

## ***Will the Real Job Please Stand Up? Politico-Pastoral Exegesis of Job 38 in the Wake of Nicaea***

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*Ancient Christian commentaries on the Book of Job, and specifically reflection on Job's direct theophanic interaction with God in Job 38, offer important insights into the contexts of their writers and the writers' congregations. This is especially clear in the case of two roughly contemporary "commentaries" produced by John Chrysostom and Julian the Arian. These are two of the earliest extant works on Job in the Christian East in the wake of the Nicene and non-Nicene theological and political disputes occurring at the turn of the fourth century. For these two exegetes, Job becomes a moldable figure identified with the key tenets of their theological systems, experiencing direct revelation as a result of his exemplification of the exegetes' favored spiritual charisms and political biases due to his ambiguous place in the scheme of salvation-history. Despite each theologian sharing similar methodology, their exegesis produces two vastly different depictions for their readers of what is involved in leading a godly life in general, and how one should attempt to emulate Job himself to become closer to God.*

KEYWORDS: *Job 38, patristic exegesis, theophany, eunoia, Chrysostom, Julian*

### INTRODUCTION

Early Christian interpretation of the Old Testament is rife with concern for how Christ is both present in and speaking through the events and peoples of the stream of salvation-history. In light of this, evaluating and comparing the exegesis of early Christian writers on Job, and Job 38 in particular, is an intriguing activity for two main reasons. First, Job stands at a peculiar place in the history of Patristic exegesis, and especially in the production of formal commentaries. Though to the credit of Hilary of Poitiers we know that Origen produced at least one set a homilies on Job,

now lost (as is much of Hilary's Latin translation of them), interest in the book in the East spiked curiously only amidst the theological and political turmoil of the fourth and fifth centuries, with "non-Nicene" commentaries even persisting alongside "Nicene" commentaries.<sup>1</sup> These non-Nicene texts have been of recent interest to scholars attempting not only to identify their authors but also their readership, and thus, possibly, why their popularity persisted. Besides the commentary examined in this article, of particular note is the work known as the *Anonymous in Job*, an incomplete commentary (up to Job 3:19) originally attributed to Origen, now primarily identified as "Pseudo-Origen."<sup>2</sup> In a substantial article from 2003, Leslie Dossey thoroughly examined the commentary to decipher its provenance, concluding that it originated in Vandal North Africa and was likely written by an erudite, Eastern-influenced Arian cleric in the early sixth century.<sup>3</sup> What is most crucial to note here is her assertion that this commentary may depend, in part, on the two works examined below, demonstrating the lasting appeal of both their hermeneutical methodology and the application of the biblical text to their readers' milieus in very specific ways.<sup>4</sup>

1. Commentaries considered "orthodox" include one by Evagrius, preserved through catenae by Didymus the Blind in his fairly complete commentary (critical edition by Albert Henrichs and Dieter Hagedorn in *Didymos der Blinde: Kommentar zu Hiob [Tura-Papyrus]* [4 vols.; Bonn: R. Habelt, 1968–1985]); and a sixth-century commentary by Olympiodorus, which also preserves some catenae of Chrysostom's contemporary Polycronius, the brother of Theodore of Mopsuestia (critical edition by Ursula Hagedorn and Dieter Hagedorn, *Olimpiodor Diakon von Alexandria: Kommentar zu Hiob* [PTS 24; Berlin: DeGruyter, 1984]). In the recent contribution to the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture series on Job, these commentaries are summarily discussed; see Manlio Simonetti and Marco Conti, *Job* (ACCS 6; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), xviii–xxii.

2. The most recent critical edition is edited by Kenneth B. Steinhauser, *Anonymi in Iob Commentarius* (CSEL 96; Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006). See also Simonetti and Conti, *Job*, xix–xx.

3. Leslie Dossey, "The Last Days of Vandal Africa: An Arian Commentary on Job and its Historical Context," *JTS* 54 (2003): 121–22.

4. For an overview of similarities between the three works, see *ibid.*, 76–81. Between Pseudo-Origen and Julian the Arian, Dossey highlights obvious parallels between their Antiochene exegetical styles, their argument for the authorship of Moses, and Job's origins, for example. Between Pseudo-Origen and Chrysostom, she especially notes their tendency to exegete morally and not simply literally, and suggests that several similarities in turns-of-phrase in conjunction with Chrysostom's frequently used expression "some say" to introduce interpretive options points to, at least, their sharing a similar source, and at most Chrysostom's direct dependence on Pseudo-Origen.

What, then, is the reason for the “sudden” explosion of interest in Job in the fourth century? Perhaps it was the connection between the ancient reader in this particular historical milieu and Job’s life situation that resonated the most clearly. Job was a man under the most extreme duress, and yet not only survives, but thrives because of his keen morals and faith in God’s sovereignty. Thus, Job becomes a vision of the Everyman to priest, layman, and monastic alike. To the post-Nicene reader, Job appeared as,

among other things, the very model of an active lay spirituality: an exemplary father and paterfamilias administering impartial justice to a household, he was a true example of Christian leadership; possessed of wealth, he was untouched by the money-madness of his fourth-century analogues; above all, in an unbelieving age he was a true worshipper of his Creator.<sup>5</sup>

Job is decidedly threatened by internal politics: the accuser relies on God to act on Job rather than acting simply externally or autonomously as an unpredictable agent of chaos. In this sense, it seems possible that an infant Gentile church in only its first few centuries of existence, used to defending itself against primarily external imperial pressures of persecution, would find less in common with Job than the church after Nicaea, internally divided among party politics.<sup>6</sup> Job in general seems quite naturally to become both a creative outlet of the exegetical style of those in the wake of the first few ecumenical councils of the church in the fourth and fifth centuries and also a mirror of the writers’ own contexts, moldable to whatever pastoral ends the exegete sees fit. What we normally see reserved for homilies in which the expositor is addressing a particular group of people at a particular time actually bleeds into this more formal academic exposition much more transparently than in other examples of early commentating.

Second, Job is unique in that not only does he experience a theophany—what I define as a direct, verbal revelation by God—but he

5. Richard Vaggione, “Of Monks and Lounge Lizards: ‘Arians,’ Polemics and Asceticism in the Roman East,” in *Arianism after Arius: Essays on the Development of the Fourth Century Trinitarian Conflicts* (ed. Michel R. Barnes and Daniel H. Williams; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), 192. Cf. idem, *Eunomius of Cyzicus and the Nicene Revolution* (Oxford Early Christian Studies; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 190–91.

6. Simonetti and Conti (*Job*, xix) suggest that the “scarcity of the extant Arian exegetical literature” is “due to the fact that the situation of these heretics was quite difficult at the end of the fourth century, for they had become the target of many harsh legal measures against them. In such a situation, the figure of Job was most suitable to be proposed as a model of firmness and resignation amid different calamities.”

is also a Gentile. It is little wonder that he received little attention before then by commentary writers; he was not a patriarch, nor was he accurately locatable in the timeline of salvation-history. This produces a problem for the Christian exegete: how does a non-Israelite, much less a non-Christian, come into direct contact with God? And, in light of the somewhat esoteric nature of the book as a whole, how would ancient Christian exegetes proceed one level deeper and apply the God-speech of Job 38 to the wider Christian life? Should readers of Job merely diachronically personalize and internalize God's statements, or is Job's place in the Old Testament canon to act as clay with which pastors and exegetes can use to convey very particular, circumstantial messages about "godly" living?

We will briefly look at the interpretations of Job 38 by two expositors—Nicene John Chrysostom (d. 407)<sup>7</sup> and non-Nicene Julian (ca. 362–95)<sup>8</sup>—in light of these questions for the purpose of gaining a

7. A superb modern critical edition has been edited by Dieter Hagedorn and Ursula Hagedorn, *Johannes Chrysostomus: Kommentar zu Hiob* (PTS 35; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1990). Robert C. Hill is responsible for the only published English translation. See Robert C. Hill, *Commentary on Job* in *St. John Chrysostom: Commentaries on the Sages*, vol. 1 (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox, 2006). I am indebted to Prof. Hill's translation, which is undoubtedly better than my own, and thus references to Chrysostom's commentary in this text will be made by page number in Hill's translation. Though dating the original text of this commentary is inexact, it is at least older than 388, perhaps 398, and thus was most likely composed at Antioch; see Johannes Quasten, *Patrology* (1950; repr., Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1983), 3:433; Vaggione, "Of Monks," 196 n. 101; Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 2:784. It is not a pure commentary, but rather something in between a commentary and a set of homilies. See Manlio Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), xxi.

8. It is almost certain at this point that this Julian is also the final editor of the *Apostolic Constitutions* and the longer form of the Ignatian epistles, and was at least non-Nicene, but more likely a disciple of Eunomius and possibly bishop at Antioch after 380. The dating of this particular commentary is uncertain, but seemingly before the turn of the fourth century. See Vaggione, "Of Monks," 190–91 n. 50; idem, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 318–19; Simonetti and Conti, *Job*, xix. This paper will utilize the critical edition by Dieter Hagedorn, *Der Hiobkommentar des Arianers Julian* (PTS 141; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1973). See his introduction, ix–lxxxviii. References to the text of Julian's commentary will be made by page and line; translations will be my own. Henry Chadwick's review of this text is generally favorable; though he faults Hagedorn for occasionally missing scriptural allusions, he highlights Hagedorn's skillful identification of references from classical literature such as Homer, Euripides, Menander, and Pseudo-Plutarch; see Henry Chadwick, review of D. Hagedorn, *Der Hiobkommentar Des Arianers Julian*, *JTS* 28 (1977): 559–61. For primary source insights into the distinctive features of Eunomian theology vis-à-vis Arian theology, see Gregory of Nyssa's *Contra Eunomium*; Basil of Caesarea's *Adversus Eunomium I–III*; Pseudo-Basil's *Adversus Eunomium IV–V*. For a

clearer picture of how the theological turmoil of the fourth and fifth centuries affected early Christian exegesis of Job. Julian and Chrysostom both follow Antiochene trends in attempting to understand the literal truth of Job as best can be determined, but both also clearly steer the text and the character of Job toward their own pastoral situations.

## BACKGROUND

We know very little about Julian, as details are sparse and mostly inferred. Hagedorn concludes that his name is unrelated to other known Julians predating the work and follows Byzantine *catenae* in assuming that Julian was at some point ministering at Antioch, was most likely from Syria, and probably composed the work in the middle of the fourth century.<sup>9</sup> His exegesis, as one might expect, is fairly straightforward and quite literal, following in the broad stream of Antiochene exegetical tradition.<sup>10</sup> Evidence of his probable social and political standing through his exegesis of Job is implicit, yet discernable, as we will discover below.

Chrysostom, on the other hand, is much more well-known; the briefest overview of his life is permitted here.<sup>11</sup> Born between 340 and

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critical edition of the extant fragments of Eunomius' works, see Richard Vaggione, *Eunomius: The Extant Works* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987).

9. Hagedorn, *Der Hiobkommentar des Arianers Julian*, xxx, liii–lvi.

10. Though I would contend that the typical division between Antiochene and Alexandrian exegesis has been largely overblown, there was nevertheless conflict between those who sought to find a higher meaning to the biblical text through *allegoria* (Alexandria) and those seeking for it through *historia*. What is crucial to bear is the point of Frances Young: “The problems with the now traditional account lie . . . in the assumption that Antiochene literalism meant something like modern historicism. . . . The distinctive thing about historical writing was not ‘single-minded pursuit of facts’ but their presentation as morally significant, their interpretation in terms of ‘virtue’ and ‘vice’ and ‘fortune’” (Frances M. Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002], 166–67). This will be reflected very clearly as we examine each exegete's application of the theophany of Job to the average Christian's life; cf. Simonetti and Conti, *Job*, xix. For a bird's-eye approach to the division between Alexandria and Antioch, see Christopher A. Hall, *Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), 132–76.

11. Here we will rely primarily on the extraordinary text of J. N. D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom—Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), along with the very helpful distillation of J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose and John Chrysostom: Clerics between Desert and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). See also Wendy Mayer and Pauline Allen, *John Chrysostom* (Early Church Fathers; London: Routledge, 2000), 3–16.

350, John was baptized at 18, and after only three years of ministry was exiled by Constantius.<sup>12</sup> Though he would be recalled by Julian in 362, the precedent of exile and return would continue for a number of years.<sup>13</sup> Chrysostom was ordained as a deacon around 380, then to the priesthood in 386, and finally was made bishop of Constantinople in 398.<sup>14</sup> He was highly educated in Greek rhetoric and possibly also in some Latin, and was likely destined to a life of political leadership had his interest in asceticism not been so voracious.<sup>15</sup> Along with two friends, Chrysostom attended an ascetic school and was disciplined by Diodore of Tarsus, one of the founders of the Antiochene school of exegesis.<sup>16</sup> During a period of recall (likely when Valens occupied Antioch in 371), Chrysostom withdrew for a four-year period of ascetic monastic life at Mount Silpius, perhaps in an attempt to avoid ordination, only to retreat to full isolation as a hermit for another two years.<sup>17</sup> We can easily see, then, why urban ministry would present a challenge to him. Not only did he need to cater to a vastly mixed audience of pagans, Jews, and Christians, but he was forced to contend with the urban political powers who seemed to be in direct contradiction to the sort of lifestyle he saw as most beneficial to all Christians: asceticism.<sup>18</sup> His relationship with the empress Eudoxia was especially troubling, as her powerful station directly contradicted his strict views on the roles of women; she was a large factor in one of his later exiles and precipitated the events that led to his condemnation by the emperor Arcadius.<sup>19</sup> The final straw for Chrysostom, exhausted of playing the political game with Eudoxia, came after she had a statue of herself erected outside Chrysostom's cathedral.<sup>20</sup> Having delivered a

12. Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 4–5; Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose and Chrysostom*, 124.

13. E.g., Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 228–29.

14. Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose & Chrysostom*, 125; Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 36–37, 55, 106.

15. Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 6–8, 13–19; Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose and Chrysostom*, 127.

16. Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 19–20, 95; Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose and Chrysostom*, 127–28.

17. Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 24–25; Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose and Chrysostom*, 129–30.

18. Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose and Chrysostom*, 186, 205–215, 224–227; Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 97–99, 107; Mayer and Allen, *John Chrysostom*, 34–40; Jaclyn L. Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication in Late Antiquity: John Chrysostom and His Congregation in Antioch* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 65–84.

19. Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 109–111; Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose and Chrysostom*, 231–39.

20. Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose and Chrysostom*, 245.

series of scathing sermons against the empress around Christmas of 404, a synod was convened just before Easter to depose Chrysostom. After a bloody encounter between imperial forces and catechumens loyal to Chrysostom, he was confined to his palace and refused to leave the city.<sup>21</sup> Despite receiving moral support from the West, he was finally forced into exile on June 20, sparking a riot that saw both the church (St. Sophia) and the senate burned to the ground.<sup>22</sup> Chrysostom died in exile only three years later, exhausted from the strenuous journey away from his church.<sup>23</sup>

As we will notice below concerning Chrysostom's exegetical methodology, the text is rather uneven throughout with regard to the attention given to each verse or section of Job. As Simonetti and Conti aptly notice: "in some cases, a brief quotation is followed by an extended explanation, while in many other cases an entire series of biblical verses receives only an extremely cursory explanation or is even presented without any explanation."<sup>24</sup> Thankfully, though, for our purposes here his commentary on Job 38 is, with some exceptions, relatively complete. As is the case with Julian and other Antiochenes, Chrysostom generally prefers extracting moral lessons from the literality of Job where possible.<sup>25</sup>

#### JULIAN ON JOB

The description quoted above concerning how the ancients saw Job is a generalization that will be nuanced differently by our two exegetes. For Julian, even though Job is "descended from a race with no inheritance in Jacob and unable to plead any nobility of descent, he is nonetheless a 'theios . . . anēr,' an archetype of a truly fundamental virtue: εὐνοια or 'right-mindedness.'"<sup>26</sup> This was not a general characteristic of one

21. Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 237–49; Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose and Chrysostom*, 246.

22. Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 250–51; Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose and Chrysostom*, 247.

23. Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 283–85.

24. Simonetti and Conti, *Job*, xxi.

25. Mayer and Allen, *John Chrysostom*, 30.

26. For εὐνοια as a polemical device used by Julian, see Julian, 3.4–4.14; 6.4–8; 10.14; 14.19–20; 21.15–16; 24.1–2; 20; 51.9–10; 80.11; 96.10. Cf. Vaggione, "Of Monks," 192–93. Julian uses this term in a more theologically technical fashion than predecessors such as Aristotle (cf. *Nicomachean Ethics*, VIII).

broadly on God's side, or an "anonymous" believer, but one who was actually as close to God as possible and reflecting that in life; Job was for all intents a saint.<sup>27</sup> Though he had not been privileged to the special revelation of God in the Law, Prophets, or other Scriptures, he nonetheless utilized to the fullest extent the general revelation given to all humans by being created *imago Dei*.<sup>28</sup> Thus, Job is not merely an example of moral superiority; to Julian he is the *highest* example of moral fortitude because of his correct utilization of knowledge for εὐνοια.<sup>29</sup> Julian's Job embodies the highest possible standard of a well-ordered life, and so Julian's explanation for the theophany beginning in chapter 38 is poignant: his Job gains the status of a seer, which is "established on the basis of the Theophany . . . ; Job (sharing a privilege accorded elsewhere only to Moses) sees the Only-begotten God face to face in the cloud."<sup>30</sup>

As a Eunomian, then, Julian's Job not only exemplifies right living, but the proper hermeneutic from which God should be understood. Not only must one possess εὐνοια (as opposed to κακονοια, "wrong-mindedness") to properly interpret Scripture and revelation, but logical precision (τέχνη or ἀκριβεια) is also highly desired.<sup>31</sup> This becomes most evident in Julian's treatment of the theophany of Job 38, but

27. Julian, 15.1–5; 24.20; 106.1–10; 126.1–10; 228.9–10; 248.18–20. Cf. Vaggione, "Of Monks," 193.

28. Julian, 220.8–9; 232.8–14. Cf. Vaggione, "Of Monks," 193–194.

29. Julian, 7.1–9; 8.12–14; 9.9–14, 18–10.3; 11.11–12; 14.19–20; 17.19–21; 57.13–58.1; 172.17; 174.9–10; 190.2–4, 9–15. Cf. Vaggione, "Of Monks," 194–195.

30. Julian, 247.16–248.20, 301.12–15, 280.11–281.8. Cf. Vaggione, "Of Monks," 195.

31. Vaggione, *Eunomius of Cyzicus*, 46–47, 86–90. Julian uses this to explain the disposition of the devil, who is alienated from God because of his κακονοια; Julian, 12.16ff. Cf. G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), 64, 571, 695, 1392. τέχνη is a concept most associated with schools of rhetoric and philosophy, from Xenophon through Plotinus; cf. Xenophon, *Oeconomicus* (trans. E.C. Marchant; LCL; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1923–1997), 361–526; Plato, *Republic*, Book VI (trans. Paul Shorey; LCL; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935–1942), 2–117; *Sophist*, 253–254B (trans. H. N. Fowler; LCL; London: William Heinemann, 1921), 398–404; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VI (trans. Terence Irwin; Indianapolis: Hackett, 1985), 86–98; *Metaphysics*, Book I (trans. Hugh Lawson-Tancred; New York: Penguin, 2004), 1–40; Zeno, SVF I.323 (ed. H. von Arnim; Leipzig, 1903–1924), 70; Cicero, *On Ends*, Books III, V (trans. H. Rackham; LCL; London: William Heinemann, 1914), 215–98, 389–504. Julian's understanding of τέχνη is perhaps closest to that of Plotinus; cf. *Enneads*, III.2–9, IV.3, V.8–9 (trans. Stephen MacKenna; London: Faber and Faber, 1917–1930), 160–254, 259–87, 419–42.



is certainly evident throughout the entirety of the text.<sup>32</sup> Julian's language reveals that this is not a text merely for devotion, fully accessible by anyone with sound motives, but for students of some learning, or at least students seeking to understand the text with technical precision. Nevertheless, this analytic stance is not mutually exclusive with the ancient sense of actually being present and experiencing the words of God afresh through the performative retelling of Job's predicament. Job's hermeneutic ought to be the reader's hermeneutic.

For the text to be alive and present for the reader, though, certain suppositions must be understood. Julian thus takes great pains to apply this hermeneutic to the theophany of Job 38 in the first order to determine how it is that God can interact with his creation at all. Does he occupy the same space as creatures? Does he speak in an audible voice? These are not metaphysical questions of obsession or distraction for Julian, but genuine theological planks whereby the reader may interact with God at the same level as Job (presuming, of course, the reader possesses εἰσνοια like Job). Foremost, as a Eunomian, Julian's God would in actuality be inaccessible apart from the λόγος, the pre-existent Jesus; because of this, any direct revelation from God must come purely from προσωποποιῶ, "personification."<sup>33</sup> That is to say, God is so far beyond our understanding that he graciously utilizes understandable modes of communication for the sake of humanity—both for Job and those reading God's words to Job.<sup>34</sup>

And so, when we reach the text of the God-speech in Job 38, Julian takes delight in highlighting the various ways God has spoken to humanity, closely echoing the text of Hebrews throughout his exposition. This is not a God who delights in hiding from his creation, but one who has gone to great pains throughout salvation-history to make himself known to his followers: as a man wrestling with Jacob, as a voice speaking to Adam in the garden of Eden, as a burning bush to Moses—and through the Holy Spirit to Paul, interestingly enough.<sup>35</sup> God does not limit himself to one-on-one communication, though, and importantly so; God's revelation is not limited to a select few. He also made his activity manifest through "the sound of trumpets and a fiery storm" to the whole people of Israel leaving Egypt and through calling down "tongues of fire

32. Take, for instance, Julian's lengthy explanation for Moses as the author of Job, 1:1–4.18; or Julian's explanation for how the satan and God can said to converse with one another, 11.16–13.12.

33. Lampe, *Patristic Greek*, 1189.

34. Cf. Julian, 11.18–13.12.

35. Julian, 247.3–12.

not to burn, but to illuminate” on the followers of Christ at Pentecost.<sup>36</sup> God’s revelation to Paul was not simply for his own benefit either, for his theophany on the road to Damascus “was not allowed to be without witness, for [God] made the bystanders who saw him on the road and were astounded hear” as well.<sup>37</sup> For Julian, God will choose to utilize any and all aspects of his creation to communicate with humanity, but God does so not out of mere condescension; rather, it is out of concern for making himself accessible.<sup>38</sup> Mixed together with God’s sovereignty and status as the creator of everything is God’s desire to connect with that creation. Thus, if God sees fit to speak through a donkey, so too is it fitting to speak from a whirlwind or through fire.<sup>39</sup>

Another noteworthy aspect of Julian’s exposition of the divine speech in Job 38 is his continued explanation of the amount of separation between humanity and God, and obviously particularly between Job and God. For Julian, God’s speech is not given harshly in order to widen the gulf between humanity and God, nor to highlight the utter futility of humanity in attempting to dialogue with God, but in order to show the reader more about the character of the God who has chosen to make himself known throughout salvation-history. As Julian moves on into 38:3ff., this becomes even more apparent. While it is true that, at the outset, the words of God seem gruff, highlighting the finitude of humanity, Julian draws out the emphasis on the power of God’s βουλή, “will” or “plan,” as the prominent feature of God’s overall discourse.<sup>40</sup> At God’s behest, all of creation is formed; unlike humanity, God has no need for tools, cornerstones, or support pillars. Julian is emphatic that absolutely nothing happens without God’s will causing it. This is another bi-level argument; on the one hand, Julian implicitly takes God’s theophanic pronouncements here as a proof text for an Arian cosmology, wherein the λόγος could only have been created by the will of the Father, and that the creation of the λόγος was not a necessary action. Thus, he is probably bolstering the viewpoints almost certainly already held by the readers of this commentary. On the other hand, though, Julian may

36. *Ibid.*, 247.16–248.7.

37. *Ibid.*, 248.7–10.

38. Nevertheless, Julian makes the common distinction between seeing God’s ἐνέργεια and his οὐσία; in theophany, even when speaking directly with God we do so through his “activity” rather than his “essence.” See Julian, 248.5ff.

39. *Ibid.*, 248.11–20.

40. Julian, 251.16–252.12. Cf. Lampe, *Patristic Greek*, 302–303.

actually be allowing the ambiguity of God's answer as a whole to stand, not attempting to be overly exegetical to the point of stifling the text. God's answer to Job is as mysterious as his answer to all humanity, and though modern theologians may be uncomfortable receiving the answer of "it is simply God's will" to the question of the problem of theodicy, pastorally Julian preserves the overall goodness of God by allowing that mystery to remain.

This becomes even clearer during Julian's discussion of 38:7ff., the final portion to which we shall turn in this examination. Those who attempt to pin the problem of evil on lesser creations, such as the stars through astrology, ignore the thrust of God's answer to Job.<sup>41</sup> This is a mistake made by two sets of people: by Job's "comforters" in the text, and by those who improperly exegete Job; for how can God be called "good," yet said to be the maker of that which causes evil?<sup>42</sup> Even if God did create something capable of determining the fates of people evilly, how could God's providence not overshadow the providence of lesser beings? If this is not logically sufficient to convince his readers, Julian makes a second attempt by channeling a popular example: by highlighting the illogical possibility of laws attempting to forbid people to act evilly if people are, in fact, not able to control their own actions and act for the good of society.<sup>43</sup> Even in the brief space of one verse, for Julian God both justifies his own activity, asserting his ultimate goodness, and speaks a word of encouragement for the readers of Job who are spurred on with the knowledge of their significance in God's cosmos. Julian does not exegete God as a sovereign dictator, but as an ultimately good and creative God supremely interested in the well-being of his creation:

If God is good and without a share in any evil, he is the maker of no evil, but the creator of every good thing. For to the extent that he made everything, he made it exceedingly beautiful; so then none of what is made is evil, not that which is above the earth, not the things upon the earth, nor the things in heaven, and therefore neither the stars.<sup>44</sup>

41. Julian, 252.13ff. Though his obsession with astrology in this section may indeed be an overall unnecessary diversion, at the least the gist of his argument is relevant for our current discussion.

42. *Ibid.*, 253.2–4.

43. *Ibid.*, 253.4–9.

44. *Ibid.*, 253.10–14.

Job is innocent of all sin partly, but perhaps precisely, because he has resisted the temptation to blame his tragedies on creation. Despite his *παρρησία*, “boldness,” in even attempting to dialogue with God, Job’s *εὐνοία* allowed him direct access to God’s insights into the matter. By direct implication, then, if the reader exhibits similar *εὐνοία*, she will also be afforded direct interaction with God.

Thus, we see that Julian is content to consistently work on two levels, neither of which is mutually exclusive. On the one hand, Job is a model for *εὐνοία*, something that, from Julian’s perspective, was not modeled by pro-Nicenes. As such, he is an archetype of one who is able to draw close to God and not perish before God’s glorious theophany—regardless of his political stature or theological influence. On the other hand, Julian consistently exegetes with his readership in mind, inviting the keen observer of the truth behind Job’s high theological vantage onto a similar—and still fully realistic—path toward *εὐνοία*. Let us now proceed to examine Chrysostom’s treatment of the same passage.

#### CHRYSOSTOM ON JOB

Chrysostom, despite being a fellow Antiochene academician, portrays a different Job:

*This Job is an ascetic philosopher, his children as much disciples as progeny, his wife a temptress and instrument of Satan. Where gluttonous Adam fell his abstemious descendent triumphs, and, abhorring all intemperance, regards no possession as his own, viewing even the loss of children with detachment. A true ‘hero and athlete’ he displays a *dynamis* as potent as that of any Olympic victor, and equally public. . . . Here is a Job indeed who has left the walls of the city behind; the losses of family, possessions, and friends are but stages in an emancipation.*<sup>45</sup>

45. Vaggione, “Of Monks,” 195–97. Cf. Chrysostom, *Job*, 15–71; 163–71; C. A. Newsom and S. E. Schreiner, “Job,” in *Hebrew Bible: History of Interpretation* (ed. John H. Hayes; Nashville: Abingdon, 2004), 146. Also of interest is the differing concern Chrysostom places on the history of the text; whereas Julian is more concerned with identifying Moses as the author and not historically identifying Job, Chrysostom makes it a point to identify Job as King Jobab of Edom and not worry at all about the potential author of the work. Cf. Hill, *Commentary on Job*, 8–9; Chrysostom, *Job*, 13; 203. Kelly (*Golden Mouth*, 97–99) highlights Chrysostom’s blatant attitudes toward the rich (and especially rich women) and their extravagant lifestyles in his commentary on the Psalms.

Interestingly, in his exegesis of Gen 15 in homilies 36 and 37, Chrysostom depicts Abraham as a likewise enlightened individual (Chrysostom, *Homilies on Genesis*

There is certainly reason enough to suspect that Chrysostom's portrayal of Job is more a result of his current political involvement in his own defense against the non-Nicenes who are variously at power in urban centers around him than anything else, not to mention his ascetic past which factors largely into many of his writings. Indeed, as Vaggione describes, Chrysostom has captured Job "for a cause, and enlisted him in the army of a new, and equally transformed, 'philosophy.'"<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, Chrysostom exhibits the same exegetical determination as Julian to understand how God interacts with Job in this periscope, and consequently, with the one reading God's words to Job.

After devoting a lengthy section at the outset of his commentary on questions of setting and characterization of Job, Chrysostom's pace quickens dramatically until reaching chapter 38 (and quickens again afterward). Chrysostom establishes a link straightaway between the theophany experienced by Job and that of the patriarchs by focusing much more intently than Julian on God's speech originating from the whirlwind.<sup>47</sup> For Chrysostom this was not simply for the sake of shock and awe as perhaps theophanies are so depicted in the Pentateuch; for since Job is a wise man, and this work accounted among the books of the *sophoi*, God "places a cloud over that righteous man at the time so as to elevate his thinking and get him to think that the voice was coming from on high."<sup>48</sup> Then, Chrysostom takes a somewhat different route than

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18–45 [trans. Robert C. Hill, *Fathers of the Church*; Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1990]; references to this work will follow the form of homily and paragraph). Abraham is consistently the "just man" who, though being "raised by infidel parents . . . yet enjoyed the divine vision" because of his "devotion to divine things." God's attention to his "anticipated virtue once more causes his virtue to be more patent" in choosing to leave his home country of infidels (36.2). He brings his nephew with him as an "imitator of his own virtue," and in attempting to deceive the Egyptians concerning his wife does not show cowardice but a "spirit of steel," an "attitude firmer than iron" (36.3). He shows "the extent of his humility," "his great restraint," "mildness of spirit" and "the extraordinary degree of his good sense" in his dealings with Lot (36.6). His closeness to God is evidenced by God's immediate answer to his inquiry into having offspring (36.12). Abraham's acceptance of God's promise required "a robust spirit capable of rising above every human consideration and leaving it behind" (37.7). Finally, Chrysostom applies Abraham's disregard for material wealth (despite possessing much of it) to the members of his congregation (37.16–19). For supplementary information on the text of Gen 15, see Jeffrey J. Niehaus, *God at Sinai: Covenant and Theophany in the Bible and Ancient Near East* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 172–80; Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 58–60, 89–90.

46. Vaggione, "Of Monks," 197.

47. Chrysostom, *Job*, 186.

48. *Ibid.*

Julian in attempting to grasp which concealed intentions God reveals, noting that God actually addresses heinous thoughts guarded by Job, but quite transparent to his Creator.<sup>49</sup> This has a dual effect: for one, it demonstrates quite clearly how much loftier God is than Job; yet, on the other hand, it further demonstrates the wisdom of Job for not giving voice to these concerns.

This sort of dual layering pervades Chrysostom's reasoned exegesis, as we see further demonstrated in his explication of 38:3. Whereas on the one hand Job is enjoined by God to "gird his loins" as if entering some sort of sparring match, on the other hand he is invited into a reasoned, rhetorical discourse with God. That is to say, Chrysostom is keen to note that what God is about to say will be marvelous—an answer full of "wisdom and understanding" fit for a discourse with a philosopher—but there is also wonder in God responding at all.<sup>50</sup>

Much of the remainder of chapter 38 has a tenor of God's care for creation, and Job as an integral part of it.<sup>51</sup> Chrysostom's God has constructed the earth for one such as Job, and where Julian's God goes into greater detail than is necessary for Job to understand his greatness, Chrysostom's God is actually sparing Job details of creation and instead stating what he presumably already knows: "If the universe is the beneficiary of such great providence, much more so are you."<sup>52</sup> Chrysostom's God, moreover, is not as much concerned to emphasize the power of his will in such a vast work of construction as his "great skill."<sup>53</sup> Working by his will would have been assumed, obviously, but Chrysostom elevates the role of logic and planning involved in creation by fiat. Where Julian's God has created by the simplest of acts, Chrysostom's God has spent much time and effort to act "as a fine architect" by knowing the exactly perfect measurements by which to

49. *Ibid.* This may also reflect somewhat of an internal debate happening in Julian's city of residence in light of the "Syrians" also making use of Job for their purposes.

50. *Ibid.*, 187.

51. In Homily 37.4 on Gen 15, Chrysostom also draws this characteristic of theophanic activity to Abraham's case, demonstrating that God asserts his care of Abraham in the midst of any deific identification; God is not only God, but the God who has acted in history to safeguard his servant and fulfill his promises.

52. Chrysostom, *Job*, 187. It should be noted that Chrysostom's conclusion to this chapter is somewhat of a surprise in that he can only imagine that something was awry in Job's cosmology to have demanded such a spiel by God. Cf. Hill's (*Commentary on Job*, 230 n. 14) assessment of this, in which he assesses Chrysostom's conclusion as "premature."

53. Chrysostom, *Job*, 188.

construct the earth and humanity in the realm of time.<sup>54</sup> Chrysostom implies that such a philosopher as Job would have the technical scientific knowledge to grasp the magnitude of God's creative act, more so than one who was close to God but, in the end, reliant on the wonder of the unknown to have faith. On a deeper level, though, Chrysostom's God is not revealing minor facts about which Job should be dumbfounded, but the purest of wisdom (which, of course, is not wholly unexpected).<sup>55</sup> Perhaps, with regard to the leadership in the church during Chrysostom's writing, this is evidence of an implicit appeal to the wisdom of those who have spent more of their lives studying God, Scripture, and the "higher" goals of existence rather than those who have politically jockeyed themselves to leadership through other avenues, as he may be characterizing the non-Nicenes in leadership; unfortunately, at this time we may only speculate.

The import of the text's relation to the current reader is so great that Chrysostom does not shy from explicitly drawing his reader into that text, noting that "what is said to Job is no more directed to him than to us. *Gird your loins like a man.* We too, in fact, have need of being heartened and challenged."<sup>56</sup> Such is the case throughout this theophany. God is speaking in such a way as to draw the listener, not just Job, into the whole of God's creative activity, the revelation of which is not just reserved for Moses and Abraham and other patriarchs. Chrysostom delights in the imagery of God harnessing the waters and fires and floods nowadays as in olden days.<sup>57</sup> What is more, these elements of the natural world are not ordered as such *ipso facto*, but only through God's constant activity for the sake of a witness to humanity.<sup>58</sup> Likewise, Chrysostom waxes poetic about natural entropy and the organization of the seemingly disorganized heavens: "if in natural creation that is fluid and disorganized there exists such orderliness and such regularity, remember who is responsible for what is made when you see it also in the

54. *Ibid.*, 188–89. Julian may also be subtextually referencing the general governance of the city and empire and locating Job's place within it, exegeting diachronically, in a sense. Job's special position with God does not preclude God's care of Creation nor his πρόνοια, nor indeed ours.

55. *Ibid.*, 189.

56. *Ibid.*, 188. We find a similar enjoinder in Chrysostom's commentary on Abraham in Homily 36.15–17, though to be fair the purpose of his commentary is explicitly homiletical.

57. Chrysostom, *Job*, 190.

58. *Ibid.*, 191.

heavens.”<sup>59</sup> It appears almost certain at this point that Chrysostom has almost abandoned explicit adherence to his thesis of God’s theophany as an answer to Job’s sapiential problem in favor of the pastoral implications of the theophany. The ontological space between humanity and God is unfathomable based on God’s description of his own activity. Yet Job’s position as an ascetic philosopher grants him access to an audience with the Almighty. Finally, being constantly mindful of the Nicene imbroglio that lies behind his priestly activity, Chrysostom utilizes the opportunities the text gives him to stress how God’s language of birth and generation does and does not apply to the Son; the practical and the theological cannot and should not, in the end, be divorced in the mind of Chrysostom.<sup>60</sup> The cosmology described by Chrysostom’s God is clearly Nicene, and any other interpretation would be fraught with difficulties.

#### CONCLUSION

It is certainly easy to see divergences in opinion between the two exegetes on Job’s situation. Chrysostom seems to be more interested in asserting the ontological gap between God and Job, and though the gap is large, Job is just the person to engage in a proper philosophical discourse with God. Julian, on the other hand, is interested in how God closes the gap because of Job’s εϋνοια, and how it is no strange thing for God to communicate with one who is so close to him. Though at times Chrysostom’s Job is stared down by a God almost needing to defend his sovereignty, nevertheless he does so on Job’s level; whereas for Julian God is highlighting his own majesty in order to make the theophanic event itself more beautiful and profound. The most profound similarity, despite the differences in Julian’s and Chrysostom’s contexts, is that both focus on the applicability of God’s speech to current readers, and neither allow the reading of the text simply to remain part of an exegetical exercise. Though Job was not reckoned as a member of the line of patriarchs, he indeed did stand somewhat indirectly in salvation-history as one who experienced a direct theophany firsthand. As pre-critical interpreters, it was therefore the task of both Julian and Chrysostom to draw their readers into this theophany, not as mere exegetes, but as part of God’s creation called into participation with Scripture. On one level, Job is the historical figure through which the average Christian can

59. Ibid.

60. See especially *ibid.*, 194.



seemingly most closely relate. On a much more pervasive level, however, Job serves almost as a puppet through which Julian and Chrysostom can disseminate their own theologies, whether anti- or pro-Nicene, to their congregations. However, whether the true path to God was as a person living a well-ordered life evident of a well-ordered mind, as was Julian's urban rhetor, or, as Chrysostom's ascetic philosopher by steadfastly remaining detached from the troubles of the world, must be discerned by the subsequent readers of the commentaries.