer?

### Chapters 16–17

#### For understanding

1. **16:1–17:17.** In his second reply to Eliphaz, how does the mockery of his friends and the scorn of his foes make Job feel? Still, for what does he continue to plead? By this point, what worries Job?
2. **16:4.** Of what is the shaking of his head a sign?
3. **16:15.** What is sackcloth? When is it worn?
4. **17:3.** What legal procedure is alluded to here? For what is God being asked? To what legal gesture does "giving surety" (literally, slapping the hand) allude?

#### For application

1. **16:15.** According to CCC 2015, spiritual progress entails some form of *mortification*, a putting "to death that which is earthly in you" (Col 3:5), like wearing sackcloth or enduring something uncomfortable out of spiritual discipline. What place do acts of mortification and self-discipline have in your spiritual life? Have you tried to follow Paul's advice?
2. **16:16.** One of the Beatitudes says, "Blessed are those who mourn" (Mt 5:4), especially over their own sin. Have you ever mourned to the point of tears over your past sins? How might such mourning help your spiritual growth?
3. **17:1.** Clarify what "broken in spirit" means. How can one tell when a man's spirit has been broken? Why does Ps 51:17 regard a broken spirit as something acceptable to God? In that sense, what does a "broken spirit" enable God to do?
4. **17:13–15.** Job speaks here of his loss of hope. If his health and fortunes were restored, of what would his hope consist? How is the Christian virtue of hope different from Job's, and what is the object of its hope (see CCC 1817–21)?

### Chapter 18

#### For understanding

1. **18:1–21.** In his second speech, what familiar warning does Bildad reiterate? Why is Bildad insulted?
2. **18:15.** What is brimstone? How was it used in ancient times?
3. **18:17–19.** What ancient belief does Bildad share? From that perspective, what is the worst thing that can happen to a man?

*For application*

1. **18:13.** Certain diseases tend to run in families. Is it likely that you or a loved one will contract a particular disease prevalent in your family? How ready is your faith if this occurs?
2. **18:14.** Read the note for this verse. How often do you think about death, and is there anything about it that terrifies you? What spiritual preparations have you made for it?
3. **18:17.** Many people wonder what legacy they will leave behind when they die. What sort of legacy do you want to leave? How important is it that the memory of you lives after you?

**Chapter 19***For understanding*

1. **19:1–29.** What makes Job's second reply to Bildad a high point in the book? What hope does he express for the first time?
2. **19:6.** To what charge is Job responding here? By contrast, how does he look on God? According to John Chrysostom, what is Job suggesting here?
3. **19:25–27.** What is Job's newfound conviction? Name some reasons why scholars arrive at different interpretations about "when" Job expects to be vindicated. How has the passage been read traditionally, as exemplified in Jerome's rendering of the text in the Latin Vulgate?
4. **19:25.** How is God described here? What does a redeemer in that sense do?
5. **19:26.** In what two ways can the prepositional phrase "from my flesh" be understood, and what is its most likely sense here? According to St. Thomas Aquinas, how will the eyes of the resurrected body behold God?

*For application*

1. **19:13–19.** Job complains that his physical condition makes him repulsive to everyone, including his wife. How did Jesus approach people who were physically repulsive? What kind of respect and love do such people deserve, regardless of their condition?
2. **19:25.** Reread the note for this verse. If you have been baptized into the family of God as his adopted child, what has God's role become? How personally do you take this?
3. **19:26–27.** In addition to purple or black, white is one of the liturgical colors used for Catholic funerals. What are the significances of these colors?

**Chapter 20***For understanding*

1. **20:1–29.** About what is Zophar's second speech another belabored warning? What does he emphasize about sin?
2. **20:3.** About what is Zophar offended? What change in the debate about God's ways is taking place?
3. **20:17.** For what was the land of Palestine known?
4. **20:28.** According to Zophar, what is the "day of God's wrath" going to accomplish?

*For application*

1. **20:3.** When arguments get heated, what are some ways to avoid giving or taking offense? How might interior prayer in the midst of a discussion help?
2. **20:5.** What is the difference between *pleasure* and *joy*? Which word would you use to describe the satisfaction of eating a favorite dessert? Or the delight of completing a challenging task? What makes joy a fruit of the Spirit?
3. **20:12–14.** What truth is there in Zophar's words? How could a momentary triumph when a plan succeeds turn bitter to the victor? How might a person permanently silence his conscience?

**Chapter 21***For understanding*

1. **21:1–34.** In his second reply to Zophar, what is Job's argument? What claim does he contest in particular? What do sinners oftentimes get away with? What is Job's conclusion?
2. **21:19.** To what does the traditional maxim cited here eventually give way in Israel's moral theology? On what grounds does Job reason that the traditional perspective is flawed?
3. **21:23–25.** What correlation does Job dispute? What does not always come to the righteous, and what deserts might the wicked avoid? What do appearances indicate?

*For application*

1. **21:15.** Whom does prayer benefit? What profit does anyone get by praising God, thanking him for favors, or interceding for others?
2. **21:19.** Compare what Job says in this verse to Ex 34:7. What are the children of the wicked likely to learn about moral responsibility from their parents? How is the iniquity of an alcoholic or abusive father actually visited on his children and his children's children?
3. **21:29–32.** The fact that notorious wrongdoers often die rich and are respected and honored afterward bothers many people today, just as it bothered Job. Do you question the justice they receive? Since Jesus forbids us to judge lest we be judged (Mt 7:1–2), how are we to think about their lives?

**Chapter 22***For understanding*

1. **22:1–30.** In his third speech, what does Eliphaz fire at Job? What are Job's crimes said to include? What does Eliphaz insist that Job needs to do?

## Study Questions

2. **22:6–9.** If Job never actually committed these crimes, why does Eliphaz say he did? Later on, what will Job claim so as to deny these charges?
3. **22:21–30.** Although Eliphaz wrongly finds iniquity in Job, what is the value of his advice? How does he explain the ways to repent?
4. **22:24.** Where is Ophir probably located? For what was it renowned in the biblical world?

### For application

1. **22:2.** Jesus advises us to admit that we are unprofitable servants (Lk 17:10). What does he mean? If our service is of no profit to God, what benefit does it have?
2. **22:6–9.** What are the spiritual and corporal works of mercy (see CCC 2447 and surrounding paragraphs)? What motives should inspire us to perform them?
3. **22:23–26.** What does it mean for you to “make the Almighty your gold”? What benefit does Eliphaz suggest you get from doing that? Can you think of other benefits as well?
4. **22:29.** Why is pride one of the capital sins (CCC 1866)? What is the difference between a healthy self-esteem and the sin of pride?

## Chapters 23–24

### For understanding

1. **23:1–24:25.** In his third reply to Eliphaz, about what does Job remain confident? To what notion do his friends cling? About what exceptions to their ideas is Job aware?
2. **23:13.** What does Job’s summary of the biblical doctrine of divine sovereignty mean to say about it? In this context, what is Job contesting?
3. **24:1.** What are the “times of judgment”? What is Job about to refute?
4. **24:2.** To what is removing landmarks equivalent? What was the attitude toward moving boundary marks in ancient Israel?
5. **24:13–17.** Of what are light and darkness symbolic? How is this association forged?

### For application

1. **23:7.** The Creed says that God is the judge of the living and the dead. What does it mean for him to be the judge of the living? What forms might that judgment take? Why would it be better for a Christian to undergo judgment while still alive than to have it imposed after death?
2. **23:17.** Saints like Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross have spoken of periods of “darkness” as being part of the normal spiritual life. As a metaphor, what does the darkness of which they speak represent? What is the antidote to it (CCC 164–65)?
3. **24:13–17.** These verses use the analogy of darkness in a different sense, as the note for these verses indicates. Aside from the physical associations, what moral associations can one make with darkness and light?

## Chapters 25–26

### For understanding

1. **25:1–6.** What does Bildad refuse to accept in his third speech? Whose arguments is he merely summarizing?
2. **26:1–14.** After a barrage of sarcastic rebukes in his third reply to Bildad, what does Job stress about God’s power? At this point, what is Job’s attitude?
3. **26:12.** What is Rahab? What is the point here?
4. **26:13.** According to St. Ephraem the Syrian, of what do these words about the fleeing serpent speak? Why is Satan called a fleeing serpent?

### For application

1. **25:6.** Contrast Bildad’s view of man with that of Ps 8:4–5. What balance needs to be struck, in view of the Catholic doctrines of both the sinful nature and the absolute value of man (CCC 405, 1700–1709)?
2. **26:2–3.** Who is the person Job describes as having no power or strength or wisdom in these verses? What is his tone?
3. **26:4.** How would you answer Job’s question about the spirit behind Bildad’s comments? Who is the Accuser of whom he may be thinking? What spirit often animates the accusatory remarks that come from our mouths (see Mt 15:18–19)?

## Chapter 27

### For understanding

1. **27:1–12.** How does Job bring the debate to a climax? By employing a solemn oath formula, what is Job doing?
2. **27:7.** By referring to “my enemy”, of whom does Job seem to be thinking? Who is *not* meant? Why not?
3. **27:13–23.** Whom do some scholars regard as the speaker of these verses? Who is speaking in the present arrangement of the text? What does it show about Job?

### For application

1. **27:2.** Have you ever sworn an oath (e.g., in court, or before a justice of the peace)? In swearing an oath, what are you doing, according to the formula (CCC 2150)? Why then is perjury such a serious offense?
2. **27:5–6.** Job is tenacious about his righteousness and formally swears to it. Since all three of his friends disagree with him, how rational is his tenacity? When the Church tenaciously insists that her moral doctrine is true and the contrary false, why is her tenacity considered irrational or intolerant? On what grounds does she maintain her doctrine?
3. **27:7.** What fate does Job seem to wish upon his enemies? What is the Christian attitude toward enemies?

## Chapter 28

### *For understanding*

1. **28:1–28.** What is the subject of this chapter, and what function does it have? Literarily, what are two possibilities regarding the identity of the author or speaker of this composition? Theologically, what does the poem indicate about true wisdom?
2. **28:3.** Who are the men referred to here? How do they put an end to darkness?
3. **28:24.** To what is this verse a reference? According to St. Ambrose, who is the person living in shadow? Why is it vain for such a person to regard himself as unseen? What does the Lord know about the person?
4. **28:28.** How does man come to know the divine wisdom? To what is the biblical notion of wisdom always tied? According to St. John Chrysostom, how high does fear of the Lord rank, and what does it avoid doing?

### *For application*

1. **28:1–11.** The speaker of this poem marvels at the ability of men to discover technical knowledge that the wisest of animals have not learned. What human accomplishment most fascinates you? How much effort would it take for you to learn it?
2. **28:12–13.** Of what kind of wisdom and understanding is the speaker thinking here? Why is the discovery of this wisdom not merely a matter of technical brilliance or scientific genius?
3. **28:15–19.** If the wisdom this poem is considering cannot be bought, how can it be acquired (compare with Is 11:2–3a)?
4. **28:28.** How does wisdom as a gift of the Spirit (as in the Isaiah passage) result in fear of the Lord? How might the two gifts be identified?

## Chapter 29

### *For understanding*

1. **29:1–31:40.** In chap. 29, which begins Job's concluding monologue, on what does he look back? In chap. 30, over what does he agonize? In chap. 31, how does he give the strongest possible testimony of his innocence? According to St. Gregory the Great, about what do the last words of blessed Job speak? What does Gregory think will happen when the dragon, currently imprisoned in the bottomless pit, comes forth?
2. **29:4.** What does Job mean by referring to autumn days? What modern association with them is *not* meant?
3. **29:7.** In the biblical world, for what was the gate of the city used? With what does Job's experience as a judge explain his familiarity?
4. **29:18.** In the judgment of some scholars, to what may this text have originally referred? How does the Greek LXX read?

### *For application*

1. **29:2–6.** Have your fortunes changed for the better or for the worse since your childhood? In what ways? How much of that change has to do with your relationship with God? Has it become closer or more distant? In what ways?
2. **29:7–11.** How does one acquire and keep a good reputation? How easily is a good reputation gained or lost? What are some indications in our culture that a person enjoys a good reputation?
3. **29:18–20.** Barring some disaster, how long do you expect to be alive? How does your vision of the future reflect that expectation? What provision have you made to secure that future?

## Chapter 30

### *For understanding*

1. **30:4.** What probably is mallow? What is broom?
2. **30:19–31.** Whom is Job addressing directly here? What does he think about God? How does he contrast God with himself?
3. **30:30.** Why is Job's skin turning black? What does the burning in his bones suggest?

### *For application*

1. **30:1–9.** What sorts of people does our culture regard as the lowest of the low in society? As you see your own position in society, where would you rank in relation to them?
2. **30:10–13.** What is the Christian response to one who has lost his reputation as Job has? Should the Christian ostracize, shun, or avoid contact with such a person? If not, what would be more appropriate behavior?
3. **30:25–26.** What events in the life of Jesus do these verses bring to mind? How do the sufferings of Job and those of Jesus resemble each other? How are they different?

## Chapter 31

### *For understanding*

1. **31:1–40.** Although Job suffers terribly, of what sins is he not guilty, according to his testimony? Clearly, what kind of man is Job?
2. **Word Study: If (31:5).** How might the Hebrew word *'im* be used as a conditional term? As an alternative conjunction? As an exceptive term? How is the word meaningful in certain oath formulas that appear in the Bible, as in Job's case?
3. **31:26.** Why would Job call down a curse on himself for looking at the sun or moon?
4. **31:27.** What is the association with kissing one's hand?

### *For application*

1. **31:1–2.** Why does Job want to make a "covenant" with his eyes? In our age of rampant pornography, daring "fashion statements", and crass attempts to attract attention, how critical is such a "covenant" for personal holiness? How careful are you being to guard your eyes?



## Study Questions

2. **31:7–10.** In its treatment of the sixth commandment, the Catechism contains an extended section on the virtue of chastity for single people, married couples, and persons attracted to others of the same sex (2337–59). How does this virtue maintain the integrity of a person within himself? How is it integrated into the relationship of one person to another? Why can one never assume he has fully acquired this virtue?
3. **31:16–22.** Why does the Church maintain a “preferential option for the poor”? How does she exercise that option? What is your role in helping to maintain it?
4. **31:33–34.** How hard is it for you to examine your conscience before going to confession? What kinds of transgressions are you likely to keep secret out of fear of what others think (including the confessor)? What kinds of sins are you inclined to hide even from yourself?

## Chapters 32–33

### For understanding

1. **32:1–37:24.** Who is Elihu, and how is he introduced? On what grounds does he claim to speak for God? Although he does little to advance the debate beyond the arguments already voiced, what do some scholars detect in his words? Into how many speeches can his discourse be divided?
2. **32:8–10.** How does Elihu rank the wisdom of age and experience? About what do the parallel uses of *spirit* and *breath* suggest that Elihu is talking?
3. **33:12.** In contesting Job’s innocence, what does Elihu presume to do? What indicates that he is still thinking within the parameters of conventional wisdom? Of what were the only things Job actually claimed to be innocent?
4. **33:23.** Who is the mediator mentioned here? Where does belief in their intercession appear?

### For application

1. **32:9.** What image of old people does our culture present? What do young people seem actually to believe about the wisdom of the aged in comparison with their own? Has your own opinion of your parents’ and grandparents’ understanding of life changed with age?
2. **32:21–22.** What is the difference between compliment and flattery? Under what circumstances can flattery or adulation be either a grave or a venial sin (CCC 2480)?
3. **33:14–15.** Elihu says that God speaks to people in dreams, when the mind is most relaxed. How else does God speak to you? What ways do you have of cultivating an open ear to him? How can you verify that what you hear is genuine and true?

## Chapters 34–35

### For understanding

1. **34:10–30.** Why does Elihu defend God’s justice? What can the statements that Job has actually made be taken to mean? Though Job held that his conscience was clear, to what possibility did he remain open? Whom was Job’s argument that God sometimes allows human injustice to continue intended to refute?
2. **34:11.** What does Scripture teach us about God’s method of judging? How is God uniquely qualified for this? While Elihu is right to insist on these points, when does he stray from the truth?
3. **35:5.** How does Elihu compare God’s high position to that of the clouds in relation to men? How is the God of the Bible unlike the deities of the ancient Near East?
4. **35:9–16.** To what argument of Job’s is Elihu responding in these verses? What interpretation does Elihu offer? According to Elihu, why would God fail to answer? What is he inferring about Job?

### For application

1. **34:5–9.** Read the notes for vv. 7 and 9. If you were Job and had to listen to accusations such as those Elihu makes, what would be your reaction? How would the virtue of meekness be helpful to you in such a situation?
2. **34:14–15.** Though Elihu is thinking only in physical terms, what does the Spirit of God have to do with giving or withdrawing spiritual life? What *is* spiritual life? What is spiritual death, and how might a living person know when it has happened to him?
3. **35:6–7.** How would you answer Elihu’s questions in these verses? Who suffers or benefits from human sin or its opposite? How might the answer influence your approach to prayer?

## Chapters 36–37

### For understanding

1. **36:10.** What does the idiom “opens their ears” mean? To what does it refer?
2. **36:24–33.** Although God’s greatness exceeds human understanding, where can one get a glimpse of it?
3. **37:1–24.** What point is Elihu making by continuing the discussion of the awesome forces of nature? For what does the talk of witnessing divine power in the skies set the stage?
4. **37:19.** According to Elihu, why cannot God be prosecuted by men? Why is this comment aimed at Job?
5. **37:22.** What is the significance of the north? What in Canaanite mythology might have influenced this idea?

### For application

1. **36:13–17.** Elihu charges Job with anger and bitterness. Why does Heb 12:15 warn the faithful against a “root of bitterness” taking hold in a person? What kinds of spiritual harm can a bitter, vindictive spirit do? How open is a bitter person to the grace of God?

2. **36:15.** How closely does Elihu's statement in this verse correspond with your experience? What kinds of things does affliction teach? What has it taught you?
3. **37:24.** What does "being wise in his own conceit" mean? Why would God not pay attention to someone of that mind-set? To whom *does* God pay attention?

## Chapter 38

### *For understanding*

1. **38:1–41:34.** After which of Job's actions does the Lord finally reveal himself to him? What is curious about what God reveals about Job? What are the speeches designed to induce in Job? When was the need to vindicate God first, even before vindicating Job, made necessary? At what point is Job declared to be "in the right"?
2. **38:1.** To what does the Hebrew term for "whirlwind" refer? Of what can powerful gales be a sign?
3. **38:4–6.** How is the creation of the world described? What edifice seems to be in mind? How did ancient Israel view the world?
4. **38:6.** What is a cornerstone? Once set in place and leveled, what function does it serve?
5. **38:8–11.** What was a common motif in the ancient Near East? How does Scripture employ it?

### *For application*

1. **38:1.** Contrast this verse with the experience of Elijah on Mount Horeb (1 Kings 19:11–13). Why might Job have needed a tempestuous theophany for his correction, whereas Elijah needed only the "still, small voice" for his? How does the Holy Spirit get your attention?
2. **38:5.** One way the physical sciences seek an understanding of cosmology (the study of the universe) is by measuring the sizes, numbers, distances, etc., of celestial objects. Can such an approach determine the origin of the universe? What role does faith play in the theories that science proposes?
3. **38:7.** Even though Scripture regards the physical creation as good (see Gen 1) and an occasion for joy (as in this verse), many ancient philosophies regard it as evil. Why? How (to the human mind) can the physical creation help or hinder a relationship with its Creator?

## Chapter 39

### *For understanding*

1. **38:39–39:30.** From the realms of creation, where does attention now turn? What is the point in this section?
2. **39:13.** For what is the ostrich known? Who ensures the survival of its young? What did some ancient lore maintain about ostriches?
3. **39:19.** What kind of horse is referred to here, and for what characteristic is it known? On what basis is the military horse sometimes compared to the locust?
4. **39:27.** What is another word for eagle? What has God made him to do?

### *For application*

1. **39:9–12.** Have you ever tried to tame a wild animal or train a domestic one? Is insight into animal behavior required for this? How much patience is required, especially after unsuccessful tries? How does the Holy Spirit "tame" our hearts, and how much patience might that take?
2. **39:19–25.** The image of the war horse in these verses is one of courage and eagerness for battle. Which aspects of the Christian life (e.g., moral, spiritual, social) seem to call for the greatest courage and determination? What does the Catechism mean by calling prayer a battle, and in what senses (CCC 2725–45)?
3. **39:30.** Compare this verse with Mt 24:28, where both God (in Job) and Jesus (in Matthew) quote a similar proverb. What is God's point in quoting it here to Job? About what is Jesus warning his disciples?

## Chapter 40

### *For understanding*

1. **40:6–41:34.** In the Lord's final discourse, when is Job left humbled and speechless? How are the hippopotamus and the crocodile described, and what do they symbolize? In Jewish tradition, what do Behemoth and Leviathan represent? According to St. Thomas Aquinas, what is the Lord now describing? In what ways is it appropriate for Job's debate to end with a description of the devil?
2. **40:8.** If Job is vindicated by a declaration of innocence, why is the Lord reprimanding him? How does St. Thomas Aquinas explain Job's intention in asserting his righteousness, regardless of his friends' wrong inference?
3. **40:13.** What does binding the faces of the dead mean? What customs may the image evoke? What is the "world below"?
4. **40:15.** What is the Behemoth? Though it is a mere creature made by God, what characteristics does it have that make it steady and confident? What does its name mean in Hebrew?

### *For application*

1. **40:3–5.** What is true humility? When Jesus says that he is "lowly in heart" (Mt 11:29), what is he saying about himself? What does his statement suggest with respect to how you should view yourself?
2. **40:8.** In Christian terms, how are we justified in the sight of God? If we cannot justify ourselves before him, who can?
3. **40:9–14.** Some recent movies have depicted in comic terms what happens when men try to take God's place. Have some of your own decisions attempted to take God's place in your life or that of others? What did you learn from the outcome?

## Study Questions

### Chapter 41

#### For understanding

1. **Word Study: Leviathan (41:1).** What does the name Leviathan mean, and to what does it refer? How is the Leviathan pictured? What else is he also called? In God's final speech to Job, to what reptile is the name given? How does Leviathan appear in Canaanite mythology? In pagan religious texts, what kind of figure is he? Though the name is not used in the Book of Revelation, how does he appear there?
2. **41:10.** How does the logic proceed here?
3. **41:11.** What obligation does the Lord have to reward people? Why not? How does Paul seem to have this passage in mind in Rom 11:35?
4. **41:19–21.** How is poetic license most obvious in these verses?

#### For application

1. **41:1.** What seems to lie behind the human tendency to imagine fierce and malicious monsters? Although we no longer regard the crocodile as uncontrollable as the ancients did, what kinds of monsters do we tend to create in their place? Of what are we afraid?
2. **41:18–30.** World literature, both ancient and modern, is full of man's confrontation with impregnable, fire-breathing dragons. What do these animals represent? According to the Catechism (2853), what does the dragon of Revelation represent? How is it conquered?

### Chapter 42

#### For understanding

1. **42:1–6.** What has brought Job to submission and repentance? Though the reason Job was made to suffer is not revealed, what three things has he come to see? According to St. Basil, of what are we to be assured in whatever God ordains?
2. **42:8.** Among whom is Job counted in the Old Testament? Whom does this company include?
3. **42:10.** By how much does the number of Job's livestock increase? According to St. Gregory the Great, what did this reward show about his words? What does his designation as an intercessor on behalf of his friends show about him?
4. **42:14.** How do the names of Job's daughters evoke their feminine beauty?
5. **42:15.** According to Num 27:1–11, who normally received the inheritance when a father died? How did Job handle the division of his estate?

#### For application

1. **42:3.** In former ages, philosophers believed that there were certain things the human mind was not *apt* (capable, equipped, or suited) to know. How has that attitude changed in our more "enlightened" and scientific age? What does it mean to know God—and how is he still beyond our knowledge?
2. **42:6.** One meaning of the verb *despise* is "to regard as negligible or worthless"—a strong word from one who, like Job, had been a wealthy and prominent judge. How might modern psychology look upon Job's statement about himself? Why have many saints held that a similar disposition before God is the only one that is appropriate for us?
3. **42:10.** What will the Lord restore to you when you repent sin? How do the sacraments aid in this restoration?