

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

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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

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 $\eta\alpha$ in vs. 26 as privative.

³ Kissane, 120-121.

⁴ Clines, *Job 1-20*, 464.

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Other scholars believe that Job will die and later be resurrected. Edward Young, for instance, speaks of an eschatological event, namely, bodily resurrection,⁵ and Gleason Archer translates Job 19:26 in the following way, “And from the vantage point of my flesh, I shall see God.”⁶ 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?”⁷ 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:⁸

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

⁵ Edward Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (London: Tyndale, 1949), 317.

⁶ Gleason L. Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament: Introduction* (Chicago: Moody, 1964), 449.

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.”

⁸ John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job*, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (NICOT) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 282-298.

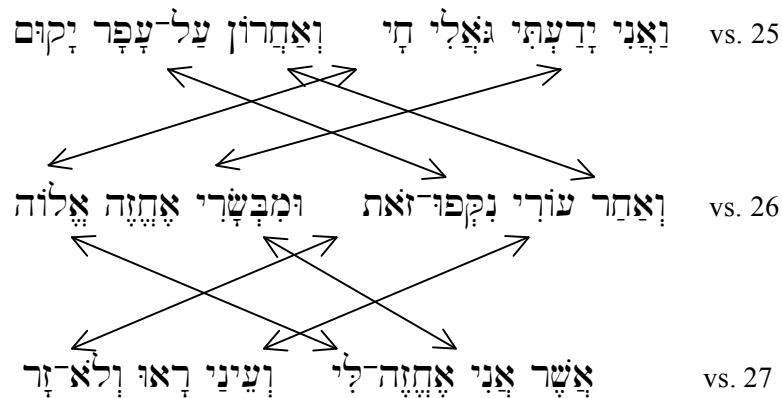
וְעֵינַי רָאוּ וְלֹא-זָר

And my eyes will behold, and not another.

כָּלֹוּ כְלִי־תִי בְּחֻקֵי

My heart faints within me.¹¹

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.¹² 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.¹³



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 אֲנִי ("I") before the verbs יָדַעְתִּי ("I know," vs. 25) and אֶחְזֶה ("I will see," vs. 27).

¹¹ All translations from Hebrew to English are done by the author of this article. Literally, "My kidneys grow faint in my breast."

¹² 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.

¹³ 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.

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2. Intensification by repeating the verbs **רָאוּ** (vss. 26, 27) and **יִרְאוּ** (“they will see,” vs. 27).

3. A positive clarification after the verb, **אֶחָדָה לִּי** (“I shall see for myself,” vs. 27)¹⁴ and a negative clarification, **וְלֹא־אֲחֵר** (“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

רָאוּ and **יִרְאוּ**. 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 **רָאוּ** (“see,” “behold”).¹⁵ One of its functions is to express the vision of God that every righteous person will have on the resurrection morning.¹⁶ Usually the words for “seeing” are associated with the words for waking.¹⁷ Some scholars would include in this category even those texts that do not have the word “to see,” but which nevertheless imply it.¹⁸

Generally the verb **רָאוּ** (“to see”) denotes the act of “seeing,” “perceiving,” “watching,” or “looking” with one’s own eyes.¹⁹ Job expresses his conviction that he will live again by a short but assertive phrase,

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* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 305.

¹⁵ See Francis A. Brown, S. E. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, “**רָאוּ**,” *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon: With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic (BDB)*, (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 302.

¹⁶ Robert D. Culver, “**רָאוּ**,” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (TWOT)*, 2 vols., ed. R. Laird Harris (Chicago: Moody, 1981), 1:274-277.

¹⁷ John F. A. Sawyer, “Hebrew Words for Resurrection of the Dead,” *Vetus Testamentum (VT)* 23 (1973): 224. See, for example, Pss 17:15, 16:10, and 36:10.

¹⁸ Mitchell J. Dahood, *Psalms*, 3 vols. Anchor Bible, vols. 16-17A (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966-1970), 3: xlix-lii; Pss 21:7; 27:4; 41:13; 61:8; 63:3; 140:13.

¹⁹ Eve perceived that the fruit of the tree was good (Gen 3:6). In Isa 53:11 **יִרְאוּ** 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.

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namely, וְעֵינַי רְאִי (“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.²⁰ That is why in Scripture seeing is often paralleled to awakening. Note, for example, the references in Pss 17:15 and 11:7:

אֲנִי בְצַדִּיק אֶחְזֶה פָּנֶיךָ 17:15

I, I shall behold Your face in righteousness;

אֶשְׂבְּעָה בְּהַקְיִי תְמוּנָתְךָ

I will be satisfied with Your likeness when I awake.

יָשָׁר יִחְזֶה פְּנֵימוֹ 11:7

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—רְאָה and חָזָה—occur together.
2. The term חָזָה occurs twice.

Additional emphasis on personal involvement is created by:

1. Particularly emphasizing his personal, by its nature, physical involvement, namely, seeing with עֵינַי (“my eyes”).
2. Clarifying his assertion by adding וְלֹא-זָר (“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

²⁰ Sawyer, “Hebrew Words for Resurrection,” 222-224.

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

קום and חי. The motif of resurrection is further reestablished by the employment of the verb **קום** (“He will stand”), especially as it functions in parallel to the term **חי** (“alive,” “living”).²¹ This interconnection clearly alludes to Job 14:12, where Job employs **קום** in parallel to **יקיצו** (“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 **קום** and **חי**, the subject of which is the Redeemer, is to intensify and reinforce the concept of the Resurrection hope even more.²²

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, **קום** following **חי**.²³

I know that my redeemer lives [**חי**],
And that in the end he will stand [**קום**] upon the earth (vs. 25).²⁴

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

עפר and חי. The noun **עפר** (“earth,” “dust”) points back to the **עפר** 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 **עפר** of the ground, Yahweh caused him **חיה** (“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.²⁵

²¹ Bertrand Pryce, “The Resurrection Motif in Hosea 5:8-6:6” (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1989), 166.

²² Sawyer, “Hebrew Words for Resurrection,” 232. See also Theodor H. Gaster, “Resurrection,” *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, 4 vols., ed. George Arthur Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962-1976), 4:39-43; William L. Hendricks, “Resurrection,” *Holman Bible Dictionary*, ed. Trent C. Butler (Nashville: Holman, 1991), 1178-1179.

²³ Isa 26:14, 19; Hos 6:2. In all these references **קום** constantly follows **חי**. 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 **קום** 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.

²⁵ Job 2:12; 4:19; 5:6; 7:5,21; 10:9; 14:8,19; 16:15; 17:16; 19:25; 20:11; 21:26; 22:24; 27:16; 28:2; 30:6,19; 34:15; 38:38; 39:14; 40:13; 41:25; 42:6. Janzen, *Job*, 141.

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Moreover, the occurrence of the term עֲפָר so close to the adjective חַי (“alive,” “living”),²⁶ which characterizes the Redeemer as a living being, alludes to the resurrection at the eschaton.²⁷

As Job uses עֲפָר²⁸ in parallel with death and the grave, the underlying relation of עֲפָר²⁹ to death is also emphasized by its close proximity to חַי. This is well demonstrated in Job 19:25:³⁰

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

Where these two terms occur in close proximity, they allude to the resurrection, especially when עֲפָר is used to describe the dust of the earth.³¹ Thus, the basic meaning of Job 19:25 is that Job has a Redeemer who lives and will conquer death.³²

אֶחָר and אַחֲרָיון. Furthermore, the adjective אַחֲרָיון (“and at the end”) is derived from the preposition אַחֲרַי, which means “behind,” or “afterwards.”³³ Both in terms of space and time, אַחֲרָיון can either mean “what

²⁶ “חַי,” *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.

³⁰ Ps 22:29; Isa 26:19. Nicholas J. Tromp, *Primitive Conceptions of Death and the Nether World in the Old Testament*, *Biblica et Orientalia* 21 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969), 89.

³¹ The foundation for this connection is based on the creation story (Gen 2:7), when man was formed from the עֶפֶר of the ground and God caused him to live, חַיָּה. See also Isa 26:19 and Dan 12:2.

³² Hasel notes that “The emphasis on resurrection is a part of the interest in victory over death” (see Gerhard F. Hasel, “Resurrection in the Theology of Old Testament Apocalyptic,” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 92 [1980]: 267-284).

³³ Bill T. Arnold, “אַחֲרַי,” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis (NIDOTTE)*, 5 vols., ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 1:360-361; L. Harris, “אַחֲרַי,” *TWOT*, 1:33-34.

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immediately follows,”³⁴ or describe the general “beyond” or “future,”³⁵ and finally, even the limits of space³⁶ or the very end of time.³⁷

According to Dahood, the word אַחֲרָיוֹן 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 (לְעַד). It is obvious that the author used אַחֲרָיוֹן 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 אַחֲרֵי (“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: אַחֲרֵי (“after”); אַחֲרָיוֹן (“the eschaton”); עָפָר (“the dust of earth”); חַיִּי (“live”); הָאָדָמָה and הַתְּהִיָּה (“to see upon awakening”); קִיָּוָה

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 אַחֲרָיוֹן 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 “אַחֲרָיוֹן,” *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).

³⁸ Dahood, *Psalms III*, xlvi.

³⁹ See also W. T. Smith, “New Rendering of Job xix. 23-27.” *Expository Times* 3 (1891-1892): 60.

(“to arise”)—all of them complement each other in creating a solid eschatological scenario. To these we might add an eighth, נָצַל (“to redeem”), and working from the associative field, there may even be a ninth in vs. 26, namely, עָוָר (“to awake”).⁴⁰

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,⁴¹ and this is an important fact because it is written earlier than Dan 12.⁴²

יְחִיּוּ מֵתֵיךָ

Your dead will live

נִבְלָתֵי יְקֻמוּן

Their [My] corpses will rise

הַקִּיצוּ וְרַנְּנוּ שְׁכֵנֵי עָפָר

You who dwell in the dust, awake and shout for joy

כִּי טַל אֹרֶת טֶלֶד

For your dew *is as* the dew of the dawn

וְאָרֶץ רְפָאִים תִּפְּלֵל

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.⁴³ In fact, it cries out, in full assurance of the purpose of God, the clear command

⁴⁰ Sawyer, “Hebrew Words for Resurrection,” 231.

⁴¹ Hasel, “Resurrection in the Theology of Old Testament Apocalyptic,” 267-284.

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.

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over the cemetery of the dead, “Wake up and rejoice, you that sleep in the dust.”⁴⁴

Moreover, Isa 26:19⁴⁵ emphasizes the same message of resurrection as Ezekiel and other prophets do, but in a much more expressive way: Your dead יָחִי “shall live”; their corpses יִקְרָאוּן (“shall rise”); dwellers in the dust הִקְרִיבוּ (“awake”); . . . and the earth תִּפְיֵל (“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.⁴⁶

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.⁴⁷

Three widely accepted terms for resurrection are: הָיָה (“to live”),⁴⁸ קָוָם (“to rise”), and קָיָץ (“to awake”).⁴⁹ Two more images enhance the resurrection overtones of this passage, namely, the mention of אֹרֶךְ (“light,” “morning”)⁵⁰ and the depiction of the freshness of טֶל (“dew”).⁵¹

⁴⁴ Donald E. Gowan, *Eschatology in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1964), 90-92.

⁴⁵ See an insightful and detailed exegesis by Hasel, “Resurrection in the Theology of Old Testament Apocalyptic,” 267-284. Of a different nature is the work of Brook W. R. Pearson, “Resurrection and the Judgment of the Titans: ἡ δὲ γῆ τῶν ἀσεβῶν in LXX Isaiah 26:19,” in *Resurrection*, ed. Stanley E. Porter, Michael A. Hayes, and David Tombs (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 33-51.

⁴⁶ See also Howard Clark Kee, “Resurrection of the Dead,” *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, ed. William H. Gentz (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986), 887-888; W. Stewart McCullough, “Israel’s Eschatology from Amos to Daniel,” in *Studies on the Ancient Palestinian World*, ed. J. W. Wevers and D. B. Redford (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1972), 66-101; John H. Otwell, “Immortality in the Old Testament: A Review of the Evidence,” *Encounter* 22 (1961): 22-27.

⁴⁷ For a discussion on the vocabulary and categories of terms, see Sawyer, “Hebrew Words for Resurrection,” 219-222.

⁴⁸ Hasel, 272.

⁴⁹ S. Amsler “קָוָם,” *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament*, ed. E. Jenni and C. Westermann (Munich: Kaiser, 1976), 2:635-641.

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.

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The categories of eschatological terms represented in Isa 26:19 include:

1. חָיָה (“to live” in the sense of “to live again”).
2. From the category of “rising” or “standing”—קָוַם (“to arise”).
3. From the category of “awakening,” “light,” and “seeing”—אֹר (“light”).
4. From the category of “rain,” or “blossoming”—טֵל (“dew”).
5. Words for the “dead” (מָוֶת, נִבְלָה, and עָפָר).

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

1. חָיָה (“live”).
2. From the category of “arising”—קָוַם (“to arise”).
3. From the category of “awakening” and “seeing”—רָאָה and חָזַק (“to see”),
4. The term for dead—עָפָר (“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.⁵² Verse 1 not only is permeated with eschatological overtones, but also is integrally related to the detailed resurrection description in vs. 2:

וְרַבִּים מִיַּשְׁנֵי
And many of those who sleep
אֲדָמַת־עָפָר יִקְיִצּוּ
in the dusty earth will awake,
אֵלֶּה לְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם
Some to everlasting life,
וְאֵלֶּה לְחַרְפוֹת לְדָרְאוֹן עוֹלָם
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 *מִיִּשְׁנֵי* in the expression *וְרַבִּים מִיִּשְׁנֵי* (“and many of those who sleep”) literally means “of those sleeping” and refers to the dead.⁵³ The term *יָשָׁן* 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 *אֶדְמַת-עָפָר* (“the dusty earth”). This is the construct chain *אֶדְמַת-עָפָר*,⁵⁴ literally meaning “the earth of dust,” and is associated with the imagery of burial in the grave.⁵⁵

In the context of these physical images of death, the statement that *יִקְיִצּוּ* (“they will awake”) definitely refers to the bodily resurrection of those who are to be delivered, and “not simply a renewal of the soul.”⁵⁶ 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 *קִיֵּן* (“to awake”)⁵⁷ is associated with “seeing” and “light.”⁵⁸ Moreover, here it is located next to the term *חַיִּים* (lit., “lives”) in the phrase *אֵלֶּה לְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם* (“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, *וְאֵלֶּה לְחַרְפוֹת לְדָרְאוֹן עוֹלָם* (“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, *וְתַעֲמֹד* (“and you will stand”), which is further clarified by the phrase, *לְקֵץ הַיָּמִין* (“at the end of the days”). The technical term for resurrection, *עֲמֹד* (“to

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.

⁵⁴ Yitshak Avishur, “Pairs of Synonymous Words in the Construct State (and in Appositional Hendiadys) in Biblical Hebrew,” *Semitics* 2 (1971-72): 17-81.

⁵⁵ For a detailed analysis of the phrase *אֶדְמַת-עָפָר*, see Artur A. Stele, “Resurrection in Daniel 12 and its Contribution to the Theology of the Book of Daniel” (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1996), 111-115.

⁵⁶ Gleason L. Archer, “Daniel,” *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: With the New International Version of the Holy Bible*, 12 vols., ed. Frank E. Gaebelain (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976-1992), 7:152.

⁵⁷ See “קִיֵּן,” *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 קום (“to stand,” “arise”), and that is why its employment here emphasizes a particular purpose, which will be carried out לְקֵץ הַיָּמִין.⁵⁹ The term קֵץ (“end”) signifies the eschaton⁶⁰ or the end time of human history,⁶¹ which will culminate in the bodily resurrection of the dead from their graves.⁶²

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

1. Terminology for “the dead”— מִיִּשְׁנֵי אֶרֶץ-עָפָר (“the sleepers of the dusty earth”).
2. From the field of “seeing,” “awakening,” or “light”— קִיץ (“to awake”). In addition, the ones raised to life are said to shine like the brightness of the heavens.
3. And the word תָּחֵה (“to live”).

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

1. עָפָר and תָּחֵה (“death” and “life”).
2. In Job רָאָה and תָּחֵה (“to see”), and זֹהַר (“brightness”) in Daniel.
3. In Job קום (“to stand”), and עָמַד (“to stand”) in Daniel.
4. Job’s event is at the אַחֲרֹון (“eschaton”), and Daniel’s event is at יְמֵי קֵץ (“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 קֵץ (“end”) with the definite article, only two have prefixed the preposition ל, namely, Dan 12:13 and Hab 2:3. See Shemaryahu Talmon, “קֵץ,” *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, “קֵץ,” *NIDOTTE*, 3:955.

⁶² Michael S. Moore, “Resurrection and Immortality: Two Motifs Navigating Confluent Theological Streams in the Old Testament (Dan 12 1-4),” *Theologische Zeitschrift* 39 (1983): 17-34; Lewis Bayles Paton, “Immortality in the Hebrew Religion,” in *Religion and the Future Life*, ed. Hershey Sneath (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1922), 141-163; Eric C. Rust, “The Destiny of the Individual in the Thought of the Old Testament,” *RevExp* 58 (1961): 296-311; also Robert W. Landis, *The Doctrine of Resurrection of the Body Asserted and Defended* (Philadelphia: Perkins & Purves, 1846); C. Ryder Smith, *The Bible Doctrine of the Hereafter* (London: Epworth, 1958); Thomas Forsyth Torrance, *Space, Time and Resurrection* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976); Isaac Watts, *The World to Come: or, Discourses on the Joys and Sorrows of Departed Souls at Death and the Glory or Terror of the Resurrection* (England, Leeds: Davies & Booth, 1918).

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.⁶³ According to Theophile Meek, the interpretations are so varied that practically no two of them are in agreement.⁶⁴ 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 וְאָנֹכִי יָדַעְתִּי (“for I, I know”), where וְ (“for,” “but”) introduces contrast with vss. 23-24,⁶⁵ and the personal pronoun אָנֹכִי takes on an emphatic form “I myself.”⁶⁶ The verb יָדַעְתִּי (“I know”)⁶⁷ occurs in the book of Job 12 times.⁶⁸ 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.”⁶⁹ The significance of the phrase, which points out Job’s unique relationship with God, is revealed by an examination of the verb יָדַעְתִּי in interrelated textual parallels:⁷⁰

חַיִּים וְחֶסֶד עָשִׂיתָ עִמָּדִי

You have granted me life and lovingkindness Job 10:12

יָדַעְתִּי כִּי־זֹאת עִמָּדִי

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 “יָדַע,” *BDB*, 395.

⁶⁸ Job 9:2,28; 10:13; 13:2,18; 19:25; 21:27; 23:3; 29:16; 30:23; 32:22; 42:2. For a detailed discussion on the current verses see Christo, “The Eschatological Judgment in Job 19:21-29,” 67-151.

⁶⁹ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 304.

⁷⁰ Jacques Doukhan, “Radioscopy of a Resurrection: The Meaning of *niqq^epû zō’it* in Job 19:26,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 34/2 (1996): 187-193.

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I have known that this is with You 10:13

וְאֲנִי יָדַעְתִּי גֹאֲלִי הָיָה

For I, I know that my Redeemer lives 19:25

וְאֶתְרוֹן עַל-עֶפְרָיִם יִקְוֶה

and that at the end He will stand upon the earth 19:25

By affirming that גֹאֲלִי הָיָה (“my Redeemer lives”),⁷¹ Job focuses on Yahweh, who functions as his personal Defender, Redeemer Advocate, and Judge.⁷² The pronominal suffix “my” refers to Job, and at the same time the phrase גֹאֲלִי הָיָה is structurally contrasted with עַל-עֶפְרָיִם (literally,

⁷¹ LXX — ἀθάνατος — “immortal.”

⁷² “Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my advocate is on high,” Job 16:19.

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“on the dust”).⁷³ The primary emphasis lies on the expression of his conviction that his גֹּאֵל⁷⁴ lives and he will encounter God face to face.⁷⁵

Employing his straightforward descriptive expression וְאַחֵר עוֹרִי נִקְפָּו (‘‘and after my skin is destroyed,’’ vs. 26), Job calls attention to his death

⁷³ When interpreting Job’s conviction, one needs to identify whom Job speaks of. There are four different views:

1) One view is that the גֹּאֵל is a human figure that will vindicate Job. See S. B. Freehof, *Book of Job* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1958), 148. This view is not supported by modern commentators. Gordis argues that it is God to whom Job appeals and also provides the arguments above why the גֹּאֵל is not man, because if the גֹּאֵל is to be identified with Job’s witness of 16:19, then the redeemer is to be found in the heavens (Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 206). He rejects Ibn Ezra’s interpretation on the grounds of 16:19. Also see Habel, *Job*, CBC, 100; Pope, 146; and Hartley, 293. Most commentators tie Job 19 with Job 16. Moreover, he will arise at the eschaton.

2) According to Clines, there is no person envisaged, divine or human, who will represent Job. Job’s גֹּאֵל, he proposes, is Job’s cry. This cry is to be identified with the witness, the advocate, and also the intercessor of 16:18-21, all of which is considered personification (Clines, *Job 1-20*, 456-460).

3) The third view is that the גֹּאֵל is God. Proponents of this view emphasize that Yahweh was a protector of the nation, and describes his actions related to deliverance in two critical periods of Israel’s history—the exodus from Egypt (A. R. Johnson, ‘‘The Primary Meaning of גֹּאֵל,’’ *Supplement to Vetus Testamentum* 1 (1953): 67-77. He points out such texts as Exod 15:13; 6:6; Pss 74:2 and 106:10 and the return from Babylon; Isa 43:1; 44:6.

4) The fourth view is that Job might have reference to a third person, one who is divine, but who is not the one he sees as persecuting him. One may refer to him as a heavenly mediator. This view was suggested by S. Mowinckel, ‘‘Hiobs Goel und Zeuge im Himmel,’’ *Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 41 (1925): 207-212. See also W. A. Irvin, ‘‘An Examination of the Progress of Thought in the Dialogue of Job,’’ *Journal of Religion* 13 (1933): 150-164.

⁷⁴ See Hubbard, ‘‘גֹּאֵל,’’ *NIDOTTE*, 1:789-794. For various functions of the term, see Christo, ‘‘The Eschatological Judgment in Job,’’ 137-143.

⁷⁵ Gordis sees a progression in Job’s faith from a mediator (מוֹדֵיִן, 9:33) to the witness advocate-intercessor (קֹלֵי־יָצִי, 16:18-21), and finally a redeemer (גֹּאֵל, 19:25). Robert Gordis, *The Book of Job* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1978), 526. Habel emphasizes in Job’s statement a confidence that there is someone out there, a liberator greater than a witness, an arbiter who will vindicate him (Norman C Habel, *The Book of Job*, Cambridge Bible Commentaries, ed. A. R. C. Leaney and J. W. Packer [London: Cambridge UP], 1975), 104. However, a main function of the גֹּאֵל was to redeem. But redemption implied payment. Therefore, this concept of payment implies that the גֹּאֵל is a third party between God and man. Harris, ‘‘גֹּאֵל,’’ *TWOT*, 1:351-353. See also Hos 13:14; Isa 35:10; Jer 31:11; Ps 69:19; 74:2.

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independent and in the prefixes and suffixes), which are tied together in the double chiasm. The לִי (particle preposition + suffix 1st person common singular) in vs. 27 functions as an ethical dative, thus heightening the immediacy of Job's experience.⁸³ The significance of such phrases as עוֹרִי ("my skin"), וְבֶשֶׁרִי ("my flesh"), לִי ("I myself"), וְעֵינַי ("my eyes") is obvious,⁸⁴ 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.⁸⁵ Thus, the phrase וְאַחֵר עוֹרִי ("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 עָפָר, yet there is skin to which Job can refer.

Moreover, the descriptive elements of a human body like עוֹר ("skin"), בָּשָׂר ("flesh"), עֲצָמוֹת ("bones"), and גִּידִים ("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.⁸⁶

Summary

The double chiasm indicates that the preposition אַחֵר ("after," vs. 26) is to be taken as a temporal entity, corresponding to the adjective אַחֲרָיוֹן ("the eschaton," "latter," vs. 25), thus making the eschaton the central point of convergence. Moreover, the term אַחֲרָיוֹן has eschatological and the future-life intention, as it occurs along with a synonym for eternity לְעֶד ("forever") that functions in the same context. All five terms from the field of death and resurrection—אָפָר ("the dust of earth"); תָּהָה ("to live"); רָאָה and תָּהָה ("to see upon awakening"); and קוּם ("to arise")—

⁸³ Gordis, 207.

⁸⁴ See Janzen, *Job*, 144.

⁸⁵ Job 19:25-27 describes the same process of creation as Job 10; in both passages, the body arises out of a nonexistent stage. In Job 10:9, as in Job 19:25, this stage is referred to as אֶפֶר ("dust"), a designation of death or the nether world. See Gen 3:19,21; Job 7:21; 17:16; 34:15, etc.

⁸⁶ Samuel L. Terrien, *Job: Poet of Existence* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957), 150, 151.

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compliment אָהַר and אֶתְרוֹן 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” (עַל-עָפָר יִקְוֶה), which, de facto, is the picture of victory over death.⁸⁷

By employing two synonymous verbs, הִזָּה (occurs twice) and רָאָה, and in particular emphasizing his personal, by its nature physical, involvement, namely, seeing with עֵינַי (“my eyes”) and then clarifying his assertion by adding וְלֹא-אֲחֵר (“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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⁸⁷ 2 Kgs 13:7; Mal 4:3. Delbert R. Hillers, “Dust: Some Aspects of Old Testament Imagery,” in *Love and Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope*, ed. John Marks and Robert Good (Guilford: Four Quarters, 1987), 106.

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