

# JOB

## INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JOB

This book, in the Hebrew copies, generally goes by this name, from Job, who is however the subject, if not the writer of it. In the Vulgate Latin version it is called “the Book of Job”; in the Syriac version, the Writing of Job; and in the Arabic, the Writing or Book of Job the Just. In some Hebrew Bibles it stands between the Book of Proverbs and the Song of Solomon; but, according to the Talmudists <sup>f1</sup>, it should stand between the Psalms of David and the Proverbs of Solomon. Some have made a question of it, whether there ever was such a man as Job, and suppose this book not to be a real history, or to contain matters of fact, but to be written under fictitious names, and to be parabolical, and that it is designed to set forth an example of patience in suffering affliction; and some of the Jewish writers <sup>f2</sup> affirm, that Job never was in being, and that this book is a parable, apologue, or fable; and to this Maimonides <sup>f3</sup> himself inclines; but this opinion is justly rejected by Aben Ezra, Peritsol, and others; for that there was such a man is as certain as that there were such men as Noah and Daniel, with whom he is mentioned by the Prophet Ezekiel, (<sup><3144></sup>Ezekiel 14:14) and the testimony of the Apostle James is full to this purpose, who speaks of him as a person well known, and not to be doubted of; of whom, and of whose patience, the Jews he writes to had heard much, (<sup><3151></sup>James 5:11) besides, the names of the countries where he and his friends lived, the account given of his family, and of his substance, both before and after his afflictions, show it to be a real history. Learned men are not agreed about the signification of his name; according to Jerom <sup>f4</sup>, it signifies a magician, taking it to be the same with *bwa*, “ob”: and some Jewish writers <sup>f5</sup> place him with Balaam and Jethro, as the counsellors of Pharaoh against the Israelites, for which he was afflicted: the same ancient fathers render the word grieving and howling; others, as Spanheim <sup>f6</sup>, derive it from *bay*, to “love” or “desire”, and so it signifies desire or delight, and is the same with Desiderius or Erasmus; hence Job is called by Suidas <sup>f7</sup> *τριποψητος*, exceeding desirable; but Hillerus <sup>f8</sup>, deriving it from the same root, makes it to signify just the reverse, “without desire”; or not desirable; and supposes

it to be a compound of **bway**, “desire”, and **ya**, “not”; but the generality of writers derive it from **bya**, “to be at enmity”, and so it signifies one that is exposed to the hatred and enmity of men, or one that is a hater and enemy of wicked men; or, as Schmitt<sup>f9</sup> interprets it, a man zealous for God, and showing hatred to wickedness and wicked men on his account. Who Job was, it is not easy to say; not the same with Jobab, of the race of Esau, as some, (~~0363~~Genesis 36:33). Aristeas<sup>f10</sup> says he was a son of Esau himself, by his wife Bessare, and was first called Jobam; nor the same with Job a son of Issachar, (~~0463~~Genesis 46:13), nor was he a descendant of Abraham by Keturah; but rather sprung from Uz, the firstborn of Nahor, brother of Abraham, (~~0221~~Genesis 22:21), who gave name to the country where Job lived, as Buz his brother did to that of which Elihu was, and as Chesed, another brother of Uz, did to the Chasdim or Chaldeans, who were both near to Job. It is also not agreed in what time Job lived; Maimonides<sup>f11</sup> says, of their writers some place him in the times of the patriarchs, some in the times of Moses, others in the times of David, and others say that he was of the wise men of Babylon; and some add, that he was of them that came out of the captivity there, and had a school at Tiberias, as say the Talmudists<sup>f12</sup> who give very different accounts of him: some say he was in the times of the judges; others in the times of the queen of Sheba; and others in the times of Ahasuerus; but the more general opinion is, and indeed the more probable, that he was born when the Israelites went down into Egypt, and that he was dead when they came from thence<sup>f13</sup>: in short, they place him almost in all the ages from Abraham to the Babylonish captivity, and after it; and even Luther<sup>f14</sup> was of opinion that he lived in the times of Solomon, for which there is no more reason than for the rest: it seems most probable that he lived before Moses<sup>f15</sup>, at least before the giving of the law to him, since no mention is made of it in this book, nor any reference to it; whereas there is to things more ancient, as the general deluge, the burning of Sodom, etc. the law concerning sacrifices only to be offered by priests was not as yet given; for Job offered sacrifices as being the head of his family, and so did his three friends, (~~0805~~Job 1:5 42:8). The length of his life best agrees with the times before Moses, for in his time the age of man was reduced to seventy years; whereas Job must live two hundred years or more, since he lived one hundred and forty after his restoration: add to this, that this book seems to have been written before any idolatry was in the world but the worship of the sun and moon, (~~0815~~Job 31:25,26) and before there were any writings divinely inspired, since there is no appeal to any in the whole controversy between Job and his friends;

but the appeal is made to men of years and wisdom, and to traditions of former times, (~~RS1B~~ Job 5:1 8:8-10 15:18 21:29). According to Dr. Owen<sup>f16</sup> Job lived three hundred and fifty years after the dispersion at Babel, about A. M. 2100. It is also greatly controverted who was the writer of this book; some ascribe the writing of it to Isaiah the prophet; others to Solomon, as Luther<sup>f17</sup>; others to one of the prophets who was an Idumaeen; but most to Moses, so the Jews<sup>f18</sup> say, that he wrote his own book, the section of Balaam, and Job. Some think that he wrote it when in Midian, for the comfort and encouragement of the Hebrews afflicted in Egypt at that time, and who might hope to be delivered out of their afflictions, as this good man was delivered out of his; and this, it is supposed, accounts for the use of many Arabic words in it; Midian being in Arabia, where Moses, having lived some years, had mixed their language with his own. Some are of opinion that he met with this book when in those parts, which he found either in the Arabic or Syriac language, and translated it into Hebrew<sup>f19</sup> for the use of the Israelites; and others think it was written by Job's friends, and particularly by Elihu, which is concluded from (~~RS25~~ Job 32:15,16), but it is most probable that it was written by Job himself, or at least compiled from his diary or "adversaria" kept by him, or from those of his friends, or from both, and that it was written in the language it is now in: but be it written by whom it may, there is no doubt to be made of the divine authority of it; as appears from the sublimity of the style, the subject matter of it, its agreement with other parts of the sacred writings, and particularly from a quotation of a passage out of (~~RS13~~ Job 5:13) by the Apostle Paul, (~~RS19~~ 1 Corinthians 3:19) see also (~~RS17~~ Job 5:17), compared with (~~RS26~~ Hebrews 12:5). The design of it is not only in general to assert and explain the doctrine of Providence, as Maimonides observes; but in particular to show, that, though good men are afflicted, yet sooner or later they are delivered out of their afflictions; and that it becomes them to bear them patiently, and not murmur at them; nor complain of God on account of them, whose ways and works are unsearchable, and who gives no account of his matters to men, but is sovereign, wise, and just, in all he does; and whatsoever is done by him issues in the good of his people, as well as in his own glory, as the event shows. This book may be considered either as an history of the life of Job, in which an account is given of him in his prosperity; of his afflictions, and how they came upon him; of a visit paid him by his friends, and of the discourses that pass between him and them, and of his restoration to greater affluence than he enjoyed before: or as a drama or dialogue

consisting of divers parts, and in which various speakers are introduced, as God, Satan, Job, his wife, and friends; or as a dispute, in which Job's three friends are the opponents, himself the respondent, Elihu the moderator, and God the umpire, who settled and determined the point in question. It contains many useful things in it concerning the Divine Being, and the perfections of his nature, his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and sovereignty; concerning the works of creation and providence; concerning original sin, and the corruption of mankind; concerning redemption by Christ, and good works to be done by men; and concerning the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life. Some think Job was a type of Christ in his afflictions and sufferings; in his patience under them, and deliverance out of them; in his exaltation to an high pitch of happiness and prosperity; and in his intercession for his friends. He is in many things worthy of imitation, though in others to be blamed, and not followed; and, on the whole, this book of his may be read with great pleasure and profit.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION TO JOB 1

In this chapter, Job, the subject of the whole book, is described by his native country, by his name, by his religious character, and by his family and his substance, (~~3800E~~Job 1:1-3) a particular relation is given of his children feasting together, and of Job's conduct during that time, (~~3800E~~Job 1:4,5) of a discourse which passed between God and Satan concerning him, the issue of which was that Satan obtained leave of God to afflict Job in his outward affairs, (~~3800E~~Job 1:6-12) then follows an account of his several losses, of his oxen, sheep, camels, asses, and servants, by the Sabeans, Chaldeans, and fire from heaven, and of his sons and daughters by the fall of the house in which they were through a violent wind, (~~3801E~~Job 1:13-19), and the chapter is concluded with the agreeable behaviour of Job in the midst of all this, (~~3801E~~Job 1:20-22).

**Ver. 1.** *There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job*, etc.] Of the signification of his name, see the introduction to the book. The place where he dwelt had its name not from Uz, a descendant of Shem, (~~010E~~Genesis 10:23) but from Uz, a son of Nahor, brother to Abraham, (~~022E~~Genesis 22:21) unless it can be thought to be so called from Uz, of the children of Seir, in the land of Edom; since we read of the land of Uz along with Edom, or rather of Edom as in the land of Uz, or on the borders of it, (~~290E~~Lamentations 4:21), the Targum calls it the land of Armenia, but rather it is Arabia; and very probably it was one of the Arabias Job lived in, either Petraea or Deserta, probably the latter; of which Uz or Ausitis, as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin version read it, was a part; the same with the Aesitae of Ptolemy<sup>f20</sup>; and it is said to be near the land of Canaan<sup>f21</sup>, for in Arabia Felix the Sabeans lived; and certain it is that this country was near to the Sabeans and Chaldeans, and to the land of Edom, from whence Eliphaz the Temanite came: and as this very probably was a wicked and an idolatrous place, it was an instance of the distinguishing grace of God, to call Job by his grace in the land of Uz, as it was to call Abraham in Ur of the Chaldeans; and though it might be distressing and afflicting to the good man to live in such a country, as it was to Lot to live in Sodom, yet it was

an honour to him, or rather it was to the glory of the grace of God that he was religious here, and continued to be so, (see <sup><613></sup>Revelation 2:13) and gives an early proof of what the Apostle Peter observed, “that God is no respecter of persons, but, in every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him”; that is, through Christ, (<sup><403></sup>Acts 10:34,35). Job, as he is described by his name and country, so by his sex, “a man”; and this is not so much to distinguish his sex, nor to express the reality of his existence as a man, but to denote his greatness; he was a very considerable, and indeed an extraordinary man; he was a man not only of wealth and riches, but of great power and authority, so the mean and great man are distinguished in (<sup><213></sup>Isaiah 2:9) see the account he gives of himself in (<sup><897></sup>Job 29:7-10), by which it appears he was in great honour and esteem with men of all ranks and degrees, as well as he was a man of great grace, as follows:

*and the man was perfect*; in the same sense as Noah, Abraham, and Jacob were; not with respect to sanctification, unless as considered in Christ, who is made sanctification to his people; or with regard to the truth, sincerity, and genuineness of it; or in a comparative sense, in comparison of what he once was, and others are; but not so as to be free from sin, neither from the being of it, which no man is clear of in this life, nor from the actings of it in thought, word, and deed, (see <sup><899></sup>Job 9:20,30,31) or so as to be perfect in grace; for though all grace is seminally implanted at once in regeneration, it opens and increases gradually; there is a perfection of parts, but not of degrees; there is the whole new man, but that is not arrived to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; there are all and every grace, but not one perfect, not knowledge, nor faith, nor hope, nor love, nor patience, nor any other: but then, as to justification, every good man is perfect; Christ has completely redeemed his people from all their sins; he has perfectly fulfilled the law in their room and stead; he has fully expiated all their transgressions, he has procured the full remission of them, and brought in a righteousness which justifies them from them all; so that they are free from the guilt of sin, and condemnation by it, and are in the sight of God unblamable, unproveable, without fault, all fair and perfectly comely; and this was Job’s case:

*and upright*; to whom was shown the uprightness of Christ, or to whom the righteousness of Christ was revealed from faith to faith, and which was put upon him, and he walked in by faith, (see <sup><893></sup>Job 33:23), moreover, Job was upright in heart, a right spirit was renewed in him; and though he was

not of the nation of Israel, yet he was, in a spiritual sense, an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile, the truth of grace and the root of the matter being in him, (~~1808~~ Job 19:28), and he was upright in his walk and conversation before God, and also before men; upright in all his dealings and concerns with them, in every relation he stood, in every office and character he bore:

*and one that feared God*; not as the devils, who believe and tremble; nor as carnal men, when the judgments of God are in the earth, hide themselves in fear of him; nor as hypocrites, whose fear or devotion is only outward, and is taught by the precept of men; but as children affectionately reverence their parents: Job feared God with a filial and godly fear, which sprung from the grace of God, and was encouraged and increased by his goodness to him, and through a sense of it; it was attended with faith and confidence of interest in him, with an holy boldness and spiritual joy, and true humility; and comprehended the whole of religious worship, both public and private, internal and external:

*and eschewed evil*, or “departed from it” <sup>f22</sup>; and that with hatred and loathing of it, and indignation at it, which the fear of God engages unto, (~~2083~~ Proverbs 8:13 16:6), he hated it as every good man does, as being contrary to the nature and will of God, abominable in itself, and bad in its effects and consequences; and he departed from it, not only from the grosser acts of it, but abstained from all appearance of it, and studiously shunned and avoided everything that led unto it; so far was he from indulging to a sinful course of life and conversation, which is inconsistent with the grace and fear of God.

**Ver. 2.** *And there were born unto him*, etc.] By his wife, in lawful wedlock, who was now living, and after mentioned:

*seven sons and three daughters*; next to his religious character, his graces, and spiritual blessings, and as the chief of his outward mercies and enjoyments, his children are mentioned; and which are indeed blessings from the Lord, and such as good men, and those that fear the Lord, are sometimes blessed with, (see ~~3078~~ Psalm 127:3,4,5 128:3,4) and to have a numerous offspring was always esteemed a very great favour and blessing, and as such was reckoned by Job; who, having so many sons, might hope to have his name perpetuated by them, as well as his substance shared among them; and having so many daughters, he might please himself with the thought of marrying them into families, which would strengthen his

friendship and alliance with them; just the same number of sons and daughters had Bacchaeus, the third king of Corinth <sup>f23</sup>.

**Ver. 3.** *His substance also was seven thousand sheep*, etc.] For which he must have a large pasturage to feed them on, as well as these would produce much wool for clothing, and flesh for food; this part of his substance or possessions is mentioned first, as being the largest, and most useful and profitable:

*and three thousand camels*; creatures fit to carry burdens, and travel with, and were greatly valued on that account, especially in the deserts of Arabia, near to which Job lived; and that not only because they were strong for this purpose, but because they could endure much thirst and want of water for a long time; (see Gill on "<sup><B104></sup>Leviticus 11:4"), it seems by this that Job carried on a commerce, and traded in distant parts, whither he sent the produce of his lands and cattle, and trafficked with them: these camels might not only be he, but she camels also, according to the Septuagint version, which might be kept for breeding, and for their milk: Aristotle observes <sup>f24</sup>, some of the inhabitants of the upper Asia used to have camels, to the number of 3000, the exact number here mentioned; and by the number of these creatures the Arabians estimated their riches and possessions <sup>f25</sup>; and so sheep are by the Greeks called  $\mu\eta\lambda\alpha$ , as it is thought, from the Arabic word <sup><Arabic></sup> "mala", to be rich <sup>f26</sup>; the riches of other people, and of particular persons, as of Geryon, Atlas, and Polyphemus, are represented as chiefly consisting of their flocks, and also of their herds <sup>f27</sup>, as follows:

*and five hundred yoke of oxen*; to plough his land with, of which he must have a large quantity to employ such a number in, (see <sup><I1919></sup>1 Kings 19:19)

*and five hundred she asses*; which must be chiefly for their milk; and no doubt but he had a considerable number of he asses also, though not mentioned, which, as well as the others, were used to ride on, and also to plough with, in those countries; it may be rendered only asses as by some, and so may include both: Aristaeus, Philo, and Polyhistor <sup>f28</sup> give the same account of Job's substance in the several articles as here:

*and a very great household*: this must be understood of his servants only, since his children are before taken notice of; and the same phrase is rendered "great store of servants", (<sup><O1264></sup>Genesis 26:14) and in the margin, "husbandry" or "tillage", large fields and farms; and the sense comes to



much the same, whether it is taken the one way or the other; if great store of servants, he must have large farms and many fields to employ them in; and if a large husbandry, and much ground for tillage, he must have many servants to manure and cultivate them: now these several articles are mentioned, because, in those times and countries, as has been observed, the substance of men chiefly lay in them, and according to them they were reckoned more or less rich; not but that they had gold and silver also, as Abraham had, (<sup><del>0130</del></sup>Genesis 13:1), and so had Job, (<sup><del>48124</del></sup>Job 31:24), but these were the principal things:

*so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east*; that lived in Arabia, Chaldea, and other eastern countries; that is, he was a man of the greatest wealth and riches, and of the greatest power and authority, and was had in the greatest honour and esteem: now these temporal blessings are observed, to show that grace and earthly riches are compatible, that they may, and sometimes do, meet in the same person; as also to point at the goodness of God, in bestowing such blessings on this good man, thereby fulfilling the promise made to godliness and godly men, which respects this life, and that which is to come; and they are mentioned chiefly for the sake of the loss of these things after related, whereby the greatness of his loss and of his afflictions would be the more easily perceived, and his patience in bearing them appear the more illustrious; for by how much the greater was his substance, by so much the greater were his losses and trials, and the more remarkable his patience under them.

**Ver. 4.** *And his sons went and feasted in their houses, everyone his day*, etc.] It appears by this that Job's sons were grown up to men's estate, that they were from him, and were for themselves, and carried on a separate business on their own accounts, and had houses of their own, and, perhaps, were married; and being at some distance from each other, they met by appointment at certain times in their own houses, and had friendly and family entertainments in turn; for such were their feasts, not designed for intemperance, luxury, and wantonness, for then they would not have been encouraged, nor even connived at, by Job; but to cherish love and affection, and maintain harmony and unity among themselves, which must be very pleasing to their parent; for a pleasant thing it is for any, and especially for parents, to behold brethren dwelling together in unity, (<sup><del>1401</del></sup>Psalm 133:1), besides, these feasts were kept, not in public houses, much less in houses of ill fame, but in their own houses, among themselves, at certain seasons, which they took in turn; and these were either at their

time of sheep shearing, which was a time of feasting, (<sup>(-027D)</sup>1 Samuel 25:2,36), or at the weaning of a child, (<sup>(-02K8)</sup>Genesis 21:8), or rather on each of their birthdays, which in those early times were observed, especially those of persons of figure, (<sup>(-044D)</sup>Genesis 40:20), and the rather, as Job's birthday is called his day, as here, (<sup>(-800E)</sup>Job 3:1),

*and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them;* not to make a feast in their turn, but to partake of their entertainment; which, as is commonly observed, showed humanity, kindness, tenderness, and affection in them to their sisters, to invite them to take part with them in their innocent and social recreations, and modesty in their sisters not to thrust themselves into their company, or go without an invitation; these very probably were with Job, and went to the feasts with his leave, being very likely unmarried, or otherwise their husbands would have been invited also.

**Ver. 5.** *And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about,* etc.] When they had been at each other's houses in turn; when the rotation was ended: something like this is practised by the Chinese, who have their co-fraternities, which they call "the brotherhood of the month"; this consists of thirty, according to the number of days therein, and in a circle they go every day to eat at one another's house by turns; if one man has not convenience to receive the fraternity in his own house, he may provide it at another man's, and there are many public houses very well furnished for this purpose <sup>f29</sup>: Job's sons probably began at the elder brother's house, and so went on according to their age, and ended with the younger brother; so when they had gone through the circuit, as the word <sup>f30</sup> signifies, and the revolution was over, and they had done feasting for that season, or that year:

*that Job sent and sanctified them;* not that he did or could make them holy, by imparting grace, or infusing holiness into them; at most he could only pray for their sanctification, and give them rules, precepts, and instructions about holiness, and exhortations to it; but here it signifies, that being at some distance from them he sent messengers or letters to them to sanctify and prepare themselves for the sacrifices he was about to offer for them; either by some rites and ceremonies, as by washing themselves, and abstinence from their wives, which were sometimes used as preparatory to divine service, (<sup>(-038D)</sup>Genesis 35:2,3) (<sup>(-029D)</sup>Exodus 19:10,11,14,15), or by fasting and prayer; or, perhaps, no more is intended by it than an invitation

of them to come and attend the solemn sacrifice which he, as the head of the family, would offer for them; so, to sanctify people, is sometimes to invite, to call and gather them to holy service, (see <sup><4915></sup>Joel 2:15,16) and so the Targum renders it. "Job sent and invited them:"

*and rose up early in the morning* of the last of the days of feasting; he took the first opportunity, and that as early as he could; which shows the eagerness of his spirit for the glory of God, and the good of his children, losing no time for his devotion to God, and regard for his family; this being also the fittest time for religious worship and service, (see <sup><4918></sup>Psalms 5:3), and was used for sacrifice, (<sup><4923></sup>Exodus 29:39),

*and offered burnt offering according to the number of them all* either of his ten children, or only his seven sons, since they only are next mentioned, and were the masters of the feast: this was before the law of the priesthood was in being, which restrained the offering of sacrifice to those in the office of priests, when, before, every head of a family had a right unto it; and this custom of offering sacrifice was before the law of Moses, it was of divine institution, and in use from the time of the fall of man, (<sup><4921></sup>Genesis 3:21 4:3,4 8:20), and was by tradition handed down from one to another, and so Job had it; and which was typical of the sacrifice of Christ, to be offered up in the fulness of time for the expiation of sin; and Job, no doubt, by faith in Christ, offered up those burnt offerings for his sons, and one for each of them, thereby signifying, that everyone stood in need of the whole sacrifice of Christ for the atonement of sin, as every sinner does:

*for Job said, it may be that my sons have sinned;* not merely as in common, or daily sins of infirmity; for Job so full well knew the corruption of human nature, that a day could not pass without sin in thought, word, or deed; but some more notorious or scandalous sin; that, in the midst of their feasting and mirth, they had used some filthy, or frothy, and unsavoury and unbecoming language; had dropped some impure words, or impious jests, or done some actions which would reflect dishonour on God and true religion, and bring an odium on themselves and families: now Job was not certain of this, he had had no instruction or intelligence of it; he only surmised and conjectured it might be so; he was fearful and jealous lest it should: this shows his care and concern, as for the glory of God, so for the spiritual welfare of his children, though they were grown up and gone from him, and is to be considered in favour of his sons; for by this it is evident they were not addicted to any sin, or did not live a vicious course of life;

but that they were religious and godly persons; or, otherwise Job would have had no doubt in his mind about their conduct and behaviour: the particular sin he feared they might have been guilty of follows:

*and cursed God in their hearts*; not in the grossest sense of the expression, so as to deny the being of God, and wish there was none, and conceive blasphemy in their hearts, and utter it with their lips; but whereas to bless God is to think and speak well of him, and ascribe that to him which is his due; so to curse him is to think and speak irreverently of him, and not to attribute to him what belongs unto him; and thus Job might fear that his sons, amidst their feasting, might boast of their plenty, and of the increase of their substance, and attribute it to their own diligence and industry, and not to the providence of God, of which he feared they might speak slightly and unbecomingly, as persons in such circumstances sometimes do, (see <sup><RB25></sup>Deuteronomy 32:15 <sup><RB10></sup>Proverbs 30:9). Mr. Broughton renders it, “and little blessed God in their hearts” not blessing him as they should was interpretatively cursing him; the Hebrew word used properly and primarily signifies to bless <sup>f31</sup>, and then the meaning is, either that his sons had sinned, but took no notice of it, nor were humbled for it, but blessed God, being prosperous and successful, as if they had never sinned at all, (see <sup><RB30></sup>Zechariah 13:1), Sanctius adds the negative particle “not”, as if the meaning was, that they sinned, and did not bless God for their mercies as they should, (<sup><RB00></sup>Deuteronomy 8:10), but this is too daring and venturous to make such an addition; though this is favoured by the Targum, as in some copies, which paraphrases it,

“and have not prayed in the name of the Lord in their hearts:”

and because the word is used at parting, and taking a farewell of friends, Cocceius thinks it may be so used here, and the sense to be, that they sinned, and took their leave of God, and departed from him; but rather, as the word Elohim is used of strange gods, of false deities, (<sup><RB11></sup>Exodus 18:11). Job’s fears might be, lest his sons should have been guilty of any idolatrous action, at least of blessing the gods of the Gentiles in their hearts, since feasting sometimes leads to idolatry, (<sup><RB16></sup>Exodus 32:6), but the first sense seems best, with which the Septuagint version agrees,

“it may be my sons in their mind have thought evil things against the Lord:”

*thus did Job continually*; or “all those days”<sup>f32</sup>; that is, after every such circuit and rotation of feasting, or after every feast day kept by them, he offered sacrifices for them; or every year<sup>f33</sup>, as some interpret the phrase, the feasts, and so the sacrifices, being annual; all this is observed, partly further to describe the piety of Job, his affection for his family, and concern for their spiritual good, and the glory of God, and partly as a leading step to an later event, (<sup><1818></sup>Job 1:18,19).

**Ver. 6.** *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord*, etc.] This is generally understood of the angels, as in (<sup><1837></sup>Job 38:7) who may be thought to be so called, because of their creation by the father of spirits, and their likeness to God in holiness, knowledge, and wisdom, and being affectionate and obedient to him; as also on account of the grace of election, and confirmation in Christ bestowed upon them, as well as because, in their embassies and messages to men, they represent God, and so may be called gods, and children of the Most High, for a like reason the civil magistrates are, (<sup><1826></sup>Psalm 82:6) to which may be added, their constituting with the saints the family of God in heaven and earth: these, as they stand before God, and at his right hand and left, as the host of heaven, in which posture Micaiah saw them in vision, (<sup><1229></sup>1 Kings 22:19), so they may be said to go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth into the several parts of all the world, to do the will and work of God assigned them, (<sup><1805></sup>Zechariah 6:5-8) and then, having done their work, return again, and present themselves before the Lord, to give an account of what they have done, and to receive fresh orders from him, being ready to do his pleasure in everything he shall command them, which is what is here supposed; though some think these were only the company or band of angels which were set as a guard about Job, his person, family, and substance, who now appeared before the Lord, to give an account of him, his affairs, and circumstances, as required of them:

*and Satan came also among them*; which word signifies an “adversary”, as in (<sup><1114></sup>1 Kings 11:14) but does not design here a man adversary, as there, or one that envied Job’s prosperity, as Saadiah Gaon thinks, but an evil spirit, the old serpent, the devil, as in (<sup><1629></sup>Revelation 12:9) who is an implacable and bitter enemy to men, especially to Christ and his people; and so has this name from his hatred of them, and opposition to them: Origen<sup>f34</sup> observes, that this word, translated into the Greek language, is **αντικειμενος**, an “adversary”; but R. Levi<sup>f35</sup> derives it from **הַיָּצֵר**, “to

decline” or “turn aside”; and so Suidas says <sup>f36</sup>, Satan, in the Hebrew language, is an apostate; and Theodoret <sup>f37</sup> mentions both, that it signifies either an adversary or an apostate; the first derivation is best: knowing the end of the above meeting, that it was with respect to Job, and therefore he came with an intent to contradict what they should say of him, and to accuse him before God; he came among them as one of them, transforming himself into an angel of light, as he sometimes does; or he came, being sent for, and obliged to come to give an account of himself, and of what he had been doing in the world, in order to be reprov'd and punished: but though the stream of interpreters run this way, I cannot say I am satisfied with it; for, setting aside the passages in this book in question, angels are nowhere called “the sons of God”; for besides, this being denied of them in the sense that Christ is, they are represented as servants, yea, as servants to the sons of God, ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation; they call themselves the fellow servants of the saints, and of their brethren, but do not say that they are sons of the same family, or fellow heirs, or their brethren, (<sup>8005</sup> Hebrews 1:5,14 <sup>690</sup> Revelation 19:10 22:9), moreover, they always stand in the presence of God, and behold his face, be they where they will, (<sup>0880</sup> Matthew 18:10 <sup>0119</sup> Luke 1:19) nor is there any particular day assigned them for the service of God; for though they are under the moral law, so far as it is suitable to their nature, yet not under the ceremonial law, to which the observance of days belonged; and besides, they have no rest night nor day, but continually serve God, and glorify him, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty: and if this presentation of themselves to God is supposed to be in heaven, as where else should it be? it is not possible that Satan could come among them; he is fallen from heaven, being cast down from thence, nor can he, nor ever will he, be able to find a place any more there, (see <sup>0108</sup> Luke 10:18 <sup>0104</sup> 2 Peter 2:4 <sup>6218</sup> Revelation 12:8,9) it seems better therefore to understand this of the people of God, of professors of religion, who, earlier than the times of Job, were distinguished from the men of the world by this character, “the sons of God”, (<sup>0002</sup> Genesis 6:2), such that were truly godly being so by adopting grace, and which was made manifest by their regeneration by the Spirit of God, and by their faith in Christ, and all were so by profession: now these assembled themselves together, to present themselves, their bodies and souls, before the Lord, which was but their reasonable service; as to pray unto him, and praise him, to offer sacrifice, and perform every religious exercise enjoined in those times; the apostle uses the like phrase of the saints’ social worship, (<sup>6121</sup> Romans 12:1) now for this there was a “day”;

though I very much question whether any sabbath, or much less a seventh day sabbath, was as yet instituted; but inasmuch as men agreed together to call on the name of the Lord, or to worship him in a social way, (<sup><ORR></sup>Genesis 4:26) as it was necessary that a place should be appointed to meet at, so a time fixed by consent and agreement; even as now, the seventh day sabbath being abrogated, Christians agree to meet on the first day of the week, called the Lord's day, in imitation of the apostles of Christ; and on one of these days thus fixed and agreed on was the above meeting, at which Satan came among them, as he frequently does in the assembly of the saints, to do what mischief he can; by snatching away the word from inattentive hearers, and by directing the eye to such objects, and putting such things into the mind, as divert from the service of God; or by suggesting to the saints themselves, that what is attended to does not belong to them, with many other things of the like kind: the Targum interprets this day of the day of judgment, at the beginning of the year, and the sons of God of angels, as do other Jewish writers.

**Ver. 7.** *And the Lord said unto Satan, whence comest thou?* etc.] This question is put, not as ignorant of the place from whence he came; for the omniscient God knows all persons and things, men and angels, and these good and bad, where they are, from whence they come, and what they do, (see <sup><ORR></sup>Genesis 3:9 4:9) but it is put either as being angry with him, and resenting his coming among the sons of God, and chiding him for it, as having no proper business there, like the question in (<sup><ORR></sup>Matthew 22:12), or rather in order to lead on to another, and to bring out from him what he intended to have expressed by him, of what he had seen and taken notice of in the place from whence he came, and particularly concerning Job: how God and spirits converse together we are not able to say; but no doubt there is a way in which God talks with spirits, even with evil ones, as well as good ones, and in which they speak to him; and so this does not at all affect the reality of this narrative:

*then Satan answered the Lord and said, from going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it;* this he said as swaggering and boasting, as if he was indeed the God of the whole world, the Prince and King of it, and had and exercised a sovereign dominion over it, and as such had been making a tour through it, and taking a survey of it, (see <sup><ORR></sup>Matthew 4:8), and as if he was at full liberty to go where he pleased, and was under no control, when he was in chains of darkness, and could go nowhere, nor do anything, without divine permission; could not touch Job,



nor his substance, nor, as in the days of Christ, so much as enter into a herd of swine without leave: likewise this may denote the disquietude and restlessness of this evil spirit, who could not abide long in a place, but moving to and fro, seeking rest, but finding none, (<sup><4126></sup>Matthew 12:43), as also his diligence and indefatigableness in doing and seeking to do mischief, going about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, taking all opportunities of doing injury, sowing his tares while men are asleep and off their guard, (<sup><4118></sup>1 Peter 5:8 <sup><4135></sup>Matthew 13:25), and so the first word here used signifies a diligent search, and is rendered by some, and particularly by Mr. Broughton, “from searching about the earth”<sup>f38</sup>, “and from walking in it”; and so the Targum,

“from going about in the earth, to search the works of the children of men, and from walking in it;”

and it points at the place of Satan’s abode, the earth, with the circumambient air, (<sup><4111></sup>Ephesians 2:2) and the extent of his influence, which reaches not to heaven, and to the saints there, out of which he is cast, and can never reenter, but to the earth only, and men on it; and here no place is free from him; he and his angels are roving about everywhere, city and country; public and private places, men’s own houses, or the house of God, are not exempt from them; and therefore all here need to watch and pray, lest they enter into temptation, (<sup><4154></sup>Matthew 26:41). Schultens interprets the word of Satan going through the earth with great force and violence, whipping and scourging miserable mortals.

**Ver. 8.** *And the Lord said unto Satan, hast thou considered my servant Job*, etc.] Or, “hast thou put thine heart on my servant”<sup>f39</sup>; not in a way of love and affection to him, to do him any good or service, there being an original and implacable enmity in this old serpent to the seed of the woman; but rather his heart was set upon him in a way of desire to have him in his hands, to do him all the mischief he could, as the desire of his heart was toward Peter, (<sup><4221></sup>Luke 22:31) but the sense of the question is, since thou sayest thou hast been walking up and down in the earth, hast thou not taken notice of Job, and cast an eye upon him, and wished in thine heart to have him in thine hands to do him hurt? I know that thou hast; hast thou not contrived in thine heart how to attack him, tempt him, and draw him from my service, and into sins and snares, in order to reproach and accuse him? thou hast, but all in vain; and so it is a sarcasm upon Satan, as well as an expression of indignation at him for such an attempt upon him, and as



anticipating his accusation of Job; for it is as if he should further say, I know he is in thine eye, and upon thine heart, now thou art come with a full intent to accuse and charge him; so Jarchi, “lest thou set thine heart”, etc. so as “to have a good will to accuse him” he had, but the Lord prevents him, by giving a high character of him, in these and the following words: here he calls him “my servant”; not a servant of men, living according to the lusts and will of men, and their customs and forays of worship, superstition, and idolatry; nor a servant of sin and the lusts of the flesh; nor of Satan, who boasted of the whole earth being his; but the Lord’s servant, not only by creation, but by special choice, by redemption, by efficacious grace, and the voluntary surrender of himself to the Lord under the influence of it; and by his cheerful and constant obedience he answered this character; and the Lord here claims his property in him, acknowledges him as his servant, calls him by name, and gives an high and honourable account of him:

*that there is none like him in the earth*; or “in the land”; in the land of Uz, so Obadiah Sephorno; whatever there were in other countries, there were none in this, being in general idolaters; or in the land of the people of the Heathen nations, as the Targum; or rather in the whole earth, where Satan had been walking: and, very probably, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were now dead; Job being, as it should seem, between them and the times of Moses; and though there might be many godly persons then living, who were like to him in quality, being partakers of the same divine nature, having the same image of God upon them, and the same graces in them, and a similar experience of divine things, yet not upon an equality with him; he exceeded them all in grace and holiness; and particularly, none came up to him for his patience in suffering affliction, though this was often tried; as Moses excelled others in meekness, and Solomon in wisdom; Job was an eminent saint and servant of the Lord, a father in his family, a pillar in his house, like Saul among the people, taller in grace and the exercise of it; and this is a reason why he could not but be taken notice of by Satan, who has his eye more especially on the most eminent saints, and envies them, and strikes at them; and so the words are by some rendered, “for there is none like him”<sup>f40</sup>; or rather they may be rendered, “but there is none like him”<sup>f41</sup>: and so are opposed to the accusations and charges Satan was come with against him:

*a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?* (See Gill on “~~1800B~~ Job 1:1”) here the character there given is confirmed by the Lord in the express words of it.

**Ver. 9.** *Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, doth Job fear God for nought.*] Satan does not deny any part of Job’s character, nor directly charge him with anyone sin; which shows what a holy man Job was, how exact in his life and conversation, that the devil could not allege any one thing against him; nor does he deny that he feared the Lord; nay, he owns it, only suggests there was a private reason for it; and this he dares not affirm, only puts it by way of question, giving an innuendo, which is a wretched way of slander many of his children have learnt from him: he insinuates that Job’s fear of God, and serving him, was not “for nought”, or “freely”<sup>f42</sup>, it was not out of love to him, or with any regard to his will, or his honour and glory, but from selfish principles, with mercenary views, and for worldly ends and purposes: indeed no man fears and serves the Lord for nought and in vain, he is well paid for it; and godliness has a great gain along with it, the Lord bestows everything, both in a temporal and spiritual way, on them that fear him; so that eventually, and in the issue, they are great gainers by it; and they may lawfully look to these things, in order to encourage them in the service and worship of God, even as Moses had respect to the recompence of reward; when they do not make these, but the will and glory of God, the sole and chief cause and end thereof: but the intimation of Satan is, that Job’s fear was merely outward and hypocritical, nor cordial, hearty, and disinterested, but was entirely for his own sake, and for what he got by it; and this he said as if he knew better than God himself, the searcher of hearts, who had before given such an honourable character of him. Sefhorno observes, that he supposes that his fear was not a fear of the greatness of God, a reverence of his divine Majesty, but a fear of punishment; or what we call a servile fear, and not a filial one.

**Ver. 10.** *Hast not thou made an hedge about him,* etc.] A fence, a wall of protection all around him? he had; he encompassed him about with his love as with a shield, a hedge which could not be broken down by men or devils; he surrounded him with his almighty power, that none could hurt him; he guarded him by his providence, he caused his angels to encamp about him; yea, he himself was a wall of fire around him; the Targum interprets it the word of God: so thick was the hedge, so strong the fence, that Satan could not find the least gap to get in at, to do him any injury to

his body or mind, without the divine permission; which he envied and was vexed at, and maliciously suggests that this was the motive of Job's fear of the Lord; and indeed it was an obligation upon him to fear him, but not the sole cause of it:

*and about his house*; not the house in which he dwelt; though Satan could have gladly pulled down that about his ears, as well as that in which his children were; but it designs his family, who were also by Providence protected in their persons and estates, and preserved from the temptations of Satan, at least from being overcome by them, and even at the times of their feasting before mentioned; this fence was about his servants also, so that Satan could not come at and hurt any one that belonged to him, which was a great grief and vexation of mind to him:

*and about all that he hath on every side*? his sheep, his camels, his oxen, and his asses; for otherwise these would not have escaped the malice and fury of this evil spirit they afterwards felt; but as these were the gifts of the providence of God to Job, they were guarded by his power, that Satan could not hurt them without leave:

*thou hast blessed the work of his hands*; not only what he himself personally wrought with his own hands, but was done by his servants through his direction, and by his order; the culture of his fields, the feeding and keeping of his flocks and herds; all succeeded well; whatever he did, or was concerned in, prospered:

*and his substance is increased in the land*; or "broke out"<sup>f43</sup>; like a breach of waters; (see <sup><1018></sup>2 Samuel 5:20); exceeded all bounds; his riches broke forth on the right hand and on the left, and flowed in, so that there were scarce any limits to be set to them; he abounded in them; his sheep brought forth thousands; his oxen, camels, and asses, stood well, and were strong to labour; and his wealth poured in upon him in great plenty; all which was an eyesore to Satan, and therefore would insinuate that this was the sole spring and source of Job's religion, devotion, and obedience.

**Ver. 11.** *But put forth thine hand now*, etc.] With draw thine hand of providence, power, and protection, with which thou hast covered and screened him; and, instead of that, "send"<sup>f44</sup> forth thine afflicting hand, not barely in a way of chastisement and correction, but in wrath and vengeance, consuming and destroying all he had; and this he desires might be done now, immediately, without delay, while Job was in the midst of his

prosperity; for Satan was in haste to have mischief done to him, being an object of his great hatred and enmity: some, instead of “now”, render it, “I pray thee”<sup>f45</sup>, as being an entreaty of Satan, and an importunate one, and which he was eagerly desirous of obtaining; well knowing that no hurt could be done to Job without leave from God, or his doing it himself: the Vulgate Latin version is, “put forth thine hand a little”, as if its being exerted but a little, or a small touch of it, would be sufficient to discover Job’s hypocrisy; but Satan doubtless knew Job better than this suggests, and that such was his integrity, that a small trial would not affect him; and besides, he immediately adds:

*and touch all that he hath*; which was not a slight touch, but an heavy one, reaching to all his family and substance, and to his person too, and the health of it at least; as appears by the proviso or saving clause put in by the Lord afterwards, when he gave leave to smite him:

*and he will curse thee to thy face*<sup>f46</sup>; then, let it be so and so with me, worse than it now is; let me have my full damnation; for the words are an imprecation of the devil, wishing the worst of evils to himself, if Job, in such circumstances, did not “curse” God to his “face”; that is, not only openly and publicly, but impudently; signifying that he would fly in his face, like a man passionate, furious, and enraged, and like those wicked persons, hungry and hardly bestead, that would fret and curse their king and their God, (<sup>2302B</sup>Isaiah 8:21) or like those men, who, under their pains and sores, blasphemed him that had power over them, (<sup>6660</sup>Revelation 16:10,11), or like those carnal professors, whose words were stout against God, (<sup>3013</sup>Malachi 3:13-15) in suchlike passionate expressions Satan insinuates Job would break out against God, murmuring at and complaining of his providence, arraigning his wisdom, righteousness, and holiness, in his dealings with him: or, if “he does not bless thee to thy face”<sup>f47</sup>, as it may be rendered; that is, either he “will bid thee farewell”<sup>f48</sup>, and apostatize from thee, (see Gill on “<sup>8005</sup>Job 1:5”) as sometimes nominal professors do, when affliction and tribulation come upon them, they are offended, and drop their profession, (<sup>4132</sup>Matthew 13:21) or, as others, “if he hath not blessed thee to thy face”<sup>f49</sup>; then let it be thus with me, that is, it will be then a clear case, that Job in times past had only blessed God to his face, or outwardly; he had only honoured him with his lips, but his heart was far from him, and his fear towards him taught by the precept of men, as is the character of hypocrites, (<sup>2913</sup>Isaiah 29:13) this Satan wickedly insinuates; one of the Targums is,

“if he does not provoke thee to the face of thy Word;”

Ben Melech interprets *wynp l* [“by thy life”, and takes it to be the form of an oath.

**Ver. 12.** *And the Lord said unto Satan, behold, all that he hath is in thy power*, etc.] This he said not as angry and displeased with Job, or as entertaining any ill opinion of him through the suggestions of Satan, nor as gratifying that evil spirit; but in order to convince and confound him, and to try the grace of Job, that he might shine the brighter; and it may be observed, that the Lord alone had the sovereign dispose of all that Job had, and that Satan could have no power over him or his, but what was given him:

*only upon himself put not forth thine hand*; thus the Lord restrained Satan, who could do nothing without his leave, and limits and bounds the present affliction of his servant to his family and estate; reserving his person and the health of it for another temptation and trial:

*so Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord*; the Targum adds, “with power”, authority, liberty of acting; not from his general presence, which is everywhere, from whence there is no going; nor from his gracious presence, in which he had not been; and much less his glorious presence in heaven, from whence he had been cast long ago; but from the place where the sons and people of God worshipped, and where he granted his presence to them, and from conversing with God there: as soon as Satan had got leave, he at once went forth to execute what he had permission to do, glad at heart he had so far succeeded; and eager upon doing all the mischief he could to a man that was the butt of his malice, and the object of his envy and hatred; the sad effects and consequences of which follow.

**Ver. 13.** *And there was a day*, etc.] Which according to the Targum was the first day of the week, but this is not certain, nor material; nor can it be said whether it was the day following that, Satan had leave to do what he would with Job’s substance, nor how long this was after that; for though Satan was no doubt eager upon it, and in haste to do mischief; yet besides its requiring some time to get the Sabeans and Chaldeans to march out of their own country into Job’s, so he would contrive and fix upon the most proper time to answer his ends and purposes, which was

*when his (Job's) sons and daughters were eating, and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house*; it should rather be rendered, "in the house of their brother, the firstborn"; that is, of Job; for *rwkb* relates not to brethren, but to parents, as Gussetins observes<sup>f50</sup>: this was either the beginning of a new turn, or rotation of their feasting with each other, which might begin with the elder brother; or this was his birthday; (see ~~18004~~ Job 1:4,5) and this was the day Satan pitched upon to bring all the following calamities and distresses upon Job; partly that they might fall with the greater weight upon him, and more sensibly affect him, coming upon him while his family was feasting; and while he was pleasing himself with the thoughts of having brought up his children to men's and women's estate, and of the affluent circumstances they were in; and of the unity, harmony, and love that subsisted amongst them, of which their present feasting together was a proof; and partly that these afflictions might the more look like the judgments of God upon him, just as the men of the old world were eating and drinking when the flood came and destroyed them all, (~~2177~~ Luke 17:27) and for the same reasons these were all brought upon him in one day, to crush him the more; and that it might be thought the hand of God was in it, in a way of wrath and vengeance, and so irritate him to curse him to his face, which was what Satan aimed at; (see ~~23708~~ Isaiah 47:8,9 ~~6807~~ Revelation 18:7,8).

**Ver. 14.** *And there came a messenger unto Job*, etc.] Not a messenger of Satan, as Jarchi, or one of his angels, or evil spirits; though this is a sense which is embraced not only by some Jewish Rabbins, but by several of the ancient Christian writers, as Sanctius on the place observes; and such they suppose the other messengers after mentioned were; but both this and they were servants of Job, who escaped the calamity that came upon the rest of their fellow servants:

*and said, the oxen were ploughing*: the five hundred yoke of oxen Job had, (~~18008~~ Job 1:3), which were all out in the fields, and employed in ploughing them; and to plough with such was usual in those times and countries, as it now is in some places; (see ~~11919~~ 1 Kings 19:19)

*and the asses feeding beside them*; beside the oxen, where they were ploughing, in pasture ground, adjoining to the arable land; and beside the servants that were ploughing with the oxen: "at their hands"<sup>f51</sup>; as it may be literally rendered, just by them, under their eye and care; or "in their places"<sup>f52</sup>; where they should be, and where they used to feed<sup>f53</sup>; these

were the five hundred asses, male and female, reckoned among Job's substance, (<sup><BIB></sup>Job 1:3), which were brought hither to feed, and some for the servants to ride on; this ploughed land being at some distance from Job's house; and others to carry the seed that was to be sown here: now the situation and employment of these creatures are particularly mentioned, to show that they were in their proper places, and at their proper work; and that what befell them was not owing to the want of care of them, or to the indolence and negligence of the servants.

**Ver. 15.** *And the Sabeans fell upon them*, etc.] Or, "Sheba fell" <sup>f54</sup>; that is, as Aben Ezra and Simeon Bar Tzemach supply it, an host of the Sabeans, or a company of them; these were not the descendants of that Sheba that sprung from Ham, (<sup><BIB></sup>Genesis 10:7) nor of him that came from Shem, (<sup><BIB></sup>Genesis 10:28), but from Sheba, the son of Jokshan, a son of Abraham by Keturah, who with the rest of her sons were sent into the east country, the country of Job; and these Sabeans, who descended from the same, were his near neighbours, (<sup><BIB></sup>Genesis 25:3,6), they were the inhabitants of one of the Arabias, it is generally said Arabia Felix; but that is not likely, since it was a very plentiful country, the inhabitants of which had no need to rob and plunder others; and besides was at a great distance from the place of Job's habitation, and lay to the south, and not the east; though Strabo <sup>f55</sup> indeed says, that the Sabeans inhabited Arabia Felix, and made excursions into Syria, which agrees with these Sabeans; but rather Arabia Deserta, as Spanheim <sup>f56</sup> has abundantly proved, a barren place; hence we read of Sabeans from the wilderness, (<sup><BIB></sup>Ezekiel 23:42), the inhabitants of which lived upon the plunder of others; and these being naturally given to spoil and rapine, were fit persons for Satan to work upon, as he does in the children of disobedience; into whose hearts he put it to make such a descent on Job's fields, and carry off his cattle, as they did; they fell upon his oxen and asses at once and unawares, in a body, in a hostile and furious manner:

*and took them away*; as a booty; they did not kill them, but drove them off the ground, and led them into their own country for their use and service:

*yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword*; who were ploughing with the oxen, and looking after the asses, and who might make an opposition, though in vain; this was an addition to affliction, that not only his cattle were carried off, but his servants were slain, who were born in his house, or bought with his money:



*and I only am escaped alone to tell thee*; this single servant was preserved, either by the special providence of God, in kindness to Job, that he might know of a certainty, and exactly, and what had befallen him, and how it came to pass, which men are naturally desirous of; or else, as it is generally thought, through the malice and cunning of Satan, that the tidings might the sooner be brought to him, and more readily be believed by him, and strike him with the greater surprise, a servant of his own running with it, whom he knew, and could believe; and he appearing with the utmost concern of mind, and horror in his countenance.

**Ver. 16.** *While he was yet speaking, there came also another*, etc.]

Another messenger, one of Job's servants, from another part of his fields where his sheep were grazing, and was one of those that kept them; he came with another piece of bad news, even before the other had finished his whole account; and the same is observed of all the other messengers that follow: so Satan ordered it, that all Job's afflictions should come upon him at once, and the news of them be brought him as thick and as fast as they could, to surprise him the more into some rash expressions against God; that he might have no intermission, no breathing time; no time for prayer to God to support him under the affliction, and sanctify it unto him; no time for meditation upon, or recollection of, past experiences of divine goodness, or of promises that might have been useful to him; but they came one upon the back of another, to hurry him into some indecent carriage and behaviour towards God, being considered by him as his judgments upon him:

*and said, the fire of God is fallen from heaven*; which the servant thought, or Satan put it into his mind to say, that it came immediately from God, like that which destroyed Nadab and Abihu and the murmurers in the camp of Israel, (<sup><1800></sup>Leviticus 10:2 <sup><2100></sup>Numbers 11:1) or, as it is commonly thought, is so called, because a most vehement one, as a vehement flame is called the flame of the Lord, (<sup><2200></sup>Song of Solomon 8:6) this being such a fire as was never known, since the fire that came down from heaven and destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities of the plain. I am inclined to think it was a prodigious flash or flashes of lightning; for as thunder is the voice of God, so lightning, which accompanies it, may be called the fire of God; and this agrees with the phraseology of the passage; it comes from heaven, or the air, and falls upon the earth, and strikes creatures and things in it; and which, as it is the effect of natural causes, Satan might be permitted to join them together and effect it; and this was done, and the



news of it expressed in such language as to make Job believe that God was against him, and become his enemy, and that the artillery of heaven was employed to his harm, and to the ruin of his substance:

*and hath burnt up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them;* as the fire or lightning which came down from heaven and consumed the captains, and their fifties, in Elijah's time, (<sup><1110></sup>2 Kings 1:10,12) and such like effects of lightning are often to be observed, both with respect to men and cattle; these were the 7000 sheep Job was possessed of, (<sup><1800B></sup>Job 1:3) and which were all destroyed at once, with the servants that kept them, excepting one; creatures very productive and very useful both for food and clothing, and also used for sacrifice; and it is thought that Satan's end in the destruction of these was, that Job might conclude from hence that his sacrifices were not acceptable to God, and therefore it was in vain to serve him; which he hoped by this means to bring him to express in a passionate manner to God:

*and I only am escaped alone to tell thee;* (see Gill on "<sup><18015></sup>Job 1:15").

**Ver. 17.** *While he was yet speaking, there came also another,* etc.]

Another messenger from another part of Job's possessions, where his camels were, and this before the last messenger had told his story out:

*and said, the Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away;* these were the 3000 camels, as in (<sup><1800B></sup>Job 1:3) and perhaps they were in three separate companies and places, 1000 in each, and therefore the Chaldeans divided themselves into three bands; or "appointed three heads"<sup>f57</sup>, as it may be rendered; there were three bodies of them under so many leaders and commanders, and this was done, that they might the more easily take them; and they "diffused or spread themselves"<sup>f58</sup>, as the word signifies, upon or about the camels; they surrounded them on all sides, or otherwise, these being swift creatures, would have run away from them: these Chaldeans or Chasdim were the descendants of Chesed, a son of Nahor, who was brother to Abraham, (<sup><0220></sup>Genesis 22:20,22), who settled in the east country, not far from Job: and this agrees with the character that Xenophon<sup>f59</sup> gives of the Chaldeans, at least some of them, in later times; that they lived upon robbing and plundering others, having no knowledge of agriculture, but got their bread by force of arms; and such as these Satan could easily instigate to come and carry off Job's camels:

*yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword, and I only am escaped alone to tell thee;* (See Gill on “<sup><3015></sup>Job 1:15”).

**Ver. 18.** *While he was yet speaking, there came another,* etc.] A servant of one of Job’s sons, who was in waiting at the feast before mentioned, and here again repeated:

*and said, thy sons and thy daughters were eating, and drinking wine in their eldest brother’s house;* (See Gill on “<sup><3013></sup>Job 1:13”).

**Ver. 19.** *And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness,* etc.] Most probably from the wilderness of Arabia, winds from such places being generally very strong, (<sup><2011></sup>Jeremiah 4:11,12) as this was, and is called a “great one”, a very strong and blustering one; and being so, and because of the effects of it, and being an uncommon and extraordinary one, as what follows shows, a “behold” is prefixed to the account, exciting attention and wonder:

*and smote the four corners of the house;* which shows it to be an unusual wind, it blowing from all parts and on all sides; and was either a whirlwind, which whirled about this house; or Satan, with his posse of devils with him, took the advantage of the sweep of it, as it came by this house, and with all their force and strength, might and main, whirled it about it; otherwise Satan has no power to raise winds, and allay them at pleasure; God only creates them, holds them in his fists, and brings them out of his treasures; and this wind blowing from the desert, the devil and his angels took the opportunity, and with such violence whirled it about the house that it fell, as follows:

*and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead;* not upon Job’s sons only, but upon his daughters also, the word used takes in both; and Mr. Broughton renders it, “and it fell upon the young folk”; this was the sorest affliction of all, and which Satan reserved to the last, that if the others did not succeed to his wish, this might; and a very trying, grievous one it was, to lose all his children at once in such a manner, and at such a time; his children, which were parts of himself, whom he had taken so much care of in their education, who had been as olive plants about his table, and now brought up to men’s and women’s estates, comfortably settled in the world, and living in great peace and harmony among themselves, and not one of them left to comfort him under his other afflictions; and these taken away not by any distemper of body, which would have prepared him for

the stroke, but by a violent death; and which had the appearance of the hand and judgment, wrath and vengeance of God; and while they were feasting together in mirth and gaiety, however innocent, and not in a serious frame of spirit, or having any serious turn upon their minds for death and eternity, of which they had no thought; had they been in the house of God attending religious worship, or though in their own houses, yet either in their closets praying, or else conversing about spiritual things, with one another, it would have greatly taken off of the affliction; but to be snatched into eternity at once, and in this manner, must be cutting to Job; though there is no reason to think that this was for any sin of theirs, or through any displeasure of God to them, but was permitted purely on Job's account, for the trial of his faith, patience, sincerity, and integrity; and here, as in the former instances, only one servant was spared to bring the sad tidings:

*and I only am escaped alone to tell thee*; so that all the servants in the house, excepting this, perished in the ruins of it, as well as Job's sons and daughters, (see Gill on "<sup>48015</sup>Job 1:15"). It is a notion of some Jewish writers, as Simeon bar Tzemach observes, that each of these messengers, as soon as they had delivered their message, died, and so all that Job had was delivered into the hands of Satan, and nothing left; but this seems contrary to (<sup>48096</sup>Job 19:16). It may be observed that Aristeas, an Heathen writer, as quoted by Alexander Polyhistor<sup>f60</sup>, another Heathen writer, gives an account of each of these calamities of Job, just in the same order in which they are here. It may be observed from all this, that no character ever so great and high can secure persons from afflictions, even grievous ones; Job had an high and honourable character given and confirmed by God himself, yet so sorely afflicted; and let men be the beloved of God, his chosen and precious, his covenant people, the redeemed of the Lamb, righteous and godly persons, the sons and heirs of God, yet neither nor all of these exempt them from afflictions; and those that befall them are many, frequent, and continued, and come from different quarters, from men good and bad, and from devils, and all by the permission and according to the will of God. And this shows us the uncertainty of all outward enjoyments, gold, silver, cattle, houses, lands, children, friends and relations, all perishing, and sometimes suddenly taken away: and it may be observed, among all Job's losses, he did not lose anything of a spiritual nature, not one spiritual blessing; though he lost all his outward mercies, yet not the God of his mercies; not his covenant interest in him, nor his share in his

love, favour, and acceptance, which all still continued; he did not lose his interest in a living Redeemer; his children were all dead, but his Redeemer lived, and he knew it; he did not lose the principle of grace in him, the root of the matter was still with him; nor anyone particular grace, not his faith and confidence in God, nor his hope of eternal life, nor his love and affection to God, and desire after him; nor his patience and humility; nor his integrity, faithfulness, and honesty, which he retained and held fast; nor any of his spiritual riches, which are durable; he had riches in heaven, where thieves cannot break through and steal, a better and a more enduring substance there, an inheritance incorruptible, reserved in the heavens his conduct under all this follows.

**Ver. 20.** *Then Job arose*, etc.] Either from table, being at dinner, as some think, in his own house; it being the time that his children were feasting in their eldest brother's house; or from the business in which he was employed, which he stopped on hearing this news; or from his seat, or chair of state in which he sat; or rather the phrase only signifies, that he at once, with strength of body, and rigour of mind, which were not lost, as often they are in such cases, went about the following things with great composure and sedateness. It is indeed generally observed, that there is an emphasis to be put on the word "then", which may be as well rendered "and", as if Job sat and heard very sedately, without any perturbation of mind, the loss of his substance; but when tidings were brought him of the death of his children, "then" he arose, as being greatly moved and distressed; but it should be observed till now there was no stop or intermission in the messengers, but before one had done speaking, another came and began to tell his story, and so there was no opportunity, as well as not the occasion, of arising and doing what follows; and which he did, not through the violence of his passion, or excess of grief, but as common and ordinary things, which were used to be done in that country for the loss of relations, and in token of mourning for them:

*and rent his mantle*; or "cloak"<sup>f61</sup>, as Mr. Broughton; but whether this was an outward garment, as each of these seem to be, if the same with ours, or an interior one, as some think, it is not very material to know; both were rent by Ezra upon a mournful occasion, (<sup>459B</sup>Ezra 9:3), and it was usual to rend garments for deceased relations, or when they were thought to be so, (see <sup>0137D</sup>Genesis 37:29,34), though some think that this was on the account of the blasphemous thoughts the devil now suggested into his mind, being solicitous to gain his point, and work upon him to curse God; upon which

he rent his garment to show his resentment and indignation at the thought of it, as the Jews used to rend their garments at hearing of blasphemy; but the first sense is best:

*and shaved his beard*; either he himself, or his servant by his orders; and which was done among the eastern nations as a sign of mourning, (see <sup><219D></sup>Isaiah 15:2 <sup><240G></sup>Jeremiah 16:6 48:37) and among the Greeks, as appears from Homer <sup>f62</sup>; nor was this contrary to the law in (<sup><54D></sup>Deuteronomy 14:1), where another baldness, not of the head, but between the eyes, is forbidden for the dead; besides this was before that law was in being, and, had it been, Job was not bound by it, being not of the Israelitish nation: some, as Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and other Jewish writers, interpret this of his plucking or tearing off the hair of his head; but this neither agrees with the sense of the word here used, which has the signification of shearing or mowing, rather than of tearing or plucking, nor with the firmness and composure of Job's mind, who betrayed not any effeminacy or weakness; and though he showed a natural affection for the loss of his substance, and children, as a man, and did not affect a stoical apathy, and brutal insensibility, yet did not give any extraordinary vent to his passion: he behaved both like a man, and a religious man; he mourned for his dead, but not to excess; he sorrowed not as those without hope, and used the common tokens of it, and rites attending it; which shows that mourning for deceased relations, if done in moderation, is not unlawful, nor complying with the rites and customs of a country, in such cases, provided they are not sinful in themselves, nor contrary to the revealed and declared will of God:

*and fell down upon the ground*; in veneration of God, of his holiness and justice, and as sensible of his awful hand upon him, and as being humbled under it, and patiently submitting to it; he did not stand up, and curse God to his face, as Satan said he would, but fell upon his face to the ground; he did not curse his King and his God, and look upwards, (see <sup><218D></sup>Isaiah 8:21) but prostrated himself to the earth in great humility before him; besides, this may be considered as a prayer gesture, since it follows:

*and worshipped*; that is, God, for who else should he worship? he worshipped him internally in the exercise of faith, hope, love, humility, patience, etc. and he worshipped him externally by praising him, and praying to him, expressing himself as in the next verse: afflictions, when sanctified, humble good men, cause them to lie low in the dust, and bring

them near to God, to the throne of his grace, and instead of arraigning his providence, and finding fault with his dealings, they adore his majesty, and celebrate his perfections.

**Ver. 21.** *And said, naked came I out of my mother's womb*, etc.] Either literally, where he was conceived and lay, and from whence he came into the world, though he afterwards wishes he never had, or had died as soon as he did, (~~RRB~~ Job 3:10-12), and so it is expressive of his birth, and the circumstance of it; or figuratively, his mother earth, from whence the first man sprang, and so all his posterity with him, being as he of the earth, earthly, (see ~~2127~~ Ecclesiastes 12:7), which sense is mentioned by Jarchi and Aben Ezra; but the first sense seems best: the nakedness referred to is not of the mind or soul, being destitute of righteousness and holiness, with which the following clause will by no means agree, but nakedness of body; and therefore as soon as a child is born, one of the first things done to it is to wrap it in clothes provided for it, (see ~~2504~~ Ezekiel 16:4 ~~4107~~ Luke 2:7) and also a being without the things of this life; the apostle's words are a proper comment on these, and explain them, and perhaps these are referred to by him, "we brought nothing into this world", (~~5407~~ 1 Timothy 6:7), this shows the necessity of the early care of Providence over us, and what reason we have to be thankful for unknown mercies at the time of birth, and in the state of infancy, (~~4219~~ Psalm 22:9 71:6) and what obligations children lie under to parents, and what benefits they receive from them at their first entrance into the world, and which they should religiously requite when through old age they stand in need of their assistance, (~~5408~~ 1 Timothy 5:4), and this may also serve to abate the pride of man, who will have no reason to boast of his riches, nor of his fine clothes, when he considers his original nakedness; and more especially the use of it may be, and which seems to be the use Job made of it, to make the mind easy under the greatest losses. Job considered he did not bring his substance, his servants, and his children into the world with him; and now they were taken from him, he was but as he was when he came into the world, and not at all the worse; he knew how to be abased, and to abound, and in both was content:

*and naked shall I return thither*; not into his mother's womb in a literal sense, which was impossible, (~~4804~~ John 3:4), but to the earth, and to the dust of it, (~~0089~~ Genesis 3:19 ~~2127~~ Ecclesiastes 12:7), pointing to it with his finger, on which he now lay; meaning that he should go to the place appointed for him, the grave, the house of all living, (~~4812~~ Job 30:23), and so the Targum here has it, ``to the house of the grave,``

where he should lie unseen, as in his mother's womb, till the resurrection morn; which would be a kind of a regeneration of him, when he should be delivered up from thence, and enjoy a state of happiness and glory: he should descend into the grave as naked as he was born, respecting not so much the nakedness of his body, as being stripped of all worldly enjoyments, (see <sup><205></sup>Ecclesiastes 5:15) and he says this in his present view of things; he thought once he should have died in his nest, (<sup><189></sup>Job 29:18), in the midst of all his prosperity, and left a large substance to his children; but now all was taken away, and for the present had no hope or expectation of a restoration, as afterwards was; but whereas he was now naked and bare of all, he expected he should continue and die so: or this is said with respect to the common case of men, who it is certain cannot carry anything out of the world with them, either riches or honour, but must leave all behind them, (<sup><50></sup>1 Timothy 6:7 <sup><99></sup>Psalm 49:16,17) which may serve to loosen the minds of men from worldly things, not to set their eyes and hearts upon them, nor to put their trust and confidence in them; and good men may part with them, especially at death with pleasure, since they will have no further use of them, and will have a better and a more enduring substance in their stead:

*the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away*; all outward enjoyments, all the good things of this world, are the Lord's, and at his dispose; the earth, and the fulness of it; kingdoms, nations, countries, houses and lands, the beasts of the field, and cattle on a thousand hills; the gold and silver, and all the riches of the earth: and these are the gifts of his providence to the sons of men; nor have they anything but in a way of giving and receiving; and even what they enjoy, through diligence and industry, is owing to the blessing of God; and who gives not in such sort as that he loses his property in what is given; this he still retains, these are talents which he puts into the hands of men to use for themselves and others, and for which they are accountable to him; and they are but stewards, with whom he will hereafter reckon, and therefore has a right to take away when he pleases; and both Job ascribes to God, not only the giving, but the taking away: he does not attribute his losses to second causes, to the Sabeans and Chaldeans, to the fire from heaven, and the wind from the desert, but to God, whose sovereign will and overruling hand were in all; these were but the instruments of Satan, and he had no power but what was given from God; and therefore to the counsel of his will, who suffered it, Job refers it, and for that reason sits down satisfied and quiet. This is all to be



understood of temporal things only; for of spiritual things it cannot be said that God gives and takes away; such gifts are without repentance, and are irreversible, (<sup><512></sup>Romans 11:29), the Targum is,

“the Word of the Lord hath given, and the Word of the Lord and the house of his judgment hath taken away;”

the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions add,

“as it pleased the Lord, so it is done:”

*blessed be the name of the Lord*; for all his blessings and mercies; for all the gifts of nature and providence that had been bestowed, which could not be claimed, and of which he knew himself unworthy; and for the continuance of them so long with goodness and mercy had followed him all the days of his life hitherto, and still he had mercies to bless God for; his wife was still with him, he had some servants left, his own life was spared; he continued as yet in health of body, and therefore could sing of mercy as well as judgment; nor is there any state on earth a man can be in, but there is something to bless God for; wherefore the apostle’s exhortation will always hold good, “in everything give thanks”: (<sup><518></sup>1 Thessalonians 5:18); besides the name, the nature, the perfections, of God are always the same, and therefore always to be celebrated, and blessing, honour, and glory, are to be ascribed to him continually, in every state and condition of life; wherefore the Arabic version adds, “from henceforth, and for ever”; which agrees with (<sup><579></sup>Psalm 72:19); and thus Job, instead of cursing God, blesses him, and proves the devil to be a liar, as he was from the beginning; and shows his superiority over him through the power of divine grace; this evil one could not touch him, he was overcome by him, and his designs defeated.

**Ver. 22.** *In all this Job sinned not*, etc.] Not that he was without sin, he was conscious to himself of it, and owns it, (<sup><380></sup>Job 9:20,30,31); but in all the above things he did or said he sinned not; not in his rending his garments, in shaving his head, and laying himself prostrate on the ground, which were done as common usages in such cases, and not through excess of passion; nor in anything that dropped from his lips, which were ill-becoming the character he bore as a religious man; and though he might be guilty of some failings and imperfections, as the best of men are, even in doing the best of things, yet he sinned not that sin the devil said he would,



that is, curse God to his face; there was nothing of this, nor like it, but the reverse of it in all he said and did:

*nor charged God foolishly*: or “gave not folly to [him]”<sup>f63</sup>; did not ascribe it to him, did not arraign his wisdom, nor charge him with folly; though there might be some things he could not account for, or see into the reasons of them, he knew the Lord could; he considered that he was a God of knowledge, the only and all wise God, and did all things after the counsel of his will, and to answer the best ends and purposes, and therefore he submitted all to his wisdom; nor did he himself speak foolishly of him, arraigning his justice and holiness, as if he had done wrong to him; he knew there was no unrighteousness in God, nor in any of his ways and works, and that he had a right to do what he would with his own, to give and take it away at his pleasure: he spoke nothing that was “unsavoury”<sup>f64</sup>, as the word signifies; nothing contrary to right reason and true religion; nothing unsuitable unto, or unbecoming him as a man, as a religious man, as in connection with God, a servant of his, and one that feared him. The Arabic version is, “nor blasphemed God”; and the Targum,

“neither did he set in order words of blasphemy before God;”

he did not curse God, as Satan said he would, neither in heart and thought, nor in words; this is a testimony of him given by the Lord himself, the searcher of hearts, and who only could give such a testimony of him; and which, as Cocceius observes, is a proof of the divine authority of this book.