Seeing God With or Without the Body:  
Job 19:25–27

Erik Galenieks

Analysis of Job 19:25-27, especially when dealing with its eschatological implications, has led scholars to various views. A general survey of them shows that one of the current prevailing thoughts1 is that Job expects a post-mortem encounter with God, but in an ethereal state.2 According to this view, Job will see his Redeemer not with his physical eyes but outside his body in his “indestructible spirit.” This view is also favored by the translation of the Revised Standard Version footnote, “without my flesh I shall see God.” Unfortunately, this interpretation ignores the nature, function, and purpose of the employed terminology and its various textual elements that suggest just the opposite, namely, the physical nature of Job’s experience.

Another popular opinion asserts that Job envisaged a restoration of his health and prosperity before his death.3 However, if Job is so confident of his recovery, why does he contemplate death with all its implications?4

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1 David J. A. Clines, Job 1-20, Word Biblical Commentary (WBC), vol. 17 (Dallas: Word, 1989), 464. He cites the following scholars to support his claim: G. H. A. Ewald, Bernhard Duhm, August Dillman, Helmut Lamparter, and Artur Weiser. See also Edward J. Kissane, The Book of Job (Dublin: Browne & Nolan, 1946), 120-121. According to him, current views may be grouped in four major categories, namely, (1) Job will die, but will be raised from the dead by God and vindicated; (2) Job will not die, but be restored to health and prosperity by God’s intervention; (3) Job will die, but even in death will be conscious of God’s activity in vindicating him; and (4) Job is expressing a wish as in a conditional clause: “if he were to see God, he would see him as friendly.”

2 Some scholars take the preposition ל in vs. 26 as privative.

3 Kissane, 120-121.

4 Clines, Job 1-20, 464.
Other scholars believe that Job will die and later be resurrected. Edward Young, for instance, speaks of an eschatological event, namely, bodily resurrection, and Gleason Archer translates Job 19:26 in the following way, “And from the vantage point of my flesh, I shall see God.” Such a variety of views and interpretations create in many minds only confusion. That is why it is necessary to take a closer look at the terminology of the passage and to analyze its eschatological nature. In the current case, it is indispensable to establish the language and the categories of the vocabulary employed in these three verses. Job’s attitude to death and belief regarding the future resurrection is fundamental to an understanding of what Job is or is not affirming. Does Job envisage an existential solution in the present course of life or an eschatological event of resurrection?

**Language**

**Structure and Delimitation.** Although many scholars begin their studies by exploring the language of a chosen passage, Meir Weiss emphasizes that the first question should be “What is its structure?” Language and structure are not to be regarded as isolated entities but rather as mutually enriching aspects of the whole. The structure provides control elements, determining to a very large extent the limits within which the study will be done. Consequently, we note that chapter 19 contains four basic units:

1-6 Address to the friends  
7-12 Complaint against God  
13-20 Complaint against man  
21-29 Conviction

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7 Meir Weiss, *The Bible from Within* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1984), 273. Weiss’ position is that “it is the structure of the literary unit that enables us to hear all that can be heard from the work of literary art.”  
These divisions are signaled in a number of different ways which are not discussed in this paper.\(^9\)

**Chiastic Structure of Job 19:21-29.** An analysis of the content of the last division of chapter 19 shows that it displays a chiastic arrangement. Despite varying thematic elements that are present in the given unit, they are bound together by a chiastic structure, which can be diagrammed in the following way:\(^{10}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>19:21</th>
<th>A₁ Admonition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>B₁ Accusation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-24</td>
<td>C₁ Aspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-27b</td>
<td><strong>D CONVICTION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27c</td>
<td>C₂ Aspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>B₂ Accusation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>A₂ Admonition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conviction**

For I, I know that my Redeemer lives,

and that at the end He will stand upon the earth;

And after my skin is destroyed, this [I know],

that from my flesh I shall see God,

Whom I will see for myself,

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\(^{10}\) Kissane pointed out the connections between vss. 21-22 and 28-29 and believed they were originally all together (Kissane, *The Book of Job*, 118-123). G. J. Janzen saw chiasm in vss. 25-27 (Gerald J. Janzen, *Job: Interpretation* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1985), 140. But N. C. Habel demonstrated that the chiasm is larger and includes vss. 21-29 (Norman C. Habel, *The Book of Job: A Commentary*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985), 296. Clines accepted Habel’s structure that saw the mode not just as vs. 25, but also including vss. 26 and 27 (Clines, *Job 1-20*, 437).
And my eyes will behold, and not another.

My heart faints within me.\footnote{All translations from Hebrew to English are done by the author of this article. Literally, “My kidneys grow faint in my breast.”}

The central part of the chiasm is Job’s conviction, represented by vss. 25-27, that functions as a part of a larger unit (vss. 21-29). Its diverse structural and thematic elements exhibit both a well-balanced chiasm and a structurally systematic arrangement.\footnote{For discussions on the structure, see Habel, The Book of Job, 294-298; Janzen, Job, 131-140; Kissane, The Book of Job, 118-123; Clines, Job 1-20, 435-438.} Moreover, vss. 25-27 not only function as the peak of the entire chiastic outline, but also demonstrate that they are bound together phonologically by their own double chiastic structure based on sound.\footnote{These insights belong to Dr. Jacques Doukhan, class notes on the book of Job. See also Gordon Eugene Christo, “The Eschatological Judgment in Job 19:21-29: An Exegetical Study” (Ph.D dissertation, Andrews University, 1992), 78.}

These three verses are interlocked by numerous cogent elements that directly expose and dramatize Job’s conviction of the bodily resurrection:

1. The additional emphatic presence of the pronoun יִּנַּה (“I”) before the verbs יָדַע (“I know,” vs. 25) and יָרֵא (“I will see,” vs. 27).
2. Intensification by repeating the verbs נוהג (vss. 26, 27) and אֲרָרֵךְ (“they will see,” vs. 27).

3. A positive clarification after the verb, מְהַסְּרָה (“I shall see for myself,” vs. 27)\(^\text{14}\) and a negative clarification, מְהַסְּרָה (“and not another,” vs. 27), which emphasizes and strengthens the positive one.

The fact that vss. 25-27 are linked together by various sense, terminological, and thematic interrelated and interdependent elements plays an extremely important role in the process of interpretation. For instance, correspondence in sound often extends to correspondence in sense. Thus, various sound, verbal, and thematic connections not only form but also help to clarify Job’s conviction.

**Eschatological Terms**

הָבַא and בִּרְא. The force of Job’s conviction in the future resurrection is demonstrated by his deliberate choice of the vocabulary, which by its nature and purpose is eschatological, especially the verb בָּרָא (“see,” “behold”).\(^\text{15}\) One of its functions is to express the vision of God that every righteous person will have on the resurrection morning.\(^\text{16}\) Usually the words for “seeing” are associated with the words for waking.\(^\text{17}\) Some scholars would include in this category even those texts that do not have the word “to see,” but which nevertheless imply it.\(^\text{18}\)

Generally the verb בִּרְא (“to see”) denotes the act of “seeing,” “perceiving,” “watching,” or “looking” with one’s own eyes.\(^\text{19}\) Job expresses his conviction that he will live again by a short but assertive phrase, \(^\text{14}\) For the reflexive and emphatic function of personal pronouns suffixed to propositions occurring after a verb, see Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Vinona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 305.


\(^\text{19}\) Eve perceived that the fruit of the tree was good (Gen 3:6). In Isa 53:11 ברָא occurs without an object, and one can understand this to indicate simply that after the suffering of death (the grave, vs. 9), the Suffering Servant will see again, that is, his eyes will be opened. The assurance that he will live again is expressed by his seeing again; see Dahood, *Psalms III*, xlix-lii.
namely, יָרְאָי אֶעָשֵׂה אֲנִי יְהֹוָה ("and my eyes will behold," vs. 27), or will see again. There is no such thing as seeing without awakening, for in sleep the eyes are closed, it is dark, and one neither sees nor knows anything. However, in awakening the eyes open, it is light, and one can see again. That is why in Scripture seeing is often paralleled to awakening. Note, for example, the references in Pss 17:15 and 11:7:

17:15
I, I shall behold Your face in righteousness;

11:7
I will be satisfied with Your likeness when I awake.

The upright will behold His face.

The context in both Psalms is the threat of death at the hands of the wicked. In both contexts, the “beholding” is a reward in contrast to the fate of the wicked. On the wicked, “God will rain fiery coals and burning sulfur” (Ps 11:6), and the men of this world have their reward already in this life (Ps 17:14). In this context, the reward of the righteous person is “seeing God” when he awakes at the resurrection (Ps 17:15). Job is particularly emphatic about beholding God in his own resurrected body. The assurance of seeing is emphasized in several ways by employing various eschatological terms and descriptive elements:

1. Two synonyms—יהוה and יָשָׁר—occur together.
2. The term יָשָׁר occurs twice.

Additional emphasis on personal involvement is created by:

1. Particularly emphasizing his personal, by its nature, physical involvement, namely, seeing with יָרְאָי (“my eyes”).
2. Clarifying his assertion by adding יָרְאָי (“and not another,” literally, “stranger”).
3. The number of occurrences of personal pronouns and suffixes.

Thus, Job demonstrates a powerful conviction that he himself, in person, not a stranger, will see God in his new resurrected body. The conviction of Job’s statement could not be made any stronger. The presence of two different verbs for “seeing” and the emphasis and clarification of the personal element not only creates an eschatological

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context, but also firmly links this unit with other passages that deal with the same eschatological hope.

**and**. The motif of resurrection is further reestablished by the employment of the verb מָשָׁת (“He will stand”), especially as it functions in parallel to the term יָם (“alive,” “living”). This interconnection clearly alludes to Job 14:12, where Job employs מָשָׁת in parallel to וָשָׂר (“they will awake”) in order to emphasize the future event that will take place in time and space. The purpose and function of both terms מָשָׁת and יָם, the subject of which is the Redeemer, is to intensify and reinforce the concept of the Resurrection hope even more.

Therefore, it is logical to associate Job 19:26 with the eschatological event, especially since the order of the word pairs follows the pattern that can be observed in other resurrection passages, namely, מָשָׁת following יָם.

I know that my redeemer lives [יָם],
And that in the end he will stand [משת] upon the earth (vs. 25).

Despite the fact that the verb מָשָׁת is usually accepted here in its legal sense, nevertheless, because of its association with יָם, it has a clear eschatological value and significance.

**and**. The noun זֶבַע (“earth,” “dust”) points back to the זֶבַע in Gen 2:7 as the place of life and in Gen 3:19 as the place of death. When a man was formed from the זֶבַע of the ground, Yahweh caused himحياء (“to live”). In the book of Job “dust” occurs at least twenty-four times, alluding either to death and the grave or to mortal human beings.

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23 Isa 26:14, 19; Hos 6:2. In all these references מָשָׁת constantly follows יָם. See Ezek 37:10.

24 Sawyer, “Hebrew Words for Resurrection,” 232. An outstanding illustration of this methodology is the example of Deut 31:16 when מָשָׁת occurs following the death of Moses. The second-century rabbis used the presence of the verb to prove the resurrection of Moses. Sanh 90. b.

Moreover, the occurrence of the term רָפָח so close to the adjective יָז (“alive,” “living”), which characterizes the Redeemer as a living being, alludes to the resurrection at the eschaton.

As Job uses רָפָח in parallel with death and the grave, the underlying relation of רָפָח to death is also emphasized by its close proximity to יָז. This is well demonstrated in Job 19:25:

I know that my redeemer lives [יָז],
And that in the end he will stand upon the earth [רָפָח].

Where these two terms occur in close proximity, they allude to the resurrection, especially when רָפָח is used to describe the dust of the earth. Thus, the basic meaning of Job 19:25 is that Job has a Redeemer who lives and will conquer death.

Inarnא and רגח. Furthermore, the adjective יָז ("and at the end") is derived from the preposition רגח, which means “behind,” or “afterwards.” Both in terms of space and time, יָז can either mean “what

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26 "יָז," BDB, 312; Clines, Job 1-20; 460.
27 See also Isa 26:19; Dan 12:2.
28 Gen 3:19; Eccl 3:20; 12:7; Job 4:19; 8:19; 10:9; 34:15; Ps 104:29.
29 Clines, Job 1-20, 160.
31 The foundation for this connection is based on the creation story (Gen 2:7), when man was formed from the רפָח of the ground and God caused him to live, יָז. See also Isa 26:19 and Dan 12:2.
immediately follows,” 34 or describe the general “beyond” or “future,” 35 and finally, even the limits of space 36 or the very end of time. 37

According to Dahood, the word נטרש functions as a technical term for the eschaton if it is qualified by an eschatological context. 38 This is exactly the case in vss. 25-27, which contain various elements of death, life, and resurrection, thus demonstrating all the criteria for understanding it in an eschatological sense. Not only does it have the elements of death and resurrection, but in its context it is also interrelated with the word designating eternity (ןשרפ). It is obvious that the author used נטרש as a technical term for the eschaton.

Job’s faith is in the eschaton. Even if he has to die and go down to Sheol and become again the dust of the earth, Job is confident in the eschatological resurrection, as is seen from the discussed vocabulary. He states that vindication is expected נטרש (“after”) the destruction of his body. It means that he is not referring to his vindication in the latter part of his own life, either. 39

Summary

The overview of the eschatological terminology within the same associated field, especially, in their clusters, builds a strong case for interpretation. Moreover, the diversity of this particular vocabulary not only merges together but also creates a specific theological eschatological environment. It was observed that Job 19:25-27 contains seven terms from the field of eschatology: נטרש (“after”); נטרש (“the eschaton”); נטרש (“the dust of earth”); נטרש (“live”); נטרש and נטרש (“to see upon awakening”); נטרש

34 The term is used to describe what will follow that which has just proceeded. The “second” husband (Deut 24:3); the “following” generation (Ps 48:13); the “next” temple (Hag 2:9).
35 In a temporal sense, it refers to the general future. The generation to come in Ps 102:18 is not the immediately following one, because, unlike Ps 48:13, the message is to be conveyed not by “telling” the next generation, but by “writing” it for them to see.
36 The local extremity is exemplified by usage to refer to the far (western) sea נטרש in Deut 11:24; 34:2; Joel 2:20, and Zech 14:8. It even refers to the eastern mountains (Gen 10:30). See William Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 313.
37 See נטרש, *BDB*, 31. A number of references signify a meaning like “end” or “last” part of a period. 2 Sam 23:1; 2 Chr 9:29; 12:15; 16:11; 25:26, and 28:26. Yahweh is “the first and the last” (Isa 41:4; 44:6; 48:12).
(“to arise”)—all of them complement each other in creating a solid eschatological scenario. To these we might add an eighth, רושם (“to redeem”), and working from the associative field, there may even be a ninth in vs. 26, namely, שרו (“to awake”).

**Intertextuality**

The presence of eschatological terms in Job 19 can be better understood and appreciated by the examination of other related passages in which the same vocabulary occurs in identical clusters, especially where the basic meaning is already established.

**Isaiah 26:19.** The majority of scholars believe that Isa 26:19 refers to the resurrection of the dead, and this is an important fact because it is written earlier than Dan 12.

Your dead will live
Their [My] corpses will rise
You who dwell in the dust, awake and shout for joy
For your dew is as the dew of the dawn
And the earth will cast out the dead

This passage is said to be the most explicit Old Testament reference to the bodily resurrection of believers, as it unambiguously refers to Yahweh’s purpose and power to deliver the dead from death. In fact, it cries out, in full assurance of the purpose of God, the clear command

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40 Sawyer, “Hebrew Words for Resurrection,” 231.
42 Ibid., 269.
43 It is restricted to “your” dead. “Dwell” and “dust” are combined in Ps 7:6; see also Job 7:21; 20:11; 21:26; Dan 12:2. The phrase “the dust of death” occurs in Ps 22:16.
over the cemetery of the dead, “Wake up and rejoice, you that sleep in the dust.”

Moreover, Isa 26:19 emphasizes the same message of resurrection as Ezekiel and other prophets do, but in a much more expressive way: Your dead נְדָעַ ("shall live"); their corpses צֶרֶם ("shall rise"); dwellers in the dust נֵבַע ("awake"); . . . and the earth יָשָׁב ("will cast out") the dead. The resurrection of the dead is that triumphant, final, and sudden eschatological event which will wake the dead from their sleep in their graves and towards which the whole universe is moving.

The strongest argument for reading in this passage the idea of the bodily resurrection comes from the employment, nature, function, and purpose of the eschatological terminology that harmoniously operates in the associated field for death and resurrection.

Three widely accepted terms for resurrection are: יָשָׁב ("to live"), מְדֹעַ ("to rise"), and עָפָר ("to awake"). Two more images enhance the resurrection overtones of this passage, namely, the mention of light, "morning" לֵעֹל ("dew").

47 For a discussion on the vocabulary and categories of terms, see Sawyer, “Hebrew Words for Resurrection,” 219-222.
48 Hasel, 272.
50 See Sawyer, “Hebrew Words for Resurrection,” 219-222. He puts these terms in the same category as “awakening” and “seeing,” as they all deal with awakening out of sleep.
51 Ibid., 225. The category contains words for “sprouting,” “blossoming,” “rain,” and “dew.” See also Hasel, 275. Though Job does not invoke in our passage the image of sprouting with rain or dew, he does employ the figure in Job 14:9-14 in a reference to the resurrection.
The categories of eschatological terms represented in Isa 26:19 include:

1. הַיֶּדֶר (“to live” in the sense of “to live again”).
2. From the category of “rising” or “standing”— יָשָׁב (“to arise”).
3. From the category of “awakening,” “light,” and “seeing”— אָרָא (“light”).
4. From the category of “rain,” or “blossoming”— בָּשָׁם (“dew”).
5. Words for the “dead” ( الماضي and רדפ).

Job 19 contains an almost perfectly matching cluster of eschatological terminology from the same fields as in Isa 26:

1. יָשָׁב (“live”)
2. From the category of “arising”— יָשָׁב (“to arise”).
3. From the category of “awakening” and “seeing”— אָרָא and בָּשָׁם (“to see”),
4. The term for dead— רדפ (“dust”).

Thus, this comparison of recognized eschatological vocabulary for “resurrection” in Isa 26, occurring also in Job 19, serves to confirm not only intertextual links but also the death-resurrection context in Job 19:25-27.

Daniel 12:1-4. In Dan 12, the eschatological terminology is represented by both the resurrection and the juridical field. Verse 1 not only is permeated with eschatological overtones, but also is integrally related to the detailed resurrection description in vs. 2:

And many of those who sleep
in the dusty earth will awake,
Some to everlasting life,
Others to shame [and] everlasting contempt.

52 Gowan, *Eschatology in the Old Testament*, 93. Like some others who argue that the resurrection is limited to “some of those who sleep,” Gowan believes that the OT teaches that most people get justice in this life and that resurrection is only for those whose accounts still have to be settled. Yet, Dan 12 should be understood as a general resurrection.
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Verse 2 depicts two resurrections, one for the righteous and the second for the wicked. The phrase יַעֲשֵׂה מִלְחָמָה ("and many of those who sleep") literally means "of those sleeping" and refers to the dead. The term יָדָע, functions as a euphemism for the state of death or sleep in the grave, which in the context of eschatological events emphasizes the bodily resurrection.

It is said that the dead sleep in אֱלִיָּהוּ ("the dusty earth"). This is the construct chain רָדִים אֱלִיָּהוּ, literally meaning "the earth of dust," and is associated with the imagery of burial in the grave.

In the context of these physical images of death, the statement that יָדָע, ("they will awake") definitely refers to the bodily resurrection of those who are to be delivered, and "not simply a renewal of the soul." Thus, the death and resurrection of an individual is designated by the imagery of "sleep" and "awakening." It should be recalled from the discussion on Job 19:25-27 that the verb יָשָׂר ("to awake") is associated with "seeing" and "light." Moreover, here it is located next to the term םיָשָׂר (lit., "lives") in the phrase לִפְתָּה מְשֵׁר שָׁלוֹם יָשָׂר ("these to everlasting life"), thus forming a strong eschatological resurrection image which at the same time highlights a clear life-and-death antithesis. The negative consequences of the resurrection event are described in the parallel phrase, which refers to those who lived without God, מְשֵׁר נְשֵׁר שָׁלוֹם יָשָׂר ("and those to shame [and] everlasting contempt"). People die individually, but the resurrection of the dead is represented as an eschatological event of a corporate nature.

Not only is the imagery of death very concrete, but it is also followed in vs. 13 by the figure of speech for the final resurrection, דָּמִיד ("and you will stand"), which is further clarified by the phrase נָפִל שָׁם דָּמִיד ("at the end of the days"). The technical term for resurrection, מְשֵׁר ("to

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53 Death is often compared with sleep: 1 Sam 28:15; Jer 51:39,57; Job 3:13; 14:12; Isa 26:19; Pss 13:4; 90:5-6.
57 See יָשָׂר, BDB, 886. Also Stele, "Resurrection in Daniel 12," 115-123.
58 Especially see Isa 26:19, which contains the same cluster of the resurrection terms as Job 19:25-27.
stand”), functions as a synonym of עזר (“to stand,” “arise”), and that is why its employment here emphasizes a particular purpose, which will be carried out עזֵרָה עַל עַדָּה. The term עַד (“end”) signifies the eschaton or the end time of human history, which will culminate in the bodily resurrection of the dead from their graves.

The eschatological terms for resurrection in this passage are from the previously mentioned categories:

1. Terminology for “the dead”— רֵסֵפֶת עַל עַדָּה (“the sleepers of the dusty earth”).
2. From the field of “seeing,” “awakening,” or “light”— עַד (“to awake”). In addition, the ones raised to life are said to shine like the brightness of the heavens.
3. And the word עֲלָה (“to live”).

Common resurrection terms and images used in both Daniel and Job are:

1. רֵסֵפֶת and עֲלָה (“death” and “life”).
2. In Job רֵסֵפֶת and עֲלָה (“to see”), and עֲלָה (“brightness”) in Daniel.
3. In Job עֲלָה (“to stand”), and עֵזֶר (“to stand”) in Daniel.
4. Job’s event is at the עֵזֶר (eschaton), and Daniel’s event is at עַד (the time of the end,” vs. 4).

In describing the resurrection event, both texts, Isa 26:19 and Dan 12:1-4, use the same cluster of identical terminology found in Job 19:25-27, thus confirming the eschatological setting and meaning of our passage.

59 Of eight occurrences of the noun עַד (“end”) with the definite article, only two have prefixed the preposition ל, namely, Dan 12:13 and Hab 2:3. See Shemaryahu Talmon, ""TDOT, 13:78-86. See also Gerhard Pfandl, “The Latter Days and the Time of the End in the Book of Daniel” (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1990).

60 Dan 8:17, 19; 11:40; 12:4, 6.

61 See Andrew E. Hill and Gordon H. Matties, ""TDOT, 3:955.

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Interpretation

Most scholars acknowledge that Job 19:25-27 is one of the most perplexing passages in the whole book. They preface their remarks by pointing out various problems and difficulties. According to Theophile Meek, the interpretations are so varied that practically no two of them are in agreement. This paper, however, presents an interpretation that is based on the discussed eschatological terminology and its interrelated linguistic elements.

Verse 25 starts with the phrase יִדְיָדֵי יְדִיבֶנֶה יִדְיָדֵי (“for I, I know”), where γ (“for,” “but”) introduces contrast with vss. 23-24, and the personal pronoun יִדְיָדֵי takes on an emphatic form “I myself.” The verb יִדְיָדֵי (“I know”) occurs in the book of Job 12 times. Most of its occurrences are found in legal contexts, where it basically means “I have a strong conviction,” “I am certain,” or “I firmly believe.” The significance of the phrase, which points out Job’s unique relationship with God, is revealed by an examination of the verb יִדְיָדֵי in interrelated textual parallels:

You have granted me life and lovingkindness  Job 10:12

63 Among more recent commentators are: Marvin H. Pope, Job, The Anchor Bible (Garden City: Doubleday, 1965), 147, “notoriously difficult”; Daniel J. Simundson, Faith under Fire: Biblical Interpretations of Suffering (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1980), 86, “difficulties increase when we get to vv. 26 and 27”; Clines, Job 1-20, 457, “much debated verses”; Edwin Good, In Turns of Tempest: A Reading of Job, with a Translation (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1990), uses ellipses wherever he finds the text impossible. Ellipses points starting in vs. 25 extend all the way to vs. 28.

64 This is the observation of Theophile J. Meek, “Job 19:25-27,” Vetus Testamentum 6 (1956): 100.

65 Clines, Job 1-20, 17:458.

66 Habel, The Book of Job, 303.

67 See “שמות,” BDB, 395.


69 Habel, The Book of Job, 304.

I have known that this is with You

For I, I know that my Redeemer lives

and that at the end He will stand upon the earth

By affirming that יְיִשְׂרָאֵל ("my Redeemer lives"), Job focuses on Yahweh, who functions as his personal Defender, Redeemer Advocate, and Judge. The pronominal suffix “my” refers to Job, and at the same time the phrase יְיִשְׂרָאֵל is structurally contrasted with רֶם (literally,

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71 LXX — ἀέναος — "immortal."
72 "Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my advocate is on high," Job 16:19.
“on the dust”).73 The primary emphasis lies on the expression of his conviction that his 𐤁𐤑𐤇𐤊𐤃 lives and he will encounter God face to face.75

Employing his straightforward descriptive expression 𐤀𐤇𐤉𐤌𐤁𐤅 𐤁𐤇𐤂 ("and after my skin is destroyed," vs. 26), Job calls attention to his death.
and decay in the grave, which is contrasted by the resurrection imagery, יִרְדָּכֵב ("that in [from] my flesh I will see God").

Scholars are divided on how to understand vs. 26, especially concerning the phrase יִרְדָּכֵב ("and in my flesh"), which is interpreted by many as meaning that "from the grave, Job, a bodiless spirit, will witness the occasion when God appears before the local assembly to verify Job’s innocence." Such conclusions contradict the immediate context and the nature and function of the employed terminology. For example, the preposition יִזָּכַב can mean both “from” or “from the standpoint of,” and many examples of the latter can be found in the Hebrew Scripture. Literally, the expression יִרְדָּכֵב “from my flesh” and not “without my flesh.” According to vs. 27, which confirms that Job expects to see his Redeemer with his own eyes, the preposition יִזָּכַב must be taken to denote the position from which he looks. The expression “from/through my flesh,” shows that it is Job in person who will be present at the eschatological scenario.

It should also be noted that the phrase יַמְנַש (“my eyes,” vs. 27), by its nature and function, not only forms an inseparably organic part of a physical body, but also serves as a parallel to יִרְדָּכֵב ("and in my flesh," vs. 26). Moreover, both phrases—"and my eyes” and “in my flesh”—have the first-person suffix “my,” plus from both sides they are enclosed by the emphatic pronoun יָנ ("I"), which taken altogether imparts a tremendous structural and thematic force to Job’s dynamic hope of a new life in his new resurrected body.

Furthermore, the reality of fully functioning physical components is confirmed by the numerous repetitions of first person pronouns (both

For a detailed discussion on vs. 26 and its parallels in Job 10, seeDoukhan, “Radioscopy of a Resurrection,” 190-192.

Interpretation of vs. 26 is especially complex because of the number of variant translations possible and uncertainties present: (1) יִזָּכַב can be either adverbial for time or space, a conjunction, or a preposition; (2) יִזָּכַב means either “skin” or “awake;” (3) the יִזָּכַב from יִרְדָּכֵב can either mean “within,” or “away from.” See Jacques Doukhan, “Radioscopy of a Resurrection,” 187-193; and Edouard-Paul Dhorme, A Commentary on the Book of Job, trans. Harold Knight (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1967), 284, 285.

For four major views concerning vs. 26, see Hartley, The Book of Job, 295-297.

See יִזָּכַב, BDB, 577-583.

Pope, Job, 139.

Dhorme, 285. See also Ps 33:14 and Cant 2:9.

Ibid., 282. In Hebrew anthropology, “the flesh” stands for the living person (Gen 6:13,17,19; 7:16,21; Job 34:15); thus the word “my flesh” is often used as equivalent to the word “myself” (Gen 2:23; 29:14; 2 Sam 19:13,14; Ps 102:6; Job 19:20; 30:30, etc.).
independent and in the prefixes and suffixes), which are tied together in the double chiasm. The הָּ (particle preposition + suffix 1st person common singular) in vs. 27 functions as an ethical dative, thus heightening the immediacy of Job’s experience. The significance of such phrases as יִרְאֵה ("my skin"), יִרְאֶה ("my flesh"), יִרְאֵה ("I myself"), יִרְאֶה ("my eyes") is obvious, as these body parts refer to the physical nature of his total restoration.

It should also be pointed out that the context of chapter 19 mentions Job’s skin twice (vss. 20,26), which by extension means his physical body. Thus, the phrase יִרְאֵה ("and after my skin") forms a thought unit implying the death of the body where the skin is the thing of the past. Job has already depicted death with יֵשׁ, yet there is skin to which Job can refer.

Moreover, the descriptive elements of a human body like יִרְאֵה ("skin"), יִרְאֶה ("flesh"), יִרְאֶה ("bones"), and יִרְאֶה ("sinews," Job 10:11; 19:20) find their counterpart in the resurrection context in Ezek 37:3-10, where Ezekiel is an eyewitness of a new creation. Consequently, the enhanced emphasis on various body parts authenticates the restoration of the physical nature during the event of the resurrection, which, on the one hand, means that Job envisioned death and the grave, but on the other hand, this concrete description illustrates the fact that after the resurrection the identity of Job remains the same as before his death.

Summary

The double chiasm indicates that the preposition יִרְאֵה ("after," vs. 26) is to be taken as a temporal entity, corresponding to the adjective יִרְאֶה ("the eschaton," "latter," vs. 25), thus making the eschaton the central point of convergence. Moreover, the term יִרְאֶה has eschatological and the future-life intention, as it occurs along with a synonym for eternity יִרְאֶה ("forever") that functions in the same context. All five terms from the field of death and resurrection—ירַנֵס ("the dust of earth"); יִרְאֶה ("to live"); יֵשׁ and יֵשַׁ ("to see upon awakening"); and יֵשׁ ("to arise")—
compliment יַרְשָׁה and יַרְשַׁס in forming an eschatological setting. It is noteworthy to emphasize that all these word pictures combined together present the unique image of “standing upon the dust” (וֹלִכִּים, רָאֶה תַּדָּשִׁים), which, de facto, is the picture of victory over death. 87

By employing two synonymous verbs, יַהַד (occurs twice) and יַהַד, and in particular emphasizing his personal, by its nature physical, involvement, namely, seeing with יִתְנָה (“my eyes”) and then clarifying his assertion by adding יָתְנָה (“and not another,” literally, “stranger”), Job demonstrates a powerful conviction that he himself, in person, not a stranger, will see God in his new resurrected body. Thus, Job’s hope for the bodily resurrection is not focused on the immortality of the soul or its continued existence in the grave; instead it is rooted in God’s wholistic creative power and is characterized by assurance and confidence that look forward to its fulfillment.

**Conclusion**

The central focus of Job is on his Redeemer. Thus, vss. 25-27 function as a declaration and an expression of total confidence in Him, that He will stand up, as one does who undertakes the cause of another. The fact, that Job is explicit and certain, filled with assurance that his heavenly Defender will take up his case at the eschaton, is conveyed by an incredibly strong emphasis on “seeing God.” The references to his “skin,” “flesh,” and “eyes” underline his conviction that this will happen exclusively in his own physical body.

Finally, neither the eschatology nor the theology delineated in this passage support the idea of Job’s post-mortem encounter with God in a disembodied state, since our text implies the presence of the body. Nor does it support the idea of an existential experience, since our text implies death through the reference to dust. What we find here is a clear expression of the doctrine of resurrection. Job 19:25-27 is about faith and hope in the eschaton; it is about vindication and the restoration of the order of the universe. Above all, it is Job’s visualization of his Redeemer that strengthens his conviction and sustains him in his eschatological hope.

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