

Who Can Be Pure and Clean? A Thematic Study of the Book of Job

Biblical Data

4:17 'Can mankind be just before God? Can a man be **pure** before his Maker?
18 He puts no trust even in His servants; And against His angels He charges error.
19 How much more those who dwell in houses of clay, Whose foundation is in the dust, Who are crushed before the moth!
20 Between morning and evening they are broken in pieces; Unobserved, they perish forever.
21 Is not their tent-cord plucked up within them? They die, yet without wisdom.'

5:1 Call now, is there anyone who will answer you? And to which of the holy ones will you turn?
2 For **anger** slays the foolish man, And **jealousy** kills the simple.
3 I have seen the foolish taking root, And I cursed his abode immediately.
4 His sons are far from safety, They are even oppressed in the gate, And there is no deliverer.
5 His harvest the hungry devour And take it to a place of thorns, And the schemer is eager for their wealth.
6 For affliction does not come from the dust, Nor does trouble sprout from the ground,
7 For man is born for trouble, As sparks fly upward.
8 But as for me, I would seek God, And I would place my cause before God;

8:1 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered,
2 How long will you say these things, And the words of your mouth be a mighty wind?
3 Does God pervert justice? Or does the Almighty pervert what is right?
4 If your sons sinned against Him, Then He delivered them into the power of their transgression.
5 If you would seek God And implore the compassion of the Almighty,
6 If you are **pure** and upright, Surely now He would rouse Himself for you And restore your righteous estate.
7 Though your beginning was insignificant, Yet your end will increase greatly.
8 Please inquire of past generations, And consider the things searched out by their fathers.
9 For we are only of yesterday and know nothing, Because our days on earth are as a shadow.
10 Will they not teach you and tell you, And bring forth words from their minds?

9:1 Then Job answered,
2 In truth I know that this is so; But how can a man be in the right before God?
3 If one wished to dispute with Him, He could not answer Him once in a thousand times.
4 Wise in heart and mighty in strength, Who has defied Him without harm?
14 How then can I answer Him, And choose my words before Him?
15 For though I were right, I could not answer; I would have to implore the mercy of my judge.
16 If I called and He answered me, I could not believe that He was listening to my voice.
17 For He bruises me with a tempest And multiplies my wounds without cause.
18 He will not allow me to get my breath, But saturates me with bitterness.
19 If it is a matter of power, behold, He is the strong one! And if it is a matter of justice, who can summon Him?
20 Though I am righteous, my mouth will condemn me; Though I am guiltless, He will declare me guilty.
21 I am guiltless; I do not take notice of myself; I despise my life.
22 It is all one; therefore I say, 'He destroys the guiltless and the wicked.'
23 If the scourge kills suddenly, He mocks the despair of the innocent.
24 The earth is given into the hand of the wicked; He covers the faces of its judges. If it is not He, then who is it?
25 Now my days are swifter than a runner; They flee away, they see no good.
26 They slip by like reed boats, Like an eagle that swoops on its prey.
27 Though I say, 'I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my sad countenance and be cheerful,'
28 I am afraid of all my pains, I know that You will not acquit me.
29 I am accounted wicked, Why then should I toil in vain?

³⁰ If I should wash myself with snow And **cleanse** my hands with lye,
³¹ Yet You would plunge me into the pit, And my own clothes would abhor me.
³² For He is not a man as I am that I may answer Him, That we may go to court together.
³³ There is no umpire between us, Who may lay his hand upon us both.
³⁴ Let Him remove His rod from me, And let not dread of Him terrify me.
³⁵ Then I would speak and not fear Him; But I am not like that in myself.

^{11:1} Then Zophar the Naamathite answered,
² Shall a multitude of words go unanswered, And a talkative man be acquitted?
³ Shall your boasts silence men? And shall you scoff and none rebuke?
⁴ For you have said, ‘My teaching is **pure**, And I am innocent in your eyes.’
⁵ But would that God might speak, And open His lips against you,
⁶ And show you the secrets of wisdom! For sound wisdom has two sides. Know then that God forgets a part of your iniquity.

^{14:1} Man, who is **born of woman**, Is short-lived and full of turmoil.
² Like a flower he comes forth and withers. He also flees like a shadow and does not remain.
³ You also open Your eyes on him And bring him into judgment with Yourself.
⁴ Who can make the **clean** out of the **unclean**? No one!
¹⁴ If a man dies, will he live again? All the days of my struggle I will wait Until my change comes.
¹⁵ You will call, and I will answer You; You will long for the work of Your hands.
¹⁶ For now You number my steps, You do not observe my sin.
¹⁷ My transgression is sealed up in a bag, And You wrap up my iniquity.
¹⁸ But the falling mountain crumbles away, And the rock moves from its place;
¹⁹ Water wears away stones, Its torrents wash away the dust of the earth; So You destroy man’s hope.
²⁰ You forever overpower him and he departs; You change his appearance and send him away.
²¹ His sons achieve honor, but he does not know it; Or they become insignificant, but he does not perceive it.
²² But his body pains him, And he mourns only for himself.

^{15:1} Then Eliphaz the Temanite responded,
¹² Why does your heart carry you away? And why do your eyes flash,
¹³ That you should turn your spirit against God And allow such words to go out of your mouth?
¹⁴ What is man, that he should be **pure**, Or he who is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?
¹⁵ Behold, He puts no trust in His holy ones, And the heavens are not **pure** in His sight;
¹⁶ How much less one who is detestable and **corrupt**, Man, who drinks iniquity like water!
¹⁷ I will tell you, listen to me; And what I have seen I will also declare;
¹⁸ What wise men have told, And have not concealed from their fathers,
¹⁹ To whom alone the land was given, And no alien passed among them.
²⁰ The wicked man writhes in pain all his days, And numbered are the years stored up for the ruthless.
²¹ Sounds of terror are in his ears; While at peace the destroyer comes upon him.
²² He does not believe that he will return from darkness, And he is destined for the sword.
²³ He wanders about for food, saying, ‘Where is it?’ He knows that a day of darkness is at hand.
²⁴ Distress and anguish terrify him, They overpower him like a king ready for the attack,
²⁵ Because he has stretched out his hand against God And conducts himself arrogantly against the Almighty.
²⁶ He rushes headlong at Him With his massive shield.
²⁷ For he has covered his face with his fat And made his thighs heavy with flesh.
²⁸ He has lived in desolate cities, In houses no one would inhabit, Which are destined to become ruins.
²⁹ He will not become rich, nor will his wealth endure; And his grain will not bend down to the ground.
³⁰ He will not escape from darkness; The flame will wither his shoots, And by the breath of His mouth he will go away.
³¹ Let him not trust in emptiness, deceiving himself; For emptiness will be his reward.
³² It will be accomplished before his time, And his palm branch will not be green.
³³ He will drop off his unripe grape like the vine, And will cast off his flower like the olive tree.

³⁴ For the company of the godless is barren, And fire consumes the tents of the **corrupt**.
³⁵ They conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity, And their mind prepares deception.

^{16:1} Then Job answered,
¹⁴ He breaks through me with breach after breach; He runs at me like a warrior.
¹⁵ I have sewed sackcloth over my skin And thrust my horn in the dust.
¹⁶ My face is flushed from weeping, And deep darkness is on my eyelids,
¹⁷ Although there is no violence in my hands, And my prayer is **pure**.
¹⁸ O earth, do not cover my blood, And let there be no resting place for my cry.
¹⁹ Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven, And my advocate is on high.
²⁰ My friends are my scoffers; My eye weeps to God.
²¹ O that a man might plead with God As a man with his neighbor!
²² For when a few years are past, I shall go the way of no return.

^{17:1} My spirit is broken, my days are extinguished, The grave is ready for me.
² Surely mockers are with me, And my eye gazes on their provocation.
³ Lay down, now, a pledge for me with Yourself; Who is there that will be my guarantor?
⁴ For You have kept their heart from understanding, Therefore You will not exalt them.
⁵ He who informs against friends for a share of the spoil, The eyes of his children also will languish.
⁶ But He has made me a byword of the people, And I am one at whom men spit.
⁷ My eye has also grown dim because of grief, And all my members are as a shadow.
⁸ The upright will be appalled at this, And the innocent will stir up himself against the godless.
⁹ Nevertheless the righteous will hold to his way, And he who has **clean** hands will grow stronger and stronger.
¹⁰ But come again all of you now, For I do not find a wise man among you.
¹¹ My days are past, my plans are torn apart, Even the wishes of my heart.
¹² They make night into day, saying, 'The light is near,' in the presence of darkness.
¹³ If I look for Sheol as my home, I make my bed in the darkness;
¹⁴ If I call to the pit, 'You are my father'; To the worm, 'my mother and my sister';
¹⁵ Where now is my hope? And who regards my hope?
¹⁶ Will it go down with me to Sheol? Shall we together go down into the dust?

^{25:1} Then Bildad the Shuhite answered,
² Dominion and awe belong to Him Who establishes peace in His heights.
³ Is there any number to His troops? And upon whom does His light not rise?
⁴ How then can a man be just with God? Or how can he be **clean** who is born of woman?
⁵ If even the moon has no brightness And the stars are not **pure** in His sight,
⁶ How much less man, that maggot, And the son of man, that worm!

^{33:1} However now, Job, please hear my speech, And listen to all my words.
² Behold now, I open my mouth, My tongue in my mouth speaks.
³ My words are from the uprightness of my heart, And my lips speak knowledge sincerely.
⁴ The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.
⁵ Refute me if you can; Array yourselves before me, take your stand.
⁶ Behold, I belong to God like you; I too have been formed out of the clay.
⁷ Behold, no fear of me should terrify you, Nor should my pressure weigh heavily on you.
⁸ Surely you have spoken in my hearing, And I have heard the sound of your words:
⁹ 'I am **pure**, without transgression; I am innocent and there is no guilt in me.
¹⁰ 'Behold, He invents pretexts against me; He counts me as His enemy.

Hope and Resolution, Because God Is On the Side of Life

^{14:14} If a man dies, will he live again? All the days of my struggle I will wait Until my change comes.

^{19:25} As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth.

²⁶ Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God;

²⁷ Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!

The Lingering Question: How Can God Purify and Cleanse Humans?

⁴ But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. ⁶ And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” ⁷ So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir through God.

See Mako A. Nagasawa, *God Condemned Sin in the Flesh of Christ: Romans 8:3 – 4 and Medical Substitutionary Atonement*, found here: <https://www.anastasiscenter.org/bible-messiah-paul-romans>.