

KEY

Archer = A Survey of Old Testament Introduction (Gleason Archer). Chicago: Moody Press, 2007.

Ash = Job: The Wisdom of the Cross (Christopher Ash). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014.

BBC = The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament. Edited by John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews and Mark W. Chavalas. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

Carson, D.A. Carson, How Long O Lord? 2d edition. Baker Academic, 2006.

Frame = John Frame, Systematic Theology, P&R Publishing, 2013.

Grudem = Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, Zondervan, 1994.

Harrison = Introduction to the Old Testament (R.K. Harrison). Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969.

K&D = Keil, C.F. and Delitzsch, F. in the Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, Vol 2. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989.

Kaiser = Walter C. Kaiser in The Majesty of God in the Midst of Innocent Suffering.

Swindoll = A Man of Heroic Endurance: Job (Charles Swindoll). Nashville, TN. W Publishing Group, 2004.

Talbert = *Beyond Suffering: Discovering the Message of Job* (Layton Talbert). Bob Jones University Press, 2007.

TWOT = The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (R. Laird Harris; Gleason L. Archer, Jr.; Bruce Waltke). Chicago: Moody Press, 1980. Two Volumes.

Walton = Old Testament Today. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004.

Basic English Diagram / Structure

1 Then

Job answered the LORD
and said,

2

“I know
that You can do all things,
and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.

3

‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’

“Therefore I have declared
that which I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me,
which I did not know.”

4

‘Hear, now,
and I will speak;
I will ask You,
and You instruct me.’

5

“I have heard of You
by the hearing of the ear;
but now my eye
sees You;

6

Therefore
I retract,
and I repent
in dust and ashes.”

TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

ENGLISH TRANSLATION (NASB95):

42:1-6 1 Then Job answered the LORD and said, 2 “I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. 3 ‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’ “Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.” 4 ‘Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me.’ 5 “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You; 6 Therefore I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes.”

PASSAGE OUTLINE:

Bible Knowledge Commentary

4. JOB'S SECOND REPLY TO GOD (42:1-6)

UBS Handbook Series

Job's Final Response Is Repentance Job 42:1-6

Be Patient: Job (Warren W. Wiersbe)

5. Job's second response (Job 42:1-6)

The New American Commentary: Robert L. Alden

I. THE LORD FINALLY SPEAKS TO JOB (38:1-42:6)

- A. Job's First Repentance (40:3-5)
- B. Job's Second Repentance (42:1-6)

Job (Charles Swindoll)

I. Full Repentance for all the Right Reasons (42:1-6)

Job: The Wisdom of the Cross (Christopher Ash)

I. Job's Response (42:1-6)

Biblical Studies: Job (Sam Storms)

D. Job's Second Response—42:1-6

Beyond Suffering (Layton Talbert)

- I. Bowing Before God —42:1-6
 - A. Job's Response: Retraction and Repentance
 1. God is Sovereign and Just (v. 2)
 2. I Spoke in Ignorance, but Now I Know Better (vv. 3-5)
 3. Repent and Submit (v. 6)
 - B. Job's Sin: Retrospect and Review
 - C. A Word to the Unconverted and the Converted
 - D. "Now Mine Eye Seeth Thee:" An Afterthought

Clines adds as to the structure:

Its structure is threefold: (1) Job acknowledges the omnipotence of Yahweh (v 2), (2) he accepts that he has intruded into an area in which he has no competence (v 3), and (3) having heard Yahweh's speeches, he abandons his case against God and determines to resume his normal life (vv 4-6)

PASSAGE OUTLINE:

- I. Job's Realization: Let God be God (vv. 1-2)
 - A. Knowing (cf. v. 3c)
 - B. Fulness of His Perfect Attributes
 - C. Context of Suffering
- II. Job's Recognition: Ignorance of the Wonderful (v. 3)
- III. Job's Reeducation: Learning as Discipleship (v. 4)
- IV. Job's Revival: Hearing Versus Seeing (v. 5)
- V. Job's Repentance: Regret and Redirection (v. 6)

SERMON OUTLINE:

- I. Job's Second Reply to God: When Suffering Means Surrender
 - A. Job's Realization: God Cannot be Overcome (42:1-2)
 - 1. Two things that Job recognized in verse 2
 - a. God is omnipotent (2a)
 - b. God is teleological (2b)
 - B. Job's Recognition: Job Admits Ignorance (42:3)
 - C. Job's Reeducation: Job is Teachable (42:4)
 - D. Job's Revival: Job Now Sees (42:5)
 - E. Job's Repentance: Job Drops His Legal Case (42:6)

Concluding Thoughts:

- 1. Sometimes Suffering Means Surrender
- 2. God Never Gives Up on Family
- 3. Experiencing God Means We Truly Know Him

PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what is the passage talking about): Job's repentance

PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what is the passage saying about what it's talking about): is evidenced by his change of mind and heart

PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text): Job Now Understands

CENTRAL PROPOSITION (OR IDEA) OF THE SERMON: Sometimes Suffering Means Surrender

SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE: Job's Second Reply to God: When Suffering Means Surrender

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

Many views have been held regarding the meaning of Job's final statement. Habel summarizes four positions that are taken by interpreters: (a) That it represents a complete surrender of Job's will to the will of God. God's self-disclosure causes Job to repent. (b) That Job perceives God in a new way, recognizes his control over the universe, and so is reconciled to God and reaffirms his faith. (c) That Job's final confession is part of the irony of the book. Job's insights have exposed God as "a blind force and a blustering orator." In spite of his innocence Job confesses, and his confession further exposes the duplicity of God. (d) That Job's final speech is his closing act of defiance. Job now sees God as he really is, unjust, unfeeling, and cruel. And he rejects a deity that confronts his cries for justice with proud boastings and irrelevant questions.

Habel takes the position that the conflict between Job and God is resolved in such a way as to preserve the integrity of each. In his first speech (chapter 38) God challenges Job to demonstrate his superior wisdom. This results in Job's first confession (40:3–5), which vindicates God's rule over the universe. In his second reply Job, who has been insistent that God appear in court with him, concludes that God's appearance is sufficient, and a declaration of Job's innocence is no longer required. In this way Job's integrity is also vindicated, and so he can repent in dust and ashes. [William David Reyburn, *A Handbook on the Book of Job*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 769–770]

The genre of the speech is, unsurprisingly, that of the legal disputation. [David J. A. Clines, *Job 38–42*, vol. 18B, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2011), 1211]

Clines contends that Job simply gives up his case against YHWH (he's not really repentant). I don't concur, but it is noteworthy:

In his reply to the first divine speech (40:3–5), brief though it was, Job has said that he stands by what he has previously argued, and he will not reiterate his case. This reply to the second divine speech goes one step further, in saying that he is abandoning his suit against Yahweh (if that is indeed how v 6a is to be read); but, just as in 40:3–5, he does not withdraw a word he has said, he does not admit that God is in the right or that he is in the wrong, he does not confess to any sins or apologize for what he has said. This reading, it must be admitted, is not accepted by all; given that this final reply by Job is hugely important for the understanding of the book as a whole, it is truly tantalizing that it is so cryptic and ambiguous. David J. A. Clines, *Job 38–42*, vol. 18B, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2011), 1212]

See Clines for more data on his view, as well as others who hold similar views.

VERSES 42:1-2

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

1 Then Job answered the LORD and said, 2 “I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

1 Then Job answered the LORD and said: 2 “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

1 Then Job replied to the LORD: 2 I know that You can do anything and no plan of Yours can be thwarted.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

1 Then Job replied to the LORD: 2 “I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

1 Then Job answered the LORD and said,

Note again the content of the Lord’s two replies to Job. (The Almighty is Lord of the Great and Terrible.)

Note also Job’s first reply which was briefer and devoid of repentance:

Job 40:3–5 3 Then Job answered the LORD and said, 4 “Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to You? I lay my hand on my mouth. 5 “Once I have spoken, and I will not answer; Even twice, and I will add nothing more.”

2 “I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.

Note the two ideas in this verse: 1) God’s omnipotence; 2) God works teleologically. Job now “knows” this (*yada*). Note experiential aspect of *yada*.

Purpose translates a word meaning “plan or idea”—anything that God plans to do will be done. [UBS Handbook, 770]

Sovereignty. Yahweh is indeed subject to no law or principle. He is *ex lex*.

Matthew 19:26 And looking at them Jesus said to them, “With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

Daniel 4:35 “All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’

Note what Job doesn't say. He doesn't say that now he understands suffering / why he suffered / why there seems to be so much unjust activity in the world.

[Don't] assume that everything that takes place in God's universe ought to be explained to us. [Don't] assume that God owes us an explanation, that there cannot possibly be any good reason for God not to tell us everything we want to know immediately. [don't] assume that God Almighty should be more interested in giving us explanations than in being worshiped and trusted. [D.A. Carson, How Long O Lord, 152-53]

Not why but Who.

VERSES 42:3-4

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

3 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' "Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know." 4 'Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me.'

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

3 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. 4 'Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me.'

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

3 You asked, "Who is this who conceals My counsel with ignorance?" Surely I spoke about things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. 4 You said, "Listen now, and I will speak. When I question you, you will inform Me."

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

3 You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge?' Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. 4 "You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.'

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

3 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' "Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know."

These two verses are handled together, since they share the same problems of interpretation and translation adjustments. Verse 3a is a variant of 38:2, in which God asks Job "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?" In other words, "Job, who are you to question my wisdom ..." (TEV). Aside from some small differences in the verbs used in 38:2 and here, it seems out of place for Job to be asking 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?'

In order to deal with this verse, various approaches have been made. Some scholars delete verses 3 and 4 as marginal notes that have been incorporated later into the text. See NEB. Others take these two verses to be original. RSV puts verses 3a and 4 in quotation marks to show that Job is quoting God. But quotation marks are of little help to people hearing a text read. NJB makes a more complex adjustment by giving the implied answer to the question the Lord had asked Job in 38:2: "I was the man who misrepresented your intentions with my ignorant words." NJB explains this adjustment in a footnote. FRCL places "You said" at the beginning of verse 3: "You said: I dared to make your plans

obscure by speaking about things I was ignorant of.” The same is done at the beginning of verse 4. TEV is similar to FRCL: “You ask how I dare question ...” and “You told me to listen....” TEV uses indirect speech to make the passage smoother and more natural in English.

In fairness to the text a note should call attention to 38:2–3 and the translation adjustment required. For example, “In verses 3 and 4 Job is using some of God’s words from 38:2 and 3 to reply to him.” Verse 3a may also be expressed, for example, “You asked me how I could doubt your wisdom” or “You asked me, ‘What right have you to question my wise way of doing things?’ ”

The second line of verse 3 is Job’s own statement, which is a reason clause beginning with Therefore or “because of that, accordingly, on that account.” Uttered means “talked about, said.” In effect Job says “Because of that I talked about things I knew nothing of.” The subject of the final line of verse 3 is in apposition with line b. Things too wonderful translates “great things” and TEV “ marvels too great.” Job confesses that these “great things” are beyond his ability to know. [UBS Handbook]

We should note the term Job uses of his speaking without understanding. הִפִּיחַ *hiph* is not the ordinary word for “speak” or “utter,” but refers rather to informing or declaring; it is especially used of announcing things not previously known before (as in 1:15; 12:7; 36:9) or things kept secret (as in 11:6; 38:18) (cf. BDB, 616b §2), and is thus almost like “reveal.” [David J. A. Clines, 1215]

Job quoted God’s question Who is this that obscures My counsel without knowledge? to infer that God was right. Job had spoken without knowledge (as Elihu had said, 34:35; 35:16); he talked about things beyond his comprehension, things too wonderful (cf. “wonders” in 37:14) or awesome in creation for him to know. Job now discarded his complaints about God’s inability to rule the world with justice. The idea that he could boldly refute any of God’s trumped-up charges (23:4–7; 31:35–36) was now abandoned. [Roy B. Zuck, “Job,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 774]

Again Job quoted the Lord, this time citing God’s challenge at the beginning of each of His two speeches (38:3; 40:7): I will question you, and you shall answer Me. This quotation implied an admission that Job was unable to answer any of the Sovereign’s barrage of rhetorical questions. Job admitted to flunking God’s biology examinations. [Bible Knowledge Commentary, 774]

Job’s second remark consists of a quotation of Yahweh’s words followed by his own response to them; by the citation form, “Job is making quite explicit that he is responding formally to the challenge of Yahweh as his adversary” (Habel). The first colon repeats

(with one omission) the words of 38:2, “Who is this who obscures the Design by words without knowledge?” Most translations make this into a quotation of Yahweh’s words, to which Job responds in the remainder of the verse, but some commentators think it is an editorial gloss (cf. Rowley). [David J. A. Clines, 1214]

Note Clines’ translation: “To be sure, I made my depositions—without understanding—concerning things too wonderful for me—which I did not know.

One important legal term occurs in v 3, where I have translated הִגַּדְתִּי “I made my depositions” (הִגַּדְתִּי hiph). The term has been used by Job in 31:37, where he said that if only he could encounter God face to face in a legal setting he would “give him an account (הִגַּדְתִּי hiph) of [his] steps,” i.e., he would set out in detail the evidence of his life that would prove him an innocent man. [David J. A. Clines, 1211]

Psalm 131:1–2 1 O LORD, my heart is not proud, nor my eyes haughty; Nor do I involve myself in great matters, Or in things too difficult for me. 2 Surely I have composed and quieted my soul; Like a weaned child rests against his mother, My soul is like a weaned child within me. Cf. Deut. 29:29.

Wonderful: God’s Power and God’s Wisdom.

4 ‘Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me.’

Verse 4 repeats with slight variations 33:31a; 38:3b; 40:7b. [UBS Handbook, 771–772]

Job again quotes Yahweh. But only the words “I will question you, and you shall answer me” have been spoken by Yahweh (at the beginning of both his speeches, 38:3 and 40:7). The words “Listen, and I will speak” are not Yahweh’s, but Elihu’s, in 33:31. Has Job then confused Yahweh with his self-avowed spokesman Elihu? Or has the poet forgotten what Elihu said? Or should we make nothing of this little discrepancy? Probably the last option is the best. [David J. A. Clines, 1215–1216]

Teachability.

VERSES 42:5

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

5 “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You;

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

5 I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you;

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

5 I had heard rumors about You, but now my eyes have seen You.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

5 My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

5 “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You;

Having grieved over his losses, Job now grieved over his sin.

Peake found it “the supreme lesson of the book ... Happy, even in his pain, that he has found himself and his God, he would rather suffer, if God willed it, than be in health and prosperity. He knows that all is well, he and his sufferings have their place in God’s inscrutable design; why should he seek to understand it? In childlike reverence he acknowledges it to be far beyond him.” [Peake, A. S. Job, Introduction, Revised Version with Notes, and Index. CB. Edinburgh: T. C. & E. C. Jack, 1905]

“His intellectual problem is unsolved, for he has transcended it.” [Rowley, H. H. Job. NCB. Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1970]

See Clines for a minority position that sees Job’s words as less than repentant and more that he has simply been worn down and now gives up knowing he can’t win against YHWH.

When Isaiah “saw the King, the LORD Almighty,” he cried, “Woe to me!” Job’s response in the next verse is less dramatic but equally sincere and profound. [Robert L. Alden, 408]

VERSES 42:6

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

6 Therefore I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

6 therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

6 Therefore I take back my words and repent in dust and ashes.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

6 Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

6 Therefore I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes.”

ESV: 6 therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

NIV: 6 Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.”

HCSB: 6 Therefore I take back my words and repent in dust and ashes.

“Retract” — morphology = וָשַׁב

The verb abhor (“despise,” NIV, ESV, NKJV mar.) has no object. Most translations supply “myself” (KJV, NKJV, NIV) to give the sense of self-abnegation. That is a possible reading, but not the most likely. The verb (*ma'as*) means “refuse, reject;” but the omission of an object is curious. But the immediate and larger context (emphasizing Job's uninformed and ill-advised words) suggests a meaning that brings closure to the legal battle that began with Job's challenge and culminated in God's answer. Job is “abhorring” his rash and inappropriate words. A better rendering would be simply “Therefore I retract [my words]” (NASB). Job is recanting, withdrawing all charges, dropping his case.” [Talbert, 221]

The focus is on words and the underlying attitudes (the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart). Job had decided it wise to speak no more (40:4-5). Note the problem with Job's words and the difference between “windy words” and those that cut deeper. “The emphasis on Job's speech punctuates the interrogation from God's initial confrontation (38:2-3) to God's summary charge (40:2,8), to Job's response (40:3-5; 42:1-6).” [Talbert, 222]

The following bullet points are taken from Talbert, 222:

* Job is rebuked for uttering “*words* without knowledge” (38:2).

- * Job is challenged to *tell* God what he knows since he has so much understanding (38:4,18).
- * Job is charged with *contending* with the Almighty, *correcting* Him, and *rebuking* God (40:2)—all verbal actions.
- * Job is accused of effectively *condemning* God in order to justify himself (40:8)—a verbal action.
- * Job confesses, “Behold, I am vile; what shall I *answer* thee? I will *lay mine hand upon my mouth*. Once have I *spoken*; but I will not *answer*; yea, twice [I have spoken]; but I will *proceed* [to speak] no further” (40:3-4).
- * Job repents, “Therefore have I *uttered* what I understood not [and *spoken*] things too wonderful for me, which I knew not” (42:3).
- * Job retracts his words (42:6a).

This is one of the most important verses in the book, if not the most important. As a result of seeing God, Job “hated/despised” himself, a much stronger reaction than the “unworthy” of 40:4. Then he “repented in dust and ashes,” an outward demonstration of his inward contrition and the death of his own opinions.¹³⁸ He deeply regretted the presumption of his foolish words. “Repent” and “comfort” are both translations of the same word, but certainly this context expects repentance.¹³⁹ None of the arguments of his friends could elicit this response, largely because their accusations were off the mark and their logic flawed. It was not his sin that brought about the suffering as they had claimed. Nevertheless, his confrontation with the Lord did bring about a change of mind and an expansion and deepening of his knowledge of God. Most conversions come not by way of apologetics but as people see the Lord and hear him through his Word.

138 A. Wolters would read the preposition לַע as לְע, “child.” “ ‘A Child of Dust and Ashes’ (Job 42, 6b),” ZAW 102 (1990): 116–19. It is an unconvincing proposal.

139 Usually the niph'al is “repent,” and the piel is “comfort.” Cf. 2:11. D. J. O’Connor, however, argues for “I am consoled” even though he was still “in dust and ashes.” “Job’s Final Word—‘I Am Consoled ...’ (42:6b),” ITQ 50 (1983/84): 181. W. Morrow believes that the word was chosen for its ambiguity (“Consolation, Rejection, and Repentance in Job 42:6,” JBL 105 [1986]: 225).

Robert L. Alden, Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 408–409.

Job’s second act is to repent in dust and ashes. In 2:8 Job is depicted as sitting among the ashes. In 2:12 Job’s friends see his condition, and to express their grief they sprinkle dust on their heads. In 30:19 Job compares his misery to dust and ashes. Sitting in dust and ashes and putting them on the head were rituals of mourning and repentance. See 2 Samuel 13:19; Isaiah 58:5; Jeremiah 6:26. [UBS Handbook, 772]

“Fallen men and women, I believe, can have no just idea what a vile thing sin is in the sight of that God whose handiwork is absolutely perfect—perfect whether we look through telescope or microscope; perfect in the formation of a mighty planet like Jupiter, with his satellites, keeping time to a second as he rolls round the sun; perfect in the formation of the smallest insect that crawls over a foot of ground. But let us nevertheless settle it firmly in our minds that sin is “the abominable thing that God hates”; that God “is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and cannot look upon that which is evil?”; that the least transgression of God’s law makes us “guilty of all?”; that “the soul that sins shall die?”; that “the wages of sin is death?”; that God will “judge the secrets of men?”; that there is a worm that never dies and a fire that is not quenched; that “the wicked shall be turned into hell?” and “shall go away into everlasting punishment?”; and that “nothing that defiles shall in any wise enter?” heaven.” (JC Ryle, Holiness)

Now Job was willing to trust the Sovereign, whose ways are perfect (Ps. 18:30), even when he could not understand.

Retract and repent correlate to each other. Job doesn’t say, “Now I get it,” but, “Now I repent.”

He does not repent of sins that have allegedly brought on the suffering; he repents of his arrogance in impugning God’s justice, he repents of the attitude whereby he simply demands an answer, as if such were owed him. He repents of not having known God better . . .” [D.A. Carson, *How Long O Lord*, 153]

According to Clines, “only in Jer 31:19 is נחם used of human repentance in the usual sense.” Generally it is used of God relenting. (Clines argues it means something else here.)_ However, I see no reason why it should not carry the meaning it does in Jer. 31.

It is important to note that Job did not confess any overt sins such as those Eliphaz had accused him of (22:2–11) nor any covert sins as Bildad has implied (8:11–18). The text does not, in fact, specify what Job “repented” of. Most who have come this far in the book say that Job confessed a bad attitude, a touch of arrogance, or mild blasphemy. I prefer to say that he confessed that his God had been too small. He needed the theophany to remind him of the fact that the God of the universe and the Creator of all creatures is greater, grander, higher, and wiser than a mortal can imagine, much less challenge. [Robert L. Alden, 407–408]

The second verb should be distinguished from others that can be translated “repent.” Eliphaz, working under the assumption that Job was guilty of great sin, urged him to “repent” (NIV: “return” in 22:23; *šub*)—that is, to change his behavior. In 42:5, Job does not suggest behavior change, but rather wishes to retract his previous statements. He employs the same verb and form used when God “changes his mind” (e.g., Ex. 32:14; Jer. 4:28; 18:10; Joel 2:13; Jonah 3:10). While it is a difficult word to translate into English, many of its occurrences take place in situations involving regret. It would not be misguided to see in Job’s statements that he regrets his previous statements, his characterization of God, his presumptuous belief in his own understanding, and his

arrogant challenges. [John H. Walton and Kelly Lemon Vizcaino, *The NIV Application Commentary: Job*, ed. Terry Muck et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 432]

Job was not suffering because of sin. Job's words do, however, convey a tacit admission that God (and, therefore, Elihu) was right: Job had sinned in his response to his suffering. He had contended with God as though He were the One at fault—just like Elihu (33:14) and God (40:2) said. He had condemned God—just as Elihu (34:17) and God (40:8) said. And he had spoken excessively and ignorantly about God—just as Elihu (34:35; 35:16) and God (38:2; 42:3) said. [Talbert, 221-22]

Some (Janzen, Clines) see “in dust and ashes” in the sense of “concerning dust and ashes” (i.e. Job is finished grieving and ready to move on).