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Haššātān and Court Traditions in the Book of Job: Court Tradition History Perspective

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Abstract

The book of Job contains about suffering and feelings of injustice. Job felt and asked why he as a godly person experienced suffering, so he sought justice to God. The word justice is related to haššātān and court. The authors want to find and describe the context of the word haššātān by the judicial or court tradition history perspective in the book of Job. The result of this research is that the dialogue and the setting of the dialogue in the sky is the atmosphere of the court which was attended by the Judge (God) and the prosecutor (haššātān), that the prosecutor stated that there was an act of injustice that occurred in the life of the defendant (Job) which was committed by God (as well as the accused), which is also as a discussion of theodicy and Judgment Traditions in the book of Job.

Keywords: haššātān; court tradition history; God; the Book of Job; theodicy

INTRODUCTION

“Why did God let me suffer, why did He let me live among injustice, and injustice befall upon me, so that I suffer?”¹ This sentence is a question of Job as a pious man who is losing all his belongings, children and even his health. These questions lead to theodic questions, to the question of whether God can be wrong in making decisions.² The book of Job tries to discuss this problem and discusses the variety of answers given in answering the problem of suffering. Indeed, the answer to this question is difficult and even very difficult to find easily, if you only read the book of Job only once and even without understanding.

This article focuses on a character who has always been seen as an antagonist and very evil, who goes against God and Job. In English, for example ISV, KJV, RV, ASV, etc. translated satan or devil. Most of the commentaries also interpret the Hebrew

word *haššātān* as evil or devil, so that the interpreters think that in the book of Job, especially the prose section, there is a dualistic view.³ Some of the following examples are interpretations that explain *haššātān* as “satan” or “devil”:

- a. Driver said that Satan here is in the antithetic position of “seeking goodness,” because he is always “seeking sin” for humans.⁴
- b. Janzen also interprets Satan's position in opposition to Job, which indicates also being in opposition to God.⁵

There are many other interpreters and translations that put “satan” or “the devil” in opposition to Job and God. Yet according to the author, the writing of the prose section of the book of Job is still very far from dualism. For this reason, this article will present that the *haššātān* position on Job's prose is not in a negative and contradictory position, but in a neutral position.

¹ A. Wendell Bowes, “Job: A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition,” in *New Beacon Bible Commentary (NBBC)* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2018), 1. Richard P. Belcher wrote a book of good commentary, which is not just an interpretation of the book of Job, but he relates it to the current situation. In writing this commentary, he acts as a pastor who serves pastorally for his congregation who are experiencing suffering. He begins this book with a question: “How should we respond to God when suffering comes into our lives?” See Richard P. Belcher, “Job: The Mystery of Suffering and God's Sovereignty,” in *Focus on the Bible* (Fearn: Christian Focus, 2017), 21.; John Briggs Curtis, “On Job's Response to Yahweh,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98, no. 4 (December 1979): 497–511, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3265665>.

² See Timothy Polk, “Kierkegaard and the Book of Job: Theodicy or Doxology?,” *Word & World* 31, no. 4 (2011): 409–16.

³ Comp. Stephen Cook, “A Reading of Job as a Theatrical Work: Challenging a Retributive Deuteronomistic Theodicy,” *Literature & Aesthetics* 24, no. 2 (2014): 48–54.

⁴ Rolles Driver and George Buchanan Gray, “The Book of Job,” in *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary (CEC)* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1986), 11.; Stephanie Day Powell, “Human Consciousness of God in the Book of Job: A Theological and Psychological Commentary,” *Biblical Interpretation* 20, no. 3 (January 1, 2012): 356–57, <https://doi.org/10.1163/156851511X588943>.

⁵ J. Gerald Janzen, *Job: Interpretation* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1985), 37–38.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this article is court tradition history of the text. This method of interpreting, which looks at the structure and semantics of this text, was introduced in Utzschneider and Nitsche's book, namely the method of interpretation after the era of historical criticism.⁶ However, this article also uses other methods, namely the traditional history method (*traditionsgeschichte*), especially the history of the court tradition which helps the process of interpreting the word *hašātān* used in the book of Job.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Job, the Main Character in Two Sides

The main character in the book of Job is none other than Job. This character named Job, whose name has been traced by commentators to find out the origin and meaning of the name Job. However, until now there has been no agreement between them for a definite meaning of this name Job. But that does not mean it cannot be

known what Job's name means. The name Job can be found in ancient oriental texts between the 20th and 14th centuries BC, for example in the Amarna texts (+ 1350 BC). The name Job here is the name of a king from the land of Pella who was named *a-ya-ab*⁷ (Decapolis in Arabic). That this name is very similar to the root name 'yb (Hebrew). In texts from Egypt dating from the 19th/18th century, there is an area called Job, and the inhabitants of this area are referred to as the people of Job. To be sure, the Jews in reading the book of Job, they call Job as "the Righteous Gentile." The mention of Gentile here shows that this character is not actually a figure who comes from the nation of Israel or the ancestors of Israel, but the ancestors of other nations. Between the two opinions above, namely the name Job, which is the name of the king of the land of Pella (Vicchio and Maalouf's view) and the name of a region in Egypt, Vicchio and Maalouf's views are more likely, because this is closely related to the return of the Jews who lived in the Arabian Gola⁸ (in the

⁶ Helmut Utzschneider and Stefan Ark Nitsche, *Arbeitsbuch Literaturwissenschaftliche Bibelauslegung: Eine Methodenlehre Zur Exegese Des Alten Testaments* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2013).

⁷ Stephen J. Vicchio, *Job in Modern World. The Image of the Biblical Job: A History, Volume 3* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2006), 210.; Tony Maalouf, *Arabs in the Shadow of Israel: The Unfolding of God's Prophetic Plan for Ismael's Line* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2003), 121. The country of Pella was located in the Decapolis, which was then called the

"Arab region". Adjacent to Pella is the very famous town of Petra. Today this "Arab region" lies in the country of Jordan, which the author says is the origin of the story of Job's prose. The word name *ayaab* comes from Arabic, which later in Arabic Al-Quran becomes Job. This indicates that the figure of Ayub is the ancestor or patriarch of the Arab nation.

⁸ The author argues that this prose was originally a legend or folk tale (*Volksbuch*) belonging to the Arab community in the Pella, Petra and surrounding areas. This legend was circulating in Arab society since pre-exilic, of course, still in the stage of the oral tradition. Folklore in this oral tradition experienced

area of Pella, Petra, and its surroundings there are centers of Jewish culture which in the New Testament era by Paul referred to as the Arab region; compare to Galatians 1:17).⁹

Literally, if Job's name in Hebrew (אִיּוֹב/ʾiyyôv) comes from a root verb אִיב/ʾyb (*hostile*),¹⁰ then this has two meanings in which the two meanings contradict each other, namely the name Job that means "hostile" or "rebellious".¹¹ The form of verbs אִיב for example:

- a. אִיב which is the absolute infinitive qal (active) form meaning "hostile one."
- b. אִיב which is the absolute infinitive nif'al (passive) form meaning "the hostile one."

a stage of written tradition when some Judah did not want to be banished by Nebuchadnezzar, so they fled to this Arab area, then they wrote down this legend of Job and put a little bit of Jewish theology in it. It is this written legend of Job that the Jews brought back to their homeland, possibly at the same time as Ezra-Nehemiah returning from Babylon. This opinion has been written by the author Art Semuel Thomas and Agus Santoso, *Dari Nasib Kepada Pengharapan: Studi Peredaksian Dan Pereseptian Kitab Ayub* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2017), 35-38. Agus Santoso, *Cierpienie i Nadzieja* (Mauritius: Wydawnictwo Bezkresy Wiedzy, 2020), 55.

⁹ See Agus Santoso, *Dia Menebus ... Supaya Kita Diterima Menjadi Anak: Tafsiran Surat Rasul Paulus Kepada Jemaat Di Galatia* (Bandung: BMI, 2011), 59.

¹⁰ H. H. Rowley, *The Book of Job, The New Century Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 28.

¹¹ Samuel E. Balentine, "Job," in *Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2006), 44-45.

If we compare the two formations of the verb "hostile" (אִיב/ "hostile" and אִיב/ "who are hostile") and name words אִיב, then it can be seen that this naming programmatically has a double meaning, namely the self of this pious person is "hostiled by God" at a time "hostile to God." This naming program is played out by the narrator in the great narrative of Job from beginning to end. So based on the double meaning above, the meaning of the name of Job means those who hostile toward God, as well as those whom God hostile to.¹²

Based on the understanding of the name Job above and related to one of the Hebrew literary styles, namely literary parallelism, and among the types of parallelism there is one known as "Yanus parallelism"¹³, then both meanings are correct.

¹² Balentine.

¹³ Scott B. Noegel, "Janus Parallelism in the Book of Job," in *Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 223* (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 2009). Yanus is the name of a two-faced Roman deity (also called Geminus). The name of the month "January" comes from the name of this deity. Examples of images of the god Yanus:



Coin depicting the god Yanus, stored at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

Through the description of this deity, Yanus's parallelism is a word in Hebrew which has a double meaning which is deliberately used by the writer, that both meanings are correct and are used in the writing.

Thus it can be explained that this person named Job is an enemy by holding debates and at the same time he is also an enemy.¹⁴ The story of Job as being hostiled and also hostile is found from the beginning to the end of this story.

Along with Yanus parallelism in the name of the main character, this character of Job is also depicted as very different; as if he lived in two different worlds. In the prologue and epilogue, Job is depicted as being devout and obedient and accepting the situation (with submit and surrender), while in the dialogue section, Job is depicted as very different from that in the prologue and epilogue. In the dialogue section, Job is depicted as someone who opposes God, who insists on defending himself, by feeling and assuming that he is right.¹⁵

In addition to the above description, Job is also depicted in the prologue and epilogue as a leader of a nomadic tribe, while in the dialogue section he is depicted as a city dweller who clearly understands the world of “judge” that is usually found in the tradition of judge at city gates. But on the other hand, the two parts cannot be separated from one another. Chapters 3 to 42 will be an incomplete story without the story in the prologue section.

Job, the Main Character Who is *Tam*

Verse 1 is an introduction to the story for the story of chapters 1 to 42. Therefore this verse is one of the key verses to be able to understand the whole of this book of Job. The verse quote below says that:

אִישׁ הָיָה בְּאֶרֶץ-עֻזַּי אִיּוֹב שְׁמוֹ
וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה יָשָׁר וְיָרָא אֱלֹהִים וְסָר מִרָע:

*There was a man in the land of Us, whose name was Job,
he is an innocent and righteous person and feared God and keeps himself away from evil.*

Based on the quotation from verse 1 above, we find the explanation in the introduction of this story that Job was actually a man: an “innocent” or תָּם, “right”

or יָשָׁר, “honor (to) God” or יָרָא אֱלֹהִים, and “turned away from evil” or סָר מִרָע.

The four Hebrew words above show that Job was one perfect person. Even just

¹⁴ See discussion of multiple meanings in the book of Job on Naphtali S. Meshel, “Dramatic Irony and DOUBLE ENTENDRE in the Book of Job / אִירוֹנְיָה / אִירוֹנְיָה וְכַפֵּל מִשְׁמְעוֹת בְּסֵפֶר אִיּוֹב” *Shmaton: An Annual for Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern*

Studies, 2017, 107–39, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24904704>.

¹⁵ Comp. Wim van der Weiden, *Seni Hidup: Sastra Kebijaksanaan Perjanjian Lama* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1995).

the first word, the Hebrew Tām is sufficient to describe Job’s perfect piety. The other three words are actually just explaining and emphasizing the first word. These terms can be explained as follows:

- a. The word yāšār in Hebrew is usually and is often used together with the word יָרַךְ which means “way”. The word yāšār has a straight literal meaning. So when the word yāšār is used to describe human piety, it means “always on the right path”.
- b. The word wîrē ´élöhîm is a typical term of the wisdom tradition, and there is a special formulation of this tradition, namely “reverence for God is the beginning of wisdom”. Based on the understanding of the terms above, we get

a picture that Job is a wise class of people.

- c. Job’s perfection of piety closes with a Hebrew term, wesār mērā` which means turned away from evil. Based on that sense, this term has the meaning “trying to avoid things that can cause someone to sin or be evil”. This meaning is explained in Job 1: 2-5, which says that Job’s children like to have parties, and every time the party is over, Job sanctifies the children by offering burnt offerings to God.

Stories About *Haššātān* and Court Traditions

The story of *haššātān* is found in Job 1: 6-12 and 2: 1-8. The story structure of the two passages is almost the same (RV).

	1:6-12	2:1-6
1	Now there was a day when the sons of God came ... (6)	Again there was a day when the sons of God came ... (1)
2	And the LORD said unto <i>haššātān</i> “Whence comest thou?” (7a)	And the LORD said unto <i>haššātān</i> “From whence comest thou?” (2a)
3	<i>haššātān</i> answered the LORD “...walking up and down in it ...” (7b)	<i>haššātān</i> answered the LORD “...walking up and down in it...” (2b)
4	And the LORD said unto <i>haššātān</i> “Hast thou considered my servant Job? ...” (8)	the LORD said unto <i>haššātān</i> “Hast thou considered my servant Job? ...” (3)
5	<i>haššātān</i> answered the LORD (contains the indictment <i>haššātān</i>) ... put forth thine hand now ...” (9-11)	<i>haššātān</i> answered the LORD (contains the indictment <i>haššātān</i>) ... put forth thine hand now ...” (4-5)
6	the LORD said unto <i>haššātān</i> “Behold, ... in thy power...” (12)	the LORD said unto <i>haššātān</i> “Behold, he is in thine hand ...” (6)

Sequences 1-3 have the same words, while sequences 4-5 are adjusted according to the context of the conversation. But in substance, sequences 1-6 have the same struc-

ture. The following is the translation of Job 1: 6-12 as the focus of observing the *haššātān* dialogue with God which is guided by several narrative sentences (לתקייא).

1	Now there was a day
2	The sons of God came
3	<i>haššātān</i> came also among them
4	The LORD said unto <i>haššātān</i> : “From whence comest thou?”
5	<i>haššātān</i> answered the LORD.
6	and said : “From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it”
7	the LORD said unto <i>haššātān</i> : “Hast thou considered my servant Job? for there is none like him in the earth, ... one that feareth God, and escheweth evil.”
8	<i>haššātān</i> answered the LORD.
9	said : “Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath, on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. but forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will renounce thee to thy face.”
10	the LORD said unto <i>haššātān</i> : “Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand.”
11	So <i>haššātān</i> went forth from the presence of the LORD.

The words typed in bold above are narrative verbs, of which 11 narrative verbs control the story.

The story begins with the narrative verb wayühî which can also be translated as once upon a time. In Hebrew prose this word is usually used to describe a tale or story. At that time “the sons of God” came to the LORD. BIMK translates the word “children of God” as “heavenly beings”. Translating BIMK is the same as translating NRSV (and also Seow) which translates “heavenly beings”. This cannot be separate-

ed from the concept of “divine congregation” that developed in the area of ancient Egypt, Babylon and Canaan.¹⁶ In mythology which was heavily influenced by polytheists, especially in Canaan, El Elyon as one of the El who had won the war between the others El, led the government in the divine council. El Elyon rules the others El, so that in degree, these the other El are divine beings who are lesser in rank than El Elyon.¹⁷ This story is a little different from the story in the Israeli tradition, where these lower divine beings are demoted to become

¹⁶ Balentine, “Job,” 51. For further reading: M. Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1955).; E. T. Mullen, *The Assembly of the Gods* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1980).; E. T. Mullen, “Divine Assembly,” in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. N.

Freedman, Vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 214-217.

¹⁷ Dianne Bergant and Robert J. Karris, *Tafsir Alkitab Perjanjian Lama* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2002), 406.

servants and helpers of God. To be sure, they were no longer divine beings. They are servants of God in their respective functions. But they cannot be conceived of as angels in the later Christian theological sense, for this would be an anachronism (counterintuitive).¹⁸ For that BIMK translates well to the term “*makhluk-makhluk surgawi* (heavenly beings)”. So what is meant by “children of God” are heavenly beings, who are helpers of God. What is interesting here is the phrase “there came haššātān among them”.

Hebrew Text: וַיָּבֹא אִם־הַשָּׂטָן בְּתוֹכָם

Author's Translation: and came haššātān who is among them.

Revised Version: and Satan came also among them.

BIMK (LAI): “dan si Peggoda ada di antara mereka juga” (and the Seducer was among them too).

The above translations can be divided into two groups.¹⁹ The phrase that is translated by the RV as “and Satan came also among them” can be interpreted as: First, satan is another being from the hea-

venly beings above. This type of interpretation is more concerned that the book of Job is a book that has been influenced by dualism. This is a battle between two great powers, between the good power (represented by God and assisted by his assistants, namely His angels) and the evil forces (represented by satan). However, this type of interpretation will of course fall into anachronism, because at that time, of course, dualistic thinking was still far from the author's thoughts.²⁰

Second, the statement “among them” can be translated, that haššātān is one of the “children of God” or “heavenly beings”. He is one of the agents or servants of God in his own function. Balentine argues that the function of satan is “the satan serves as God’s advocate, probing human behavior according to God’s directives in search of truth and faithfulness.”²¹ However, the authors disagree with Balentine’s opinion. The function of haššātān here according to the author is not just a test of faith. In this case the author also disagrees with Rowley

¹⁸ See this discussion on Bergant and Karris. Only later, after the Jews came into contact with Persian religion, these creatures came to be called “angels”. Even then there are some of these creatures who have names, for example Gabriel, Michael, etc. See Balentine, “Job,” 51.

¹⁹ Comp. Philippe Guillaume, “Dismantling the Deconstruction of Job,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127, no. 3 (2008): 491–99, <https://doi.org/10.2307/25610135>.

²⁰ The author disagrees with Tremper Longman III, “Job,” in *Baker Commentary on the Old Testament*

Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 87. Longman III argues, that even though there is an article in front of the word *satan*, it still shows a name word. For example “the George”. Despite the addition of the article “the” to the name “George”, the “George” here remains a person's name.

²¹ Disagree with this dualistic opinion, Balentine said: “The *satan* is not God’s opponent; his intentions are neither evil nor opposed to God’s purposes.” See Balentine, “Job,” 52.

who thinks that haššātān here has a duty to make humans evil.²² Both Balentine and Rowley, they narrowed down the functions and duties of haššātān. According to the author, the function of haššātān is in accordance with the word šātān, namely accuser. Its function is to accuse like a prosecutor's function in a court. For this reason, the authors see that the word haššātān has a neutral meaning.

There is an indication that in the BIMK translation, “si Penggoda (the Seducer)” is among the children of God, but not part of the children of God. This indication is also found in the TB translation, that satan also came and was present among them, and this translation seems that there is no emphasis on the existence of satan who is part of the children of God. Both translations are heavily influenced by dualism, which states that satan is a negative force, which is the opposite of a positive good force. So TB and BIMK translate the word haššātān with a negative meaning, namely in the interpretive position, a) of the two interpretations above, the author agrees more with the se-

cond interpretation or interpretation; b) that the meaning of the word haššātān here is still far from dualistic thinking patterns.²³

Because if you interpret it by including dualistic thinking, the interpreter will fall into an anachronistic interpretation, which forces younger thinking to older thinking. For this reason, in interpreting Job 1: 6, the interpreter is not allowed to include dualism in it, namely between the good powers represented by angels (children of God) and the evil forces represented by the devil.²⁴ The author sees that haššātān is part of heavenly beings or God's helpers. In this case the author does not agree with the opinion of Magdalene who said, that haššātān is in a position against Job and God. According to the author, haššātān is not in a position opposite to God, but rather he is in the position of God's assistant.²⁵ Haššātān is one of the heavenly beings who has a special assignment to be accuser. More about the coming of haššātān before God here is closely related to the tradition of “judgment” in ancient Israel.

²² Rowley, *The Book of Job, The New Century Bible Commentary*, 31.

²³ James M. Efrid, *Biblical Books of Wisdom: A Study of Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, and Other Wisdom Literature in the Bible* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1983), 38.

²⁴ Disagree with the opinion of Belcher in Belcher, “Job: The Mystery of Suffering and God's Sovereignty,” 23., which states that what is meant by Satan in the book of Job is the devil. In contrast to that, agree with the opinion of Edward L. Greenstein,

Job: A New Translation (Yale University Press, 2019), 3. Greenstein translates and interprets the word *the satan* not with the glasses of dualism, but the satan in this book is one of the angels of God who served Him.

²⁵ F. Rachel Magdalene, “Through a Glass Lawyerly: Reading the Legal Metaphors of Job 1-31,” in *Law and Narrative in the Bible and in Neighbouring Ancient Cultures*, ed. Klaus-Peter Adam (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 124.

Chr. Barth and Marie-Claire Barth-Frommel describe the three levels of trial in ancient Israel, as follows:²⁶

- a. At the village and small town levels (local level), the courts were administered by the elders who sat at the gates of the city or village. At the gate will come people who seek justice. At this level they judge only on simple matters.
- b. At higher levels, professional judges are appointed to judge at the regional level. The story of the appointment of professional judges is contained in the story of Moses who appointed judges at the advice of Jethro, his father-in-law (Ex. 18:13-26; Deut. 1:9-17). Historically, the appointment of professional judges to judge at the regional level only took effect during the period of the kingdom.
- c. At the national level, it is the national leader who acts as the supreme judge. In this case Moses, and later the kings who became judges judging at the national level. In the past, in the most difficult matters, if the case was not resolved at both the local and regional levels, Musa intervened in the matter. In a difficult problem when two mothers

mutually acknowledge and fight over a child, Solomon, who is full of wisdom, intervenes in overcoming this complicated problem to solve the problem desperately needs wisdom.

In the process of seeking justice, there were three main figures who had a dialogue, namely between the defendant, the accuser and the judge. The problem of seeking justice can begin when an accused person comes to the judge to seek justice for himself who has been indicted by an accuser. Or it could be the other way around, an accusing person comes to the judge to seek justice for the fraud committed by the defendant. For this reason, in the court process, or while the court is still in process, both the defendant and the accused are in a neutral position, meaning that nothing has been wrong and right.

The story begins when an accuser called *haššātān* comes to the Judge seeking justice. The story of this trial begins with a situation, that the servants of God come up to the Lord and of course to report the implementation of the tasks that God has assigned to each of them. One of god's helpers, whose duty is to observe and report to Him when there are some strange injustices that occur on earth. The main task of him is

²⁶ Christoph Barth and Marie-Claire Barth-Frommel, *Teologi Perjanjian Lama 2*, New Edition (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2010), 81.

to accuse in order to seek justice. Then, there was a dialogue between God and haššātān.²⁷

- a. Introductory Dialogue: The LORD asks haššātān about what haššātān has been doing so far, and haššātān answers, that he has carried out a task from God²⁸ with the phrase: “From around and from the journey on earth.” The task of haššātān's is to observe whether there are events which according to his knowledge are incidents of injustice. According to haššātān, there was an injustice related to Job's situation.
- b. Dialogue about Job: God begins the dialogue about Job with a rhetorical question, namely, whether Job's life is also the focus of haššātān observations? Of course haššātān pays attention to Job's life, because according to haššātān, this is an example of injustice. First of all, God gave praise to such pious Job. This statement of God was refuted by haššātān, because according to him, this is a form of injustice. The basis of the argument lies in God's protection of Job, which according to haššātān is a form of excessive and injustice protection (1:12). For haššātān,

this excessive protection, which God gave to Job, was the cause of Job's piety, which haššātān mentions as follows:

- Protection of Job's property and self (You who fence (protect) around him and around his house and around all his possessions).
- Job's efforts are always made successful, so that Job's wealth will increase more and more (that you bless his hands and what he has (the land) is widening on the earth).

Haššātān questions the law of cause and effect again. In this law it is postulated, that those who fear God will get protection and blessings, while those who do ungodly will get suffering. With reverse evidence haššātān argues, that precisely because of protection and blessings, Job remains pious, and because there is no blessing for himself, the wicked will continue to do wickedness. So it was God's action towards Job that haššātān called a form of injustice. For that haššātān comes to a conclusion in the form of a rhetorical question: “Was it nothing that Job feared God?” Of course the haššātān an-

²⁷ This part of the interpretation is based on the structural analysis that has been done previously.

²⁸ *Haššātān* is described as a helper of Allah (not an enemy of Allah and Job) who is assigned to “patrol”

the whole earth to become God's “spy”, and then report it to Allah. See C. L. Seow, *Job 1-21: Interpretation and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2013), 256.

swer to this rhetorical question is “of course Job will not fear God!”

- c. Statement of Judge’s Decision: The Judge granted the accuser’s request. He decided that everything that Job had was in the hands of the accuser. Thus, the accuser can carry out the orders of the judge, namely by carrying out the execution. The narrative sentence “go *haššātān* before the Lord” is a form of execution statement based on the Judge’s decision.

Based on this explanation, the position of *haššātān* here is not in a very negative position as it is generally interpreted, that he is a devil, an evil being who basically wants to tempt humans. *Haššātān* must be placed in a neutral position, not in a wrong or right position. In this position, *haššātān* is only ordered by God in his capacity as a servant of God. Where, on his way, he found a man who was pious and rich. For that *haššātān* can think, that maybe it could

be, if Job experienced adversity, then he would leave his piety. Perhaps Job’s piety was due to a comfortable and prosperous life. This one heavenly being came to the LORD and reported the results of his journey into the world on the orders of the LORD. Because in this conversation with God, still in the process of seeking justice, he accused Job, one of these heavenly beings is called *haššātān*. So the word *haššātān* should not be translated as satan or devil,²⁹ but with the prosecutor.³⁰ God is the Judge in this court. The prosecutor came to the Judge to sue the defendant, in this case was Job. After the decision was carried out, Job experienced tribulation. It was in that adversity that the defendant went to God to seek justice. In the end, God Himself came to Job and gave His justice to Job. So the ancient world of judgment is the background for not only chapters 1 and 2, but the entire book, from chapters 1 to 42.³¹

²⁹ If this is a devil or satans, then the word name *šātān* should be used which is of course without the article. However, the name *šātān* in the Old Testament is found only once, namely in 1 Chron. 21: 1. See Marshall H. Lewis, *Viktor Frankl and the Book of Job: A Search of Meaning* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick, 2019), 5.

³⁰ The word *haššātān* is not an evil being, usually identified as a satan or devil. This word has the defining article *ha*, so it is not a name word, but a noun or rather a word denoting a position. Look in Derek Kidner, *An Introduction to Wisdom Literature: The Wisdom of Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2005), 58.

³¹ Compared with Zechariah 3: 1 and Psalm 109: 6-7, that the *haššātān* who is the accuser or prosecutor

stands to the right of the accused in a trial. Or see also other commentaries on Zech. 3:1 almost all translations translate *hassatan* as satan/devil. However, the context of the book of Zechariah is post-exilic, where satan has acquired a negative connotation. The atmosphere described here is clearly a court atmosphere. There appear strong statements. Of course it is different from that in the book of Job. A somewhat similar context can be found in 1 Chron. 21:1 which mentions satan (without the password *ha*) as the instigator of David, in contrast to that recorded in 2 Sam. 24:1 which calls God an instigator. The difference is, of course, because the writer of Chronicles was “reluctant” to mention God as the cause of David’s sin so that he “created” another figure, namely satan, so that God would not be blamed. So here it cannot be concluded

CONCLUSION

As a final conclusion, the dialogue and the setting of this dialogue in the sky is a court atmosphere attended by the Judge (God) and the prosecutor (haššātān), that the prosecutor stated that there was an act of injustice that occurred in the life of the accused (Job) which was committed by God (as well as the accused), which is also a discussion of theodicies. In the end, the Judge gave a fair decision to the prosecutor, namely that the protection was revoked.

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that the position of satan is neutral, as the messenger of God. Whereas in Ps. 109:6-7, almost all translated versions, except the KJV, do not translate as "satan",

but "accuser". However, notice in this Psalm it does not use the article ha, just as in 1 Chron. 21:1, in contrast to the book of Job.

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