

KEY

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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.

Bush = Bush, Frederick. Ruth/Esther in the Word Biblical Commentary, Vol 9. Edited by David H. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker. Dallas: Word Books, 1996.

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.

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

Basic English Diagram / Structure

9:1 Then Job answered,
2 “In truth
 I know that this is so;
But how can a man
 be in the right
 before **God**?
3 “If one wished to dispute with **Him**,
 He could not answer **Him**
 once in a thousand times.
4 “Wise in heart and mighty in strength,
 Who has defied **Him** without harm?
5 “It is **God**
 who removes the mountains,
 they know not how,
When **He** overturns them
 in His anger;
6 Who shakes the earth
 out of its place,
 And its pillars tremble;
7 Who commands
 the sun not to shine,
And sets a seal
 upon the stars;
8 Who alone
 stretches out the heavens
 And tramples down
 the waves of the sea;
9 Who makes
 the Bear,
 Orion
 and the Pleiades,
 And the chambers of the south;
10 Who does great things,
 unfathomable,
And wondrous works
 without number.
11 “Were **He** to pass by me,
 I would not see **Him**;
Were **He** to move past me,
 I would not perceive **Him**.
12 “Were **He** to snatch away,
 who could restrain **Him**?
Who could say to **Him**,
‘What are You doing?’

- 13 “God will not
 turn back His anger;
Beneath Him crouch
 the helpers of Rahab.
- 14 “How then can I answer Him,
 And choose my words before Him?
15 “For though I were right,
 I could not answer;
 I would have to implore
 the **mercy** of my judge.
- 16 “If I called
 and He answered me,
I could not believe
 that He was listening to my voice.
- 17 “For He bruises me with a tempest
 And multiplies my wounds without cause.
- 18 “He will not allow me to get my breath,
 But saturates me with bitterness.
- 19 “If it is a matter of power,
 behold, He is the strong one!
And if it is a matter of justice,
 who can summon Him?
- 20 “Though I am righteous,
 my mouth will condemn me;
Though I am guiltless,
 He will declare me guilty.
- 21 “I am guiltless;
I do not take notice of myself;
I despise my life.
- 22 “It is all one;
 therefore I say,
 ‘He destroys the guiltless and the wicked.’
- 23 “If the scourge kills suddenly,
 He mocks the despair of the innocent.

- 24 “The earth is given into the hand of the wicked;
 He covers the faces of its judges.
 If it is not He,
 then who is it?
- 25 “Now my days are swifter than a runner;
 They flee away,
 they see no good.
- 26 “They slip by like reed boats,
 Like an eagle that swoops on its prey.
- 27 “Though I say,
 ‘I will forget my complaint,
 I will leave off my sad countenance and be cheerful,’
- 28 I am afraid of all my pains,
 I know that You will not acquit me.
- 29 “I am accounted wicked,
 Why then should I toil in vain?
- 30 “If I should wash myself with snow
 And cleanse my hands with lye,
- 31 Yet You would plunge me into the pit,
 And my own clothes would abhor me.
- 32 “For He is not a man
 as I am
 that I may answer Him,
 That we may go to court together.
- 33 “There is no **umpire** between us,
 Who may lay his hand upon us both.
- 34 “Let Him remove His rod from me,
 And let not dread of Him terrify me.
- 35 “Then I would speak
 and not fear Him;
 But I am not like that in myself.
- 10:1 “I loathe my own life;
 I will give full vent to my complaint;
 I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.
- 2 “I will say to God,
 ‘Do not condemn me;
 Let me know why You contend with me.

3 ‘Is it right for You indeed to oppress,
 To reject the labor of Your hands,
 And to look favorably
 on the schemes of the wicked?

4 ‘Have You eyes of flesh?
 Or do You see as a man sees?
5 ‘Are Your days as the days of a mortal,
 Or Your years as man’s years,
6 That You should seek for my guilt
 And search after my sin?
7 ‘According to Your knowledge
 I am indeed not guilty,
 Yet there is no deliverance from Your hand.
8 ‘Your hands fashioned and made me altogether,
 And would You destroy me?
9 ‘Remember now, that You have made me as clay;
 And would You turn me into dust again?
10 ‘Did You not pour me out like milk
 And curdle me like cheese;
11 Clothe me with skin and flesh,
 And knit me together with bones and sinews?
12 ‘You have granted me life and lovingkindness;
 And Your care has preserved my spirit.

13 ‘Yet these things
 You have concealed in Your heart;
 I know that this is within You:

14 If I sin, then
 You would take note of me,
 And would not acquit me of my guilt.
15 ‘If I am wicked,
 woe to me!
And if I am righteous,
 I dare not lift up my head.
 I am sated with disgrace and conscious of my misery.
16 ‘Should my head be lifted up,
 You would hunt me like a lion;
 And again You would show Your power against me.
17 ‘You renew Your witnesses against me
 And increase Your anger toward me;
Hardship after hardship is with me.

18 ‘Why then have **You** brought me out of the womb?
 Would that I had died and no eye had seen me!
19 ‘I should have been as though I had not been,
 Carried from womb to tomb.’
20 “Would **He** not let my few days alone?
 Withdraw from me that I may have a little cheer
21 Before I go—and I shall not return—
 To the land of darkness and deep shadow,
22 The land of utter gloom as darkness itself,
 Of deep shadow without order,
 And which shines as the darkness.”

TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

ENGLISH TRANSLATION (NASB95):

9:1–35 1 Then Job answered, 2 “In truth I know that this is so; But how can a man be in the right before God? 3 “If one wished to dispute with Him, He could not answer Him once in a thousand times. 4 “Wise in heart and mighty in strength, Who has defied Him without harm? 5 “It is God who removes the mountains, they know not how, When He overturns them in His anger; 6 Who shakes the earth out of its place, And its pillars tremble; 7 Who commands the sun not to shine, And sets a seal upon the stars; 8 Who alone stretches out the heavens And tramples down the waves of the sea; 9 Who makes the Bear, Orion and the Pleiades, And the chambers of the south; 10 Who does great things, unfathomable, And wondrous works without number. 11 “Were He to pass by me, I would not see Him; Were He to move past me, I would not perceive Him. 12 “Were He to snatch away, who could restrain Him? Who could say to Him, ‘What are You doing?’ 13 “God will not turn back His anger; Beneath Him crouch the helpers of Rahab. 14 “How then can I answer Him, And choose my words before Him? 15 “For though I were right, I could not answer; I would have to implore the mercy of my judge. 16 “If I called and He answered me, I could not believe that He was listening to my voice. 17 “For He bruises me with a tempest And multiplies my wounds without cause. 18 “He will not allow me to get my breath, But saturates me with bitterness. 19 “If it is a matter of power, behold, He is the strong one! And if it is a matter of justice, who can summon Him? 20 “Though I am righteous, my mouth will condemn me; Though I am guiltless, He will declare me guilty. 21 “I am guiltless; I do not take notice of myself; I despise my life. 22 “It is all one; therefore I say, ‘He destroys the guiltless and the wicked.’ 23 “If the scourge kills suddenly, He mocks the despair of the innocent. 24 “The earth is given into the hand of the wicked; He covers the faces of its judges. If it is not He, then who is it? 25 “Now my days are swifter than a runner; They flee away, they see no good. 26 “They slip by like reed boats, Like an eagle that swoops on its prey. 27 “Though I say, ‘I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my sad countenance and be cheerful,’ 28 I am afraid of all my pains, I know that You will not acquit me. 29 “I am accounted wicked, Why then should I toil in vain? 30 “If I should wash myself with snow And cleanse my hands with lye, 31 Yet You would plunge me into the pit, And my own clothes would abhor me. 32 “For He is not a man as I am that I may answer Him, That we may go to court together. 33 “There is no umpire between us, Who may lay his hand upon us both. 34 “Let Him remove His rod from me, And let not dread of Him terrify me. 35 “Then I would speak and not fear Him; But I am not like that in myself.

Job 10:1–22 1 “I loathe my own life; I will give full vent to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. 2 “I will say to God, ‘Do not condemn me; Let me know why You contend with me. 3 ‘Is it right for You indeed to oppress, To reject the labor of Your hands, And to look favorably on the schemes of the wicked? 4 ‘Have You eyes of flesh? Or do You see as a man sees? 5 ‘Are Your days as the days of a mortal, Or Your years as man’s years, 6 That You should seek for my guilt And search after my sin? 7 ‘According to Your knowledge I am indeed not guilty, Yet there is no deliverance from Your hand. 8 ‘Your hands fashioned and made me altogether, And would You destroy me? 9 ‘Remember now, that You have made me as clay; And would You turn me into dust again? 10 ‘Did You not pour me out like milk And curdle me like cheese; 11 Clothe me with skin and flesh, And knit me together with bones and sinews? 12 ‘You have granted me life and lovingkindness; And Your care has preserved my spirit. 13 ‘Yet these

things You have concealed in Your heart; I know that this is within You: 14 If I sin, then You would take note of me, And would not acquit me of my guilt. 15 ‘If I am wicked, woe to me! And if I am righteous, I dare not lift up my head. I am sated with disgrace and conscious of my misery. 16 ‘Should my head be lifted up, You would hunt me like a lion; And again You would show Your power against me. 17 ‘You renew Your witnesses against me And increase Your anger toward me; Hardship after hardship is with me. 18 ‘Why then have You brought me out of the womb? Would that I had died and no eye had seen me! 19 ‘I should have been as though I had not been, Carried from womb to tomb.’ 20 “Would He not let my few days alone? Withdraw from me that I may have a little cheer 21 Before I go—and I shall not return— To the land of darkness and deep shadow, 22 The land of utter gloom as darkness itself, Of deep shadow without order, And which shines as the darkness.”

PASSAGE OUTLINE:

Bible Knowledge Commentary

- I. JOB'S FIRST REPLY TO BILDAD (CHAPS. 9–10)
 - A. God's awesome power (9:1–13)
 - B. God's arbitrary power (9:14–24)
 - C. Job's despair (9:25–35)
 - D. Job's desperation (chap. 10)
 - 1. Job's challenge to God (10:1–7)
 - 2. Job's reminder to God (10:8–12)
 - 3. Job's blaming of God (10:13–17)
 - 4. Job's request to God (10:18–22)

UBS Handbook Series

- 1. Job Sees No Way to Win His Case With God Job 9:1–4
- 2. Job Cannot Confront a Powerful God Job 9:5–13
- 3. It is Futile for Job to Attempt to Prove He is Innocent Job 9:14–24
- 4. Job Recognizes There is No One to Mediate Between Him and God Job 9:25–35
- 5. Job Accuses God of Being Unfair to His Creatures Job 10:1–7
- 6. Job Accuses God of Watching Over Him to Destroy Him Job 10:8–17
- 7. Job Asks God to Leave Him Alone As He is Near Death Job 10:18–22

The Outline Bible

- I. Job's Defense (9:1–10:22)
 - A. How Can Mortal Argue with God? (9:1–14)
 - 1. Job is frustrated because thought he feels he is innocent he cannot challenge such a mighty God
 - B. God destroys both the blameless and the wicked (9:15–22)
 - 1. Job argues that it doesn't matter if he is innocent because God attacks him without reason
 - C. If only there were a mediator (9:32–35)

- 1. Job longs for a mediator to bring him and God together to resolve the issue
- D. Why are you treating me so terribly (10:1-7)
 - 1. Job begins to formulate his complaint to God
- E. Did you create me to condemn me? (10:8-17)
 - 1. Job asks if God's plan was to destroy him even as his body was being formed in his mother's womb
- F. Better to never have been born (10:18-22)
 - 1. If Job was created only to be condemned it would be better to have died at birth

Biblical Studies: Job (Sam Storms)

I. Job's Second Speech (Job 9–10)

- A. Job's frustration at the prospect of disputing with God—9:1–20
 - 1. its futility—vv. 1–4
 - 2. the reasons—vv. 5–13
 - a. his creative prowess—vv. 5–10
 - b. his elusive presence—vv. 11–13
 - 3. its hopelessness—vv. 14–20
- B. Job laments God's apparent indifference—9:21–24
- C. Job laments the brevity of his life—9:25–31
- D. More frustration about disputing with God—9:32–35
- E. Job complains about God's inconsistency in dealing with him—10:1–17
- F. Job contemplates his death—10:18–22

The New American Commentary: Job (Robert L. Alden)

- I. Job: Though It Seems Hopeless, I Will Plead with God (9:1–10:22)
- A. God Is Incontestably Sovereign (9:1–13)
 - B. The Innocent Have No Access to God (9:14–20)
 - C. God Seems Distant and Unconcerned (9:21–24)
 - D. Life Is Brief, and the Innocent Cannot Win (9:25–31)
 - E. Negotiation Is Impossible (9:32–10:1)
 - F. Address to God (10:2–22)
 - 1. Condemned Without Charges (10:2–7)
 - 2. I Am Your Creation (10:8–12)
 - 3. God's Intolerance of All Sin (10:13–17)

Be Patient: Job (Warren W. Wiersbe)

I. Three painful questions (Job 9:1–10:22)

- A. “How can I be righteous before God?” (Job 9:1–13)
- B. “How can I meet God in court?” (Job 9:14–35)
 - 1. “If God came, what would I say?” (vv. 14–19)
 - 2. “If I try to be happy, what good will it do?” (vv. 25–31)
 - 3. “If only I had a mediator!” (vv. 32–35)
- C. “Why was I born?” (Job 10:1–22)

BASIC OUTLINE:

I. Courtroom Drama: How Can Job Be Exonerated Before Almighty God? (9:1-35)

A. Job Agrees with Eliphaz (1-2a)

B. Job Asks How Anyone Can Dispute with God (2b-24)

1. God’s Wisdom and Power (3-4)

- a. Wisdom Demonstrated in Cross-Examination (4)
- b. Power Demonstrated in Creation (5-10)

2. God’s Sovereignty (11-24)

- a. God Is Free to Move and Act (11-15)
- b. God Is Awesome in Power and Righteousness (16-21)
- c. God Is In Control of the Wicked (22-24)

C. Job Reflects On His Misery (25-35)

- 1. My Days Are a Blur (25-26)
- 2. Shall I Grin and Bear It? (27)
- 3. I Have No Hope of Acquittal (28-31)
- 4. Who Can Mediate For Me? (32-35)

II. Courtroom Drama: Job Resigns Himself to a Sentence of Death (10:1-22)

A. From Lament to Complaint (1-19)

- 1. Bitter Words from a Bitter Man (1-2)
- 2. Does God Favor the Wicked? (3)
- 3. Does God Reject the Innocent? (4-7)
- 4. Does God Destroy That Which He Created? (8-12)
- 5. Is God Capricious? (13-19)

B. Leave Me Alone to Die (20-22)

SERMON OUTLINE:

I. In the Courtroom With God: How Can Job Possibly Be Exonerated? (9:1-35)

A. Job's Agreement: I Know This is So! (1-2a)

B. Job's Argument: How Can Anyone Dispute with God? (2b-24)

1. God's Wisdom and Power (3-10)

- a. God's Wisdom Demonstrated in Cross-Examination (3)
- b. God's Power Demonstrated in Creation (5-10)

2. God's Sovereignty (11-24)

- a. God Is Free to Move and Act (11-15)
- b. God Is Awesome in Power and Righteousness (16-21)
- c. God Is In Control of the Wicked (22-24)
 - (a) Sudden Disaster
 - (b) Free reign of the wicked
 - (c) Judicial Injustice

C. Job's Affliction: I Am Most Miserable (25-35)

I. In the Courtroom With God: How Can Job Possibly Be Exonerated? (9:1-35)

A. Job's Agreement: I Know This is So! (1-2a)

B. Job's Argument: How Can Anyone Dispute with God? (2b-24)

The windy words of a sufferer won't leave the believer condemned in the courtroom of God.

C. Job's Affliction: I Am Most Miserable (25-35)

1. Hopeless Days (25-26)
2. Meaningless Existence (27-29)
3. Helpless Cleansing (30-31)
4. Nameless Mediator (32-35)
5. Relentless Discipline (34-35)

II. In the Courtroom With God: Job Resigns Himself to a Sentence of Death (10:1-22)

A. When Suffering Resist the Temptation to Complain (1-2)

1. Lament vs. Complaint (cf. Job in chapter 3)
2. "Windy words" and C.S. Lewis . . .

B. When Suffering Resist the Temptation to Question God's Purposes (3-12)

1. The Word "Favorably" = "to have a glowing face, to be radiant or to smile"
2. Why doesn't Job see his depravity - that he is utterly sinful?

C. When Suffering Resist the Temptation to Question God's Goodness (13-17)

1. Verse 13 is the door that opens up to verses 14-17

D. When Suffering Resist the Temptation to Give Up Hope (18-22)

1. Job questions why he was ever born (18-19)
2. Job wants God to leave him alone do die (20-22)

PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what is the passage talking about): Job's bitter reply to Bildad

PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what is the passage saying about what it's talking about): is set in a courtroom drama where Job discovers that he cannot contend with God

PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text): Job cannot judicially contend with God

CENTRAL PROPOSITION (OR IDEA) OF THE SERMON:

The windy words of a sufferer won't leave the believer condemned in the courtroom of God.

SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE: "In the Courtroom with God" (Parts 1/2/3)

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

Job's first reply to Bildad.

Cf. C. Ash intro/chapter heading for chapter 9: "Job's First Reply to Bildad: The Trouble-Maker Maker."

"It is possible to be wrong and to be right at the same time. God will say that Job has spoken rightly about him (42:7). And yet Job says a great many things about God that are not right. How are we to reconcile this apparent contradiction? When we listen to Job's speeches, we need to bear in mind the distinction between Job's perception and Job's heart. His heart is the heart of a believer, which is why the Lord commands and affirms him at the end, but his perceptions are partial and flawed. We hear in these speeches the honest grapplings of a real believer with a heart for God as he sees what he thought was a secure worldview crumble around him. This is why we will hear Job say some things that are plain wrong, and yet we hear him say them from a heart that is deeply right." [Ash, 139]

Note that Job believes in the sovereignty of God, but in such a sense that when something happens it's because God made it happen. He also believes that God is righteous (9:1a). However, Job sees unfairness in his life and concludes that God must be unjust, which is an enigma to him.

When bad things happen, who does them? We answered this question earlier in the study (cf. the "heavenly council" of chapters 1-2).

At some stage in his reign King David sinfully takes a census of the fighting men of Israel, a census that appears to be motivated by a desire for autonomy, to feel secure in his army rather than entrusting his safety to the Lord. So David does something evil. The question is, what supernatural power was at work to cause him to do it?

The answer is stated in two apparently contradictory ways. In the account of the books of Samuel we are told, "the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he [that is, the Lord] incited David against them, saying, 'Go number Israel and Judah'" (2 Samuel 24:1). But when the same event is recorded later by the Chronicler, he puts it in a strikingly different way: "Then Satan stood against Israel to and incited David to number Israel" (1 Chronicles 21:1). So, did the Lord incite David to do this or did Satan incite him to do this? The answer is, both but in different ways. The characteristic perspective of the writer of Samuel and Kings is that if something happens, it happens because God does it. This is Job's perspective. When the Chronicler says that Satan did it, he is not denying that the Lord did it. The Chronicler is not a dualist. He does not believe that Satan has an existence independent from the Lord or that he can exercise autonomy in his actions. But the Chronicler draws attention to the fact that this action is God's action by the agency of Satan. It is therefore God's action in a different way from some of God's other actions. If we may put it this way, some of God's actions express his character, while others are the outworking of his longer plan to deal with evil. When God acts in steadfast love and

faithfulness, these actions express his character directly. But when evil things happen, God is acting through the agencies of evil powers, and the actions do not reveal his character. They are part of his grand plan to turn evil to good, to defeat evil, but they do not immediately reveal his character." [Ash, 140]

Job does not recognize this distinction. Cf. Satan as a pawn in God's hands / on a leash that God holds.

Job is replying to Bildad's assertion that God is absolutely, unfailingly just (8:3,20).

VERSES 9:1-4

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

1 Then Job answered, 2 “In truth I know that this is so; But how can a man be in the right before God? 3 “If one wished to dispute with Him, He could not answer Him once in a thousand times. 4 “Wise in heart and mighty in strength, Who has defied Him without harm?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

1 Then Job answered and said: 2 “Truly I know that it is so: But how can a man be in the right before God? 3 If one wished to contend with him, one could not answer him once in a thousand times. 4 He is wise in heart and mighty in strength —who has hardened himself against him, and succeeded?—

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

1 Then Job answered: 2 Yes, I know what you’ve said is true, but how can a person be justified before God? 3 If one wanted to take Him to court, he could not answer God once in a thousand times. 4 God is wise and all-powerful. Who has opposed Him and come out unharmed?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

1 Then Job replied: 2 “Indeed, I know that this is true. But how can mere mortals prove their innocence before God? 3 Though they wished to dispute with him, they could not answer him one time out of a thousand. 4 His wisdom is profound, his power is vast. Who has resisted him and come out unscathed?

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Job Sees No Way to Win His Case With God [USB Handbook]

1 Then Job answered, 2a “In truth I know that this is so . . .

”The irony is intensified by Job’s use of a term which, in legal settings, has the force of solemn oath. For he begins with the word ‘truly,’ Hebrew ‘*omnam*, an adverbial form of the more familiar ‘*amen*.’ [Janzen, 90]

What is Job affirming as being true?

Job may be dismissing most of what Bildad has said as being common knowledge, and therefore TEV has “I’ve heard all that before.” However, Bildad has said that God does not pervert justice, whereas Job will argue the contrary. So we must understand a certain irony in Job’s reply. He does not mean that he agrees and accepts all that Bildad has said. The relationship between the two lines in verse 2 may be understood in different ways. Some take line b to be the object of the verb know in line a. For example, NEB translates

"Indeed this I know for the truth, that no man can win his case against God." Others make 2b a contrast with 2a, and so the thing which Job knows refers to the traditional wisdom expounded by Bildad in chapter 8. FRCL translates 2a "Certainly, I am well acquainted with this point of view," which is similar to TEV. In some languages this line may be rendered, for example, "Yes, I know well the path of your words" or "I certainly know the story your words tell." [UBS Handbook Series]

2b "... But how can a man be in the right before God?

But how can a man be just before God? Line b begins with a contrast in which Job picks up Eliphaz's question in 4:17, "Can mortal man be righteous before God?" The Hebrew verb *TsaDaq* is here translated be just and means to be righteous or to be in the right. It is used in the legal sense in Exodus 23:7. In 4:17 Eliphaz used it in the moral and religious sense. The entire thrust of chapter 9 has to do with the hopelessness of obtaining justice from God, and *TsaDaq* is therefore understood in the sense of being acquitted by winning a lawsuit against one's opponent, in this case God. [UBS Handbook Series]

Eliphaz asked a similar question earlier:

4:17 'Can mankind be just before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker?

However,

Job is not speaking as Paul would, of how a sinner might be 'justified' or declared righteous before God but of how a righteous person can be 'justified' or publicly vindicated by God. [David J. A. Clines, "Job," in New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition, ed. D. A. Carson et al., 4th ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 467]

3 "If one wished to dispute with Him, He could not answer Him once in a thousand times.

If one wished to contend with him: in Hebrew there are only third-person singular pronouns in verse 3, and in translation it will often be necessary to replace these with nouns. TEV, like RSV, understands that it is man who may wish to contend (argue a case, go to a law court) with God. One could not answer him once in a thousand times translates what is literally "with him he cannot answer him once in a thousand times." This is best expressed in TEV as "He (God) can ask a thousand questions that no one could ever answer," and TEV offers an alternative in the margin, "A man could ask him (God) a thousand questions and he (God) would not answer." RSV, like TEV text, assumes that God asks the questions which one could not answer. [UBS Handbook]

Who is answering who? Seems that it is God who is asking the 1000 questions of which man could not answer even one. Cf. the number of questions God asks Job at the end of the book.

When Job finally did meet God (Job 38–41), the Lord asked him seventy-seven questions! And Job couldn't answer one of them! His only response was to admit his

ignorance and shut his mouth in silence. [Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Patient*, “Be” Commentary Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 40.]

ESV If one wished to contend with him, one could not answer him once in a thousand times.
NCV Someone might want to argue with God, but no one could answer God, not one time out of a thousand.
NIV Though they wished to dispute with him, they could not answer him one time out of a thousand.
HCSB If one wanted to take Him to court, he could not answer God once in a thousand times.

“However, the natural sense of this passage is that we shall be so impeded when we come before God (that is, in combat against Him) that we shall not be able to answer a single charge out of a thousand which He will have made against us.” [Calvin, *Sermons from Job*, 51]

The picture here is of the lawcourt, where the plaintiff lays charges and the defendant counters with questions. If Job were to bring God to court, metaphorically speaking, he fears he would not be able to stand up to God’s counter-questions and arguments. [“Job,” in *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*]

4 “Wise in heart and mighty in strength, Who has defied Him without harm?

God has infinite wisdom and unlimited power. (cf. “Teflon Don”)

He is wise in heart: as usual in the Old Testament, heart here represents intelligence. The same expression is used in 37:24. The Hebrew does not specify the one who is wise in heart, but the following question makes clear that it refers to God and not to man. [UBS Handbook]

Rhetorical question. “Succeeded translates a form of the verb *shalam* meaning ‘to be safe, intact, whole.’” [UBS Handbook]

VERSES 9:5-13

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

5 “It is God who removes the mountains, they know not how, When He overthrows them in His anger; 6 Who shakes the earth out of its place, And its pillars tremble; 7 Who commands the sun not to shine, And sets a seal upon the stars; 8 Who alone stretches out the heavens And tramples down the waves of the sea; 9 Who makes the Bear, Orion and the Pleiades, And the chambers of the south; 10 Who does great things, unfathomable, And wondrous works without number. 11 “Were He to pass by me, I would not see Him; Were He to move past me, I would not perceive Him. 12 “Were He to snatch away, who could restrain Him? Who could say to Him, ‘What are You doing?’ 13 “God will not turn back His anger; Beneath Him crouch the helpers of Rahab.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

5 he who removes mountains, and they know it not, when he overturns them in his anger, 6 who shakes the earth out of its place, and its pillars tremble; 7 who commands the sun, and it does not rise; who seals up the stars; 8 who alone stretched out the heavens and trampled the waves of the sea; 9 who made the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades and the chambers of the south; 10 who does great things beyond searching out, and marvelous things beyond number. 11 Behold, he passes by me, and I see him not; he moves on, but I do not perceive him. 12 Behold, he snatches away; who can turn him back? Who will say to him, ‘What are you doing?’ 13 “God will not turn back his anger; beneath him bowed the helpers of Rahab.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

5 He removes mountains without their knowledge, overturning them in His anger. 6 He shakes the earth from its place so that its pillars tremble. 7 He commands the sun not to shine and seals off the stars. 8 He alone stretches out the heavens and treads on the waves of the sea. 9 He makes the stars: the Bear, Orion, the Pleiades, and the constellations of the southern sky. 10 He does great and unsearchable things, wonders without number. 11 If He passes by me, I wouldn’t see Him; if He goes right by, I wouldn’t recognize Him. 12 If He snatches something, who can stop Him? Who can ask Him, “What are You doing?” 13 God does not hold back His anger; Rahab’s assistants cringe in fear beneath Him!

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

5 He moves mountains without their knowing it and overthrows them in his anger. 6 He shakes the earth from its place and makes its pillars tremble. 7 He speaks to the sun and it does not shine; he seals off the light of the stars. 8 He alone stretches out the heavens and treads on the waves of the sea. 9 He is the Maker of the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades and the constellations of the south. 10 He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted. 11 When he passes me, I cannot see him; when he goes by, I cannot perceive him. 12 If he snatches away, who can stop him? Who can say to him, ‘What are you doing?’ 13 God does not restrain his anger; even the cohorts of Rahab cowered at his feet.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Job Cannot Confront a Powerful God [USB Handbook]

5 “It is God who removes the mountains, they know not how, When He overturns them in His anger; 6 Who shakes the earth out of its place, And its pillars tremble;

Providence. Picture of an earthquake (cf. Psalm 75:3).

Note secondary causation as it relates to how things occur (cf. God's providence).

Chaos out of stability, as in Job's life . . . Job sees creation turned upside down (rather than marveling in the order, he's focused on the disorder that comes from the fall, cf. Romans 8). Job knows that God is wise and powerful, but he's not so sure He is good.

Like the mountains who (as Job sees it) shake under the wrath of God (His “anger”), so Job's life has been shaken. Job interprets anything that's outside of the norm as being attributed to the sovereignty, yet anger, of God (v. 13).

7 Who commands the sun not to shine, And sets a seal upon the stars;

Heb. word for “shine” is also translated “rise” in other contexts. Could be either here (ESV has “rise”).

8 Who alone stretches out the heavens And tramples down the waves of the sea;

Cf. Isa. 44:24 which adds the words “by myself” and Col. 1:16 (X's deity).

Isaiah 44:24 Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, “I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, Stretching out the heavens by Myself And spreading out the earth all alone,

Trampled the waves of the sea: the RSV footnote reads “trampled the back of the sea dragon.” This reading derives from the assumption that Hebrew yam “sea” is to be identified here with Ugaritic yammu “sea dragon,” and the word waves, literally “heights,” is to be taken as meaning “back.” Another interpretation understands the expression to mean “the back of the sea.” Trample the waves does not refer to merely walking on the waves, but rather to subduing the sea, or controlling it. The same notion applies where “the sea dragon” replaces “the sea.” [UBS Handbook]

All these references to the world around—sun, stars, sea, heaven, and earth—attest to Job's monotheism. Unlike the neighbors of ancient Israel who attributed each of these domains to separate deities, Job and all the Bible's authors believed that God “alone” was responsible for their creation and regulation. [Robert L. Alden, Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 125.]

9 Who makes the Bear, Orion and the Pleiades, And the chambers of the south;

Here we see God's omnipotence as demonstrated in creation.

Who made the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades and the chambers of the south: in 38:31–32 the order of these constellations is reversed and the Hebrew term for the Bear is different. The Septuagint and Syriac reverse the order here also. Due to the inconsistent use of these names, there appears to have been no clear-cut identification for them, although Orion is more consistently identified by the name used here than the other two. Although the first three names in Hebrew do not identify with any certainty the three constellations suggested in RSV and others, translators are advised to use the names of these constellations in their own languages.

Bear may refer to either the Big Dipper or the Little Dipper, both being constellations in the region of the sky near the north celestial pole. Orion is a conspicuous constellation and can be located in the winter skies of the northern hemisphere by extending a line drawn from Polaris, the North Star, through the star Capella in the constellation Auriga. Pleiades is a small cluster of stars located in the shoulder of the bull in the constellation Taurus. If specific names for constellations are lacking or are too little known to be of any value to the reader, the translator may borrow these terms from a major language. If this would not be helpful, we may translate, for example, “He made the group of stars in the northern sky, the group of stars in the middle sky.” The former would apply to the Bear, and the latter to Orion and Pleiades.

And the chambers of the south: this expression does not seem to identify any constellation. Pope suggests that, since “chamber” is the source of the tempest in 37:9, the reference may be to the place from which the south winds blow. TEV and others understand it to be a general term for southern stars. In many languages it will be best to translate chambers of the south as in TEV, “stars of the south,” or “stars in the southern skies.” [UBS Handbook]

Four astral constellations are also God's making.³⁴ Some question surrounds these four terms. “Pleiades” is most certain. “Orion” translates a word that ordinarily means “fool” and is fairly certain. These star patterns and Ursa Major (“big bear,” also known as the Big Dipper) probably were known to peoples of the ancient Near East. On the translation of the first there is more diversity. The KJV's “Arcturus” is wrong. The NEB's and REB's “Aldebaran,” the brightest star of the Hyades, is a possibility, but “the Bear” has the most supporters. The least certain is the fourth, “the chambers of the south” (KJV, RV, ASV, RSV, etc.). “It could refer to the very bright section of the sky from Argus to Centauri that would have been visible on the southern horizon in Israel. It could also refer to the zodiac.³⁵ The first three are in 38:31 (cf. Amos 5:8). [New American Commentary]

10 Who does great things, unfathomable, And wondrous works without number.

Job agrees with Eliphaz's words in 5:9:

Who does great and unsearchable things, Wonders without number.

Ecclesiastes 11:5 Just as you do not know the path of the wind and how bones are formed in the womb of the pregnant woman, so you do not know the activity of God who makes all things.

11 “Were He to pass by me, I would not see Him; Were He to move past me, I would not perceive Him.

This section alternates between featuring God's Immanence and Transcendence.

In light of God's very visible workings, He Himself is invisible. You see the "cause" but you cannot see He that "effects" the cause.

12 “Were He to snatch away, who could restrain Him? Who could say to Him, ‘What are You doing?’

Job may be thinking of his children who were "snatched away."

Cf. 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?'

Cf. Job's Words:

23:8–9 8 "Behold, I go forward but He is not there, And backward, but I cannot perceive Him; 9 When He acts on the left, I cannot behold Him; He turns on the right, I cannot see Him.

13 “God will not turn back His anger; Beneath Him crouch the helpers of Rahab.

"anger" cf. v. 5b.

Rahab has been identified by some scholars with Leviathan in 3:8 and the sea monster in 7:12. It is a symbol of the sea and in particular the Red Sea, and so it stands for Egypt in Isaiah 30:7 and Psalm 87:4. In the Babylonian creation myth Rahab's helpers are the ones that help the monster Tiamat create chaos. Beneath him suggests submission, defeat.
[UBS Handbook]

VERSES 9:14-24

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

14 “How then can I answer Him, And choose my words before Him? 15 “For though I were right, I could not answer; I would have to implore the mercy of my judge. 16 “If I called and He answered me, I could not believe that He was listening to my voice. 17 “For He bruises me with a tempest And multiplies my wounds without cause. 18 “He will not allow me to get my breath, But saturates me with bitterness. 19 “If it is a matter of power, behold, He is the strong one! And if it is a matter of justice, who can summon Him? 20 “Though I am righteous, my mouth will condemn me; Though I am guiltless, He will declare me guilty. 21 “I am guiltless; I do not take notice of myself; I despise my life. 22 “It is all one; therefore I say, ‘He destroys the guiltless and the wicked.’ 23 “If the scourge kills suddenly, He mocks the despair of the innocent. 24 “The earth is given into the hand of the wicked; He covers the faces of its judges. If it is not He, then who is it?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

14 How then can I answer him, choosing my words with him? 15 Though I am in the right, I cannot answer him; I must appeal for mercy to my accuser. 16 If I summoned him and he answered me, I would not believe that he was listening to my voice. 17 For he crushes me with a tempest and multiplies my wounds without cause; 18 he will not let me get my breath, but fills me with bitterness. 19 If it is a contest of strength, behold, he is mighty! If it is a matter of justice, who can summon him? 20 Though I am in the right, my own mouth would condemn me; though I am blameless, he would prove me perverse. 21 I am blameless; I regard not myself; I loathe my life. 22 It is all one; therefore I say, ‘He destroys both the blameless and the wicked.’ 23 When disaster brings sudden death, he mocks at the calamity of the innocent. 24 The earth is given into the hand of the wicked; he covers the faces of its judges—if it is not he, who then is it?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

14 How then can I answer Him or choose my arguments against Him? 15 Even if I were in the right, I could not answer. I could only beg my Judge for mercy. 16 If I summoned Him and He answered me, I do not believe He would pay attention to what I said. 17 He batters me with a whirlwind and multiplies my wounds without cause. 18 He doesn’t let me catch my breath but soaks me with bitter experiences. 19 If it is a matter of strength, look, He is the Mighty One! If it is a matter of justice, who can summon Him? 20 Even if I were in the right, my own mouth would condemn me; if I were blameless, my mouth would declare me guilty. 21 Though I am blameless, I no longer care about myself; I renounce my life. 22 It is all the same. Therefore I say, “He destroys both the blameless and the wicked.” 23 When disaster brings sudden death, He mocks the despair of the innocent. 24 The earth is handed over to the wicked; He blindfolds its judges. If it isn’t He, then who is it?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

14 “How then can I dispute with him? How can I find words to argue with him? 15 Though I were innocent, I could not answer him; I could only plead with my Judge for mercy. 16 Even if I summoned him and he responded, I do not believe he would give me a hearing. 17 He would crush me with a storm and multiply my wounds for no reason. 18 He would not let me catch my breath but would overwhelm me with misery. 19 If it is a matter of strength, he is mighty! And if it is a matter of justice, who can challenge him? 20 Even if I were innocent, my mouth would condemn me; if I were blameless, it would pronounce me guilty. 21 “Although I am blameless, I have no concern for myself; I despise my own life. 22 It is all the same; that is why I say, ‘He destroys both the blameless and the wicked.’ 23 When a scourge brings sudden death, he mocks the despair of the innocent. 24 When a land falls into the hands of the wicked, he blindfolds its judges. If it is not he, then who is it?

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

It is Futile for Job to Attempt to Prove He is Innocent [USB Handbook]

14 “How then can I answer Him, And choose my words before Him? 15 “For though I were right, I could not answer; I would have to implore the mercy of my judge.

The setting is one of a courtroom. Job cannot legally contend with God.

Ecclesiastes 6:10–12 10 Whatever exists has already been named, and it is known what man is; for he cannot dispute with him who is stronger than he is. 11 For there are many words which increase futility. What then is the advantage to a man? 12 For who knows what is good for a man during his lifetime, during the few years of his futile life? He will spend them like a shadow. For who can tell a man what will be after him under the sun?
Cf. larger context of this chapter.

God is more powerful than the creation (mountains, etc.); He is more powerful than the beasts of the sea; therefore, how can Job (or any man) stand before Him?

The monster is helpless against God, and so by comparison how much less powerful would Job be against him! In 9:3 Job admits the impossibility of entering into a legal dispute with God. The same thought is renewed here with answer him. The same Hebrew verb [as in v. 15] will be repeated in verse 32, where “answer” means to defend oneself in a legal dispute. [UBS Handbook]

Verse 15:

Though I am innocent, I cannot answer him: innocent translates the Hebrew TsaDaq “to be righteous,” which also occurs in 4:17; 9:2, 20; 10:15; 15:14; 22:3; 34:5; 35:7; here it means innocent of wrongdoing, and therefore to be in the right in a lawsuit. (See also the language of a lawsuit in 11:2; 13:18; 40:8.). [UBS Handbook]

This helps differentiate what kind of righteousness Job is referencing (cf. v. 20). Note that sensitivity to sin may differ from the O.T. to the N.T. (cf. John 16:8). We also have N.T. revelation that upholds and expands upon total depravity. Yet, Job cries out for “mercy” (v. 15b).

16 “If I called and He answered me, I could not believe that He was listening to my voice.
17 “For He bruises me with a tempest And multiplies my wounds without cause. 18 “He will not allow me to get my breath, But saturates me with bitterness.

God will crush Job without a fair hearing.

“Bruises” = same word used in Genesis 3:15, “he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

“tempest” cf. the tempest that killed Job’s children. Ironically, it was out of a tempest that God addresses Job in 38:1 and 40:6.

Cf. 7:19 where Job complained that God gave him no time to swallow his spittle. Here he objects that God repeatedly attacks him without giving him time to catch his breath.

Bitterness. Stuck. The frustration of having a total lack of control.

Using a variation of the same word (“misery”), Job saw himself like Naomi, who wanted to be called “Mara/bitter” (Ruth 1:20). [New American Commentary]

“Without cause” cf. 1:9; 2:4 where the same Hebrew word is used (*hinnam*).

19 “If it is a matter of power, behold, He is the strong one! And if it is a matter of justice, who can summon Him?

El Shaddai (cf. chapter 8) . . .

If it were a legal matter, Job felt that no one could issue God a summons to appear in court.46 God is, as it were, above the law. [New American Commentary]

Cf. Ex Lex. God is above the Law (nothing is above God) but that doesn’t mean that God violates his very nature, an impossibility.

20 “Though I am righteous, my mouth will condemn me; Though I am guiltless, He will declare me guilty.

Cf. NIV “Even if I were innocent, my mouth would condemn me; if I were blameless, it would pronounce me guilty.” God refers to Job as “blameless” (1:8, 2:3).

D.A. Carson sums up Job’s argument to this point:

Job's problem is not that God is simply too distant, but that Job could not win—even though he is quite certain he is suffering innocently. (And, again, his readers know he is right on the latter score!). Job himself surveys some of the evidence that attests God's greatness and concludes: "How then can I dispute with him? How can I find words to argue with him? Though I were innocent, I could not answer him; I could only plead with my Judge for mercy" (9:14-15). Indeed, all the references to God's power can be read another way, Job argues. "Even if I summoned him and he responded, I do not believe he would give me a hearing. He would crush me with a storm and multiply my wounds for no reason. He would not let me catch my breath but would overwhelm me with misery. If it is a matter of strength, he is mighty! And if it is a matter of justice, who can challenge him?" (9:16-19). The evidence of Job's misery suggests that God is sovereign, all right—and cruel. God is so sovereign that even Job's speech would be constrained in any trial: "Even if I were innocent my mouth would condemn me; if I were blameless, it would pronounce me guilty" (9:20). [D.A. Carson, *How Long O Lord*, 144-45]

21 “I am guiltless; I do not take notice of myself; I despise my life. 22 “It is all one; therefore I say, ‘He destroys the guiltless and the wicked.’”

The next phrase is open to alternative translations and interpretations. Literally it reads, “I do not know my soul.” It may mean that Job could not be sure about himself.⁴⁷ There may have been hidden sin that occasioned his suffering (Pss 19:12 [13]; 139:23–24). [New American Commentary]

Hebrew has no convenient way of expressing the nuance of “some (supposed) sin in me” other than by the word “my sin,” [David J. A. Clines, *Job 1–20*, vol. 17, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1989), 246]

Verse 22:

It is all one: these words are omitted by the Septuagint, and some editors invert the two lines to say “Therefore, I say: it is all one.” Dhorme translates “That is why I have said: ‘It is all one.’” TEV combines verses 21 and 22 and translates “Nothing matters.” The literal translation is “One it is, therefore.” Here “one” carries the sense of “It is all the same” or “It all amounts to the same thing.” “Nothing matters” may be expressed as “Nothing is important to me,” or idiomatically as in some languages, “Nothing touches my head” or “Nothing takes hold of my heart.” The reason for this despairing remark is that he destroys both the blameless and the wicked. [UBS Handbook]

23 “If the scourge kills suddenly, He mocks the despair of the innocent.

Likely a “natural disaster” in which the innocent (or righteous) are destroyed along with the guilty. Cf. Job’s children. God does not discriminate. The rain falls on the just and the unjust—that’s true when the rain is good (drought) or bad (flood). Yet Job overstates his case in v. 23 accusing God of relishing in the suffering of the innocent. Job sees himself as a voodoo doll in the hands of a capricious God!

Job took a slightly different tack at v. 21. The focus is less on Job and more on God's administration or failure to administrate the world. Job was more angry and bitter in this section than any other place in the book. At v. 24 in particular he came closer than anywhere else to charging God with injustice. He walked, as it were, very close to the precipice but stepped back to safer ground and thus avoided catastrophe. Just as Job voiced doubts about God's justice with rhetorical questions, so in 40:6 God demanded of Job: "Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself?" Both cases are less-than-direct accusations. They observe the polite Semitic rules and social graces. [New American Commentary]

24 "The earth is given into the hand of the wicked; He covers the faces of its judges. If it is not He, then who is it?

He covers the faces of its judges: in Exodus 23:8 bribery is condemned because it covers the eyes of officials so they can not see where justice lies. Translators are probably familiar with the image of justice represented as a feminine figure holding a scale in one hand and a sword in the other, and whose eyes are blindfolded. The blindfold is supposed to suggest that justice should be dispensed without prejudice. The picture in this verse is quite different. Here it is God who covers the eyes of the judge so he cannot see the truth and judge fairly. If the metaphor of covering the face or eyes gives the wrong meaning, translators may restructure this expression to say, for example, "He blinds the eyes of judges so they cannot judge fairly" or "He prevents justice being given, by blinding the eyes of judges." [UBS Handbook]

By this question Job virtually charged God with wrongdoing (cf. 1:22), but still it is a question and not a declarative sentence. Job almost cursed God, but not quite. [New American Commentary]

Job affirms God's sovereignty: God blindfolds the judges!

VERSES 9:25-35

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

25 “Now my days are swifter than a runner; They flee away, they see no good. 26 “They slip by like reed boats, Like an eagle that swoops on its prey. 27 “Though I say, ‘I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my sad countenance and be cheerful,’ 28 I am afraid of all my pains, I know that You will not acquit me. 29 “I am accounted wicked, Why then should I toil in vain? 30 “If I should wash myself with snow And cleanse my hands with lye, 31 Yet You would plunge me into the pit, And my own clothes would abhor me. 32 “For He is not a man as I am that I may answer Him, That we may go to court together. 33 “There is no umpire between us, Who may lay his hand upon us both. 34 “Let Him remove His rod from me, And let not dread of Him terrify me. 35 “Then I would speak and not fear Him; But I am not like that in myself.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

25 “My days are swifter than a runner; they flee away; they see no good. 26 They go by like skiffs of reed, like an eagle swooping on the prey. 27 If I say, ‘I will forget my complaint, I will put off my sad face, and be of good cheer,’ 28 I become afraid of all my suffering, for I know you will not hold me innocent. 29 I shall be condemned; why then do I labor in vain? 30 If I wash myself with snow and cleanse my hands with lye, 31 yet you will plunge me into a pit, and my own clothes will abhor me. 32 For he is not a man, as I am, that I might answer him, that we should come to trial together. 33 There is no arbiter between us, who might lay his hand on us both. 34 Let him take his rod away from me, and let not dread of him terrify me. 35 Then I would speak without fear of him, for I am not so in myself.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

25 My days fly by faster than a runner; they flee without seeing any good. 26 They sweep by like boats made of papyrus, like an eagle swooping down on its prey. 27 If I said, “I will forget my complaint, change my expression, and smile,” 28 I would still live in terror of all my pains. I know You will not acquit me. 29 Since I will be found guilty, why should I labor in vain? 30 If I wash myself with snow, and cleanse my hands with lye, 31 then You dip me in a pit of mud, and my own clothes despise me! 32 For He is not a man like me, that I can answer Him, that we can take each other to court. 33 There is no one to judge between us, to lay his hand on both of us. 34 Let Him take His rod away from me so His terror will no longer frighten me. 35 Then I would speak and not fear Him. But that is not the case; I am on my own.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

25 “My days are swifter than a runner; they fly away without a glimpse of joy. 26 They skim past like boats of papyrus, like eagles swooping down on their prey. 27 If I say, ‘I will forget my complaint, I will change my expression, and smile,’ 28 I still dread all my sufferings, for I know you will not hold me innocent. 29 Since I am already found guilty, why should I struggle in vain? 30 Even if I washed myself with soap and my hands with cleansing powder, 31 you would plunge me into a slime pit so that even my clothes would detest me. 32 “He is not a mere mortal

like me that I might answer him, that we might confront each other in court. 33 If only there were someone to mediate between us, someone to bring us together, 34 someone to remove God's rod from me, so that his terror would frighten me no more. 35 Then I would speak up without fear of him, but as it now stands with me, I cannot.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Job Recognizes There is No One to Mediate Between Him and God [USB Handbook]

25–26 With these verses we reach the major turning point of the speech, for we encounter here the transition from the monologue of 9:2–24, in which God is a distant figure, referred to generally simply as “he,” to the personal address that is sustained, with the exception of vv 32–35, to the end of the speech, reaching new intensities of emotion in 10:8–17. It is characteristic of Job’s speeches to move from monologue or address to the friends to address to God in the latter half of the speech . . . [David J. A. Clines, Job 1–20, vol. 17, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1989), 239–240]

25 “Now my days are swifter than a runner; They flee away, they see no good. 26 “They slip by like reed boats, Like an eagle that swoops on its prey.

Cf. notes on 7:6. On “no good” cf. 2:10.

Every day the same deprivation of joy lies in store for him; no matter how quickly one day gives place to the next, the one unvarying aspect marks them all. [Clines, 240]

Verses 27ff. reflect Job’s unstated question, What am I to do? (Cf. Ash, 146ff.)

3 images of speed, one each from land, water and air.

27 “Though I say, ‘I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my sad countenance and be cheerful,’ 28 I am afraid of all my pains, I know that You will not acquit me. 29 “I am accounted wicked, Why then should I toil in vain?

27–28 Is there any way of escaping the constant misery of a man refused vindication (cf. v 2b)? As in 7:13, Job contemplates a means of relief, only to realize immediately its futility. If he resolves to have done with his moaning to the point where he has forgotten it entirely (“forget my moaning” is a compressed phrase), and to put a brave face on things (**לִבְבָשׁ**, lit. “brighten my face”) his resolve is undermined by the fear of what new sufferings may lie in store for him, for he is convinced that God does not regard him as an innocent man and is certain to prolong his agony. [David J. A. Clines, 240–241]

The bottom line is that even if Job puts on a happy face, he will nonetheless be found guilty before God and pain will win out in the end.

30 “If I should wash myself with snow And cleanse my hands with lye,

Verse 30b has a translation/textual issue re: word “snow” (cf. NIV which has “soap”):

Pope understands the Hebrew word for snow here to refer to the soapwort plant, whose roots were used for making soap, and so TEV has “No soap can wash away my sins.” HOTTP reports that its committee members were equally divided between “soap” and “snow,” and so offers translators equal choice. [UBS Handbook]

Cf. Psa. 51:7, 143:2; Jer. 2:22.

31 Yet You would plunge me into the pit, And my own clothes would abhor me.

“Slime pit,” šahat, seems exaggerated unless with Pope and others it is understood as a synonym for the underworld with its putrid quagmire of filth.⁵³ The usual word for “grave,” še’ól, does not carry with it the idea of water or slime. “Clothes” are the subject of the verb “detest,” resulting in a colorful description of the putrid state of his body. [New American Commentary]

Pope & Habel reference a custom of providing clean clothes for the acquitted, as in Zech 3:3–5.

32 “For He is not a man as I am that I may answer Him, That we may go to court together.
33 “There is no umpire between us, Who may lay his hand upon us both.

Here Job turns from speaking to God to addressing his friends. Verse 32 confirms/continues the courtroom theme. Job knows he is hopeless, so he seeks a mediator.

One transl. (TEV) has “If God were human.” Tremendous implications.

Cf. 1995 hit song by Joan Osborne - (What if God Was):

What if God was one of us?
Just a slob like one of us
Just a stranger on the bus
Tryin' to make his way home?

While we may rightly consider that theologically blasphemous, it asks a genuine question...

An “umpire” — cf. a baseball umpire who serves as a “judge.”

Psalm 22...

The cry of Job was born of a double consciousness which at the moment was mastering him; first, that of the appalling greatness and majesty of God; and secondly, that of his own comparative littleness. This was not the question of a man who had dismissed God from his life and from the universe, and was living merely upon the earth level. It was rather the cry of a man who knew God, and was overwhelmed by the sense of His greatness. . . .

Over against that was the sense of his own comparative smallness. He felt he could not get to this God. He was altogether too small. It is as though Job had said: “There is no umpire, there is no arbiter, there is no one who can stand between us, interpreting each to the other; me to God, and God to me. There is no one to lay his hand upon us. . . .”

Here then was Job crying out for some one who could stand authoritatively between God and himself, and so create way of meeting, a possibility of contact.

We now turn from the elemental cry of Job, and from the Old Testament, to consider the apostolic word concerning Jesus. “There is one Mediator between God and man.” That is the Gospel in brief. That is Christianity fundamentally. [G. Campbell Morgan, cited in Swindoll, 104-05]

Cf. 1 Peter 3:18.

If God were a man, then Job could approach him and plead his case. Or if there were a “daysman” (mediator) between God and Job, he could take away the rod of judgment and bring Job and God together. But God is not man, and there is no mediator! This is where Jesus Christ enters the picture! Jesus is God and became man to reveal the Father (John 14:7-11) and to bring sinners to God (1 Tim. 2:5-6; 1 Peter 3:18). He is the “daysman” that Job was pleading for centuries ago (Job. 16:21). [Warren W. Wiersbe, Be Patient, “Be” Commentary Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 41]

34 “Let Him remove His rod from me, And let not dread of Him terrify me. 35 “Then I would speak and not fear Him; But I am not like that in myself.

The MT has Job say that there is no such person—which is undoubtedly the case—but it is more probable that we should read the negative particle לֹא as the wish particle לְאָל or לְיִלְאָל (see n. 9:33.a), as RSV mg, NEB, NAB, NIV. Those who have resisted this alteration have done so on the ground that v 32 has already effectively ruled out any possibility that such a person could exist, and v 33 is based on the assumption that no such arbitrator exists. But לְיִלְאָל can express a wish contrary to fact (cf. GKC, § 151e, Pope)—hence the translation given above—so no real objection to taking the sentence as a (hopeless) wish remains. And perhaps the link with the following verses is as follows: Would that there were such an arbiter! He could remove God’s “rod” from me. Then I could speak out without any fear (so NIV). Strahan nicely observes that “the man who uses such language is ostensibly pleading for justice; but deeper down he is seeking reconciliation, he is thirsting for love.” [David J. A. Clines, 243]

Difficult though v 35b is, the most straightforward reading of “for I am not so in myself” is “I am aware of nothing to make me afraid of Him, if He acts not in might, but in right” (Gray; similarly Peake). What has made Job lose his nerve is not a fading of his conviction of his innocence, but the sheer terror induced by God’s anger—of which this chapter has been full. [Clines, 243–244]

Cf. Psalm 23 where the rod comforts. Cf. Puritans on the “rod.”

Here the rod is a symbol of God’s punishment and is mentioned again with the same sense in 21:9. In 13:21a Job cries out for God to remove his hand from Job. [UBS Handbook]

“rod” as a symbol of God’s wrath throughout the Old Testament (21:9; Exod 17:9; Ps 89:32; Isa 10:5; cf. 2 Sam 7:14).

But there is no arbiter! Not yet!

VERSES 10:1-7

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

1 “I loathe my own life; I will give full vent to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. 2 “I will say to God, ‘Do not condemn me; Let me know why You contend with me. 3 ‘Is it right for You indeed to oppress, To reject the labor of Your hands, And to look favorably on the schemes of the wicked? 4 ‘Have You eyes of flesh? Or do You see as a man sees? 5 ‘Are Your days as the days of a mortal, Or Your years as man’s years, 6 That You should seek for my guilt And search after my sin? 7 ‘According to Your knowledge I am indeed not guilty, Yet there is no deliverance from Your hand.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

1 “I loathe my life; I will give free utterance to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. 2 I will say to God, Do not condemn me; let me know why you contend against me. 3 Does it seem good to you to oppress, to despise the work of your hands and favor the designs of the wicked? 4 Have you eyes of flesh? Do you see as man sees? 5 Are your days as the days of man, or your years as a man’s years, 6 that you seek out my iniquity and search for my sin, 7 although you know that I am not guilty, and there is none to deliver out of your hand?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

1 I am disgusted with my life. I will express my complaint and speak in the bitterness of my soul. 2 I will say to God: “Do not declare me guilty! Let me know why You prosecute me. 3 Is it good for You to oppress, to reject the work of Your hands, and favor the plans of the wicked? 4 Do You have eyes of flesh, or do You see as a human sees? 5 Are Your days like those of a human, or Your years like those of a man, 6 that You look for my wrongdoing and search for my sin, 7 even though You know that I am not wicked and that there is no one who can deliver from Your hand?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

1 “I loathe my very life; therefore I will give free rein to my complaint and speak out in the bitterness of my soul. 2 I say to God: Do not declare me guilty, but tell me what charges you have against me. 3 Does it please you to oppress me, to spurn the work of your hands, while you smile on the plans of the wicked? 4 Do you have eyes of flesh? Do you see as a mortal sees? 5 Are your days like those of a mortal or your years like those of a strong man, 6 that you must search out my faults and probe after my sin— 7 though you know that I am not guilty and that no one can rescue me from your hand?

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Job Accuses God of Being Unfair to His Creatures [UBS Handbook]

1 “**I loathe my own life; I will give full vent to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.**

I loathe my life: (see 9:21.) It is apparent from the following verses that Job imagines how it would be to take God to court. The verb translated loathe in 9:21 is different from the verb found here. In both verses the object is Job’s nepesh “life, soul,” but the verb here is better expressed “to be weary, tired, exhausted,” and so TEV “I am tired of living.” MFT says a bit more forcefully “I am sick of life, sick of it.” Some translators understand this line as a reason clause to explain the next line, and so NJB “Since I have lost all taste for life, I shall ...”; FRCL “So, since my life makes me sick ...”; NIV “I loathe my very life; therefore, I will....” [UBS Handbook]

Job’s complaint is not to be understood as a traditional lament such as Psalm 55:17, “Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan.” The complaint of Job is a legal dispute or charge he would take up against God if he were able to take God to court. [UBS Handbook]

2 “**I will say to God, ‘Do not condemn me; Let me know why You contend with me. 3 ‘Is it right for You indeed to oppress, To reject the labor of Your hands, And to look favorably on the schemes of the wicked?**

“And favor the designs of the wicked.” “Favor” translates a verb meaning “to have a glowing face, to be radiant or to smile.” Cf. UBS Handbook

Job already agreed with Eliphaz

4 “**Have You eyes of flesh? Or do You see as a man sees? 5 ‘Are Your days as the days of a mortal, Or Your years as man’s years, 6 That You should seek for my guilt And search after my sin?**

Job accuses God of acting like a mere (sinful) man. At the end of chapter 7 Job has accused God of being a hostile watcher, putting Job under surveillance (7:17-21).

Hebrew has no convenient way of expressing the nuance of “some (supposed) sin in me” other than by the word “my sin,” [David J. A. Clines, 246]

v. 6 is a chiasmus:

- A You seek
- B for my guilt
- B' and after my sin
- A' you search

7 ‘According to Your knowledge I am indeed not guilty, Yet there is no deliverance from Your hand.

On this reading, v 7a relates most closely to v 6, and v 7b to v 5: v 7a claims that God is so stubborn as to insist on searching him for sins (v 6) even when he knows he is guilty of none; v 7b apparently claims that God is overanxious to discover Job's guilt, since (in view of Job's impending death) Job cannot outlive his persecutor (cf. v 5), so there is no doubt that even with patience God will achieve his goal; there is “none to deliver from (his) hand.” Similarly Peake explained: “[God] knows that no one can deliver Job from His power, yet He overwhelms him with suffering as if at any moment he might slip through His fingers.” Verse 7b would then turn on the issue of God's haste in prosecuting Job, a theme that is explicit neither in v 5 nor in v 7b. [David J. A. Clines, 246]

Why doesn't Job see his depravity - that he is utterly sinful (cf. Bunyan, “there's enough sin in my best prayer to condemn the entire world”). At times the O.T. saints did see their depravity (cf. David in the Psalms). But the N.T. believer has a different dynamic with the indwelling Spirit who “convicts the world concerning sin, righteousness and judgement.” We also have the depths of N.T. teaching on the subject.

Job here reaches a new milestone in his confrontation with God: while in chap. 3 he laid no claim to guiltlessness, and in chaps. 6–7 he had stressed his unhappiness more than his innocence (though cf. 6:10c, 30), in this speech he not only vigorously protests his innocence (9:15, 20, 21), but here—for the first time—asserts that God also knows that he is innocent. It would be much more comfortable to believe that God had overlooked his suffering, or even that he had made a mistake about Job's innocence; to believe that God knows he is innocent and punishes him all the same is to feel utterly trapped.
[Clines, 247]

VERSES 10:8-17

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

8 ‘Your hands fashioned and made me altogether, And would You destroy me? 9 ‘Remember now, that You have made me as clay; And would You turn me into dust again? 10 ‘Did You not pour me out like milk And curdle me like cheese; 11 Clothe me with skin and flesh, And knit me together with bones and sinews? 12 ‘You have granted me life and lovingkindness; And Your care has preserved my spirit. 13 ‘Yet these things You have concealed in Your heart; I know that this is within You: 14 If I sin, then You would take note of me, And would not acquit me of my guilt. 15 ‘If I am wicked, woe to me! And if I am righteous, I dare not lift up my head. I am sated with disgrace and conscious of my misery. 16 ‘Should my head be lifted up, You would hunt me like a lion; And again You would show Your power against me. 17 ‘You renew Your witnesses against me And increase Your anger toward me; Hardship after hardship is with me.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

8 Your hands fashioned and made me, and now you have destroyed me altogether. 9 Remember that you have made me like clay; and will you return me to the dust? 10 Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese? 11 You clothed me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews. 12 You have granted me life and steadfast love, and your care has preserved my spirit. 13 Yet these things you hid in your heart; I know that this was your purpose. 14 If I sin, you watch me and do not acquit me of my iniquity. 15 If I am guilty, woe to me! If I am in the right, I cannot lift up my head, for I am filled with disgrace and look on my affliction. 16 And were my head lifted up, you would hunt me like a lion and again work wonders against me. 17 You renew your witnesses against me and increase your vexation toward me; you bring fresh troops against me.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

8 “Your hands shaped me and formed me. Will You now turn and destroy me? 9 Please remember that You formed me like clay. Will You now return me to dust? 10 Did You not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese? 11 You clothed me with skin and flesh, and wove me together with bones and tendons. 12 You gave me life and faithful love, and Your care has guarded my life. 13 “Yet You concealed these thoughts in Your heart; I know that this was Your hidden plan: 14 if I sin, You would notice, and would not acquit me of my wrongdoing. 15 If I am wicked, woe to me! And even if I am righteous, I cannot lift up my head. I am filled with shame and aware of my affliction. 16 If I am proud, You hunt me like a lion and again display Your miraculous power against me. 17 You produce new witnesses against me and multiply Your anger toward me. Hardships assault me, wave after wave.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

8 “Your hands shaped me and made me. Will you now turn and destroy me? 9 Remember that you molded me like clay. Will you now turn me to dust again? 10 Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese, 11 clothe me with skin and flesh and knit me together with bones

and sinews? 12 You gave me life and showed me kindness, and in your providence watched over my spirit. 13 “But this is what you concealed in your heart, and I know that this was in your mind: 14 If I sinned, you would be watching me and would not let my offense go unpunished. 15 If I am guilty—woe to me! Even if I am innocent, I cannot lift my head, for I am full of shame and drowned in my affliction. 16 If I hold my head high, you stalk me like a lion and again display your awesome power against me. 17 You bring new witnesses against me and increase your anger toward me; your forces come against me wave upon wave.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Job Accuses God of Watching Over Him to Destroy Him [USB Handbook]

Speaking of this section, Ash writes: “It is at the same time a beautiful and a pathetic passage.” [Ash, 149]

**8 ‘Your hands fashioned and made me altogether, And would You destroy me? 9
‘Remember now, that You have made me as clay; And would You turn me into dust again?’**

Cf. Isaiah 45:9; Gen. 3:19.

Idea is, “Are you going to grind me into dust again?” Struggling faith...

10 ‘Did You not pour me out like milk And curdle me like cheese; 11 Clothe me with skin and flesh, And knit me together with bones and sinews?’

“Curdle” = “coagulate” - trans. “congealed” in Exo. 15:8.

Cf. Psalm 139:13.

The verb “knit together,” *skk II*, appears elsewhere in this sense only in Ps 139:13, a passage similar to this one. [New American Commentary]

Poetic picture of the creative work of God.

“Just as liquid milk can be made to curdle and turn into cheese, so the semen and the ovum can be, as it were, curdled into a living being and then ‘clothed with skin and flesh’ (v. 11) on the outside and ‘knit . . . together with bones and sinews’ on the inside. What a wonderful creative act is each conception, gestation, and birth.” [Ash, 149]

12 ‘You have granted me life and lovingkindness; And Your care has preserved my spirit.

Job is looking back to when life was good, before tragedy struck. “Lovingkindness” (*Hesed*)

This is one of the most disquieting symptoms [of loss]. When you are happy, so happy that you have no sense of needing [God]. . . . If you remember yourself and turn to Him with gratitude and praise, you will be—or so it feels—welcomed with open arms. But go

to Him when your need is desperate, when all other help is vain, and what do you find? A door slammed in your face and the sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside.

After that, silence. You may as well turn away. The longer you wait, the more emphatic the silence will become. There are no lights in the windows. It might be an empty house. Was it ever inhabited? It seemed so once. [C.S. Lewis. *A Grief Observed*, 7]

13 ‘Yet these things You have concealed in Your heart; I know that this is within You:

Yet these things thou didst hide in thy heart: these things refers to the things which Job is about to mention in verses 14–17 and is paralleled by this in the next line. Job is about to tell openly the things which God has been keeping secret. Hide in thy heart means to keep them secret, not to let anyone know about them. The whole line may be rendered “What I will tell now you have kept secret,” “You did not let me know what you were planning to do,” or “You did not let anyone know the things you would do to me.” [UBS Handbook]

This is a thought I frequently have. Memories, looking at pictures of the “good old days” etc.

Verses 14-17 outline those things that God had concealed:

14 If I sin, then You would take note of me, And would not acquit me of my guilt. 15 ‘If I am wicked, woe to me! And if I am righteous, I dare not lift up my head. I am sated with disgrace and conscious of my misery. 16 ‘Should my head be lifted up, You would hunt me like a lion; And again You would show Your power against me. 17 ‘You renew Your witnesses against me And increase Your anger toward me; Hardship after hardship is with me.

Job looks upon God as the watcher of people, who is concerned with catching them in their sins. [UBS Handbook]

Hardship after hardship = “wave upon wave.”

Verse 17 is the climax of Job’s response. Note the three aspects of this verse.

VERSES 10:18-22

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

18 ‘Why then have You brought me out of the womb? Would that I had died and no eye had seen me! 19 ‘I should have been as though I had not been, Carried from womb to tomb.’ 20 “Would He not let my few days alone? Withdraw from me that I may have a little cheer 21 Before I go—and I shall not return—To the land of darkness and deep shadow, 22 The land of utter gloom as darkness itself, Of deep shadow without order, And which shines as the darkness.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

18 “Why did you bring me out from the womb? Would that I had died before any eye had seen me 19 and were as though I had not been, carried from the womb to the grave. 20 Are not my days few? Then cease, and leave me alone, that I may find a little cheer 21 before I go—and I shall not return—to the land of darkness and deep shadow, 22 the land of gloom like thick darkness, like deep shadow without any order, where light is as thick darkness.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

18 “Why did You bring me out of the womb? I should have died and never been seen. 19 I wish I had never existed but had been carried from the womb to the grave. 20 Are my days not few? Stop it! Leave me alone, so that I can smile a little 21 before I go to a land of darkness and gloom, never to return. 22 It is a land of blackness like the deepest darkness, gloomy and chaotic, where even the light is like the darkness.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

18 “Why then did you bring me out of the womb? I wish I had died before any eye saw me. 19 If only I had never come into being, or had been carried straight from the womb to the grave! 20 Are not my few days almost over? Turn away from me so I can have a moment’s joy 21 before I go to the place of no return, to the land of gloom and utter darkness, 22 to the land of deepest night, of utter darkness and disorder, where even the light is like darkness.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Job Asks God to Leave Him Alone As He is Near Death Job [USB Handbook]

18 ‘Why then have You brought me out of the womb? Would that I had died and no eye had seen me! 19 ‘I should have been as though I had not been, Carried from womb to tomb.’

To go from the hands of a midwife to those of a pallbearer! Job returns to his chapter 3 lament.

20 “Would He not let my few days alone? Withdraw from me that I may have a little cheer
21 Before I go—and I shall not return—To the land of darkness and deep shadow, 22 The
land of utter gloom as darkness itself, Of deep shadow without order, And which shines as
the darkness.”

Echoes of 3:4-5 -

4 “May that day be darkness; Let not God above care for it, Nor light shine on it. 5 “Let
darkness and black gloom claim it; Let a cloud settle on it; Let the blackness of the day
terrify it.

Cf. the chaos of creation that Job pointed to in 9:5ff. Job likens the creation of his body in the same way, from order to chaos.

In concluding his speech, Job resumes the death wish he expressed in 3:11-26 (see notes there). Job is “stuck” as it were; he cannot kill himself, he can only wish himself dead. I never got there; I always focused on the fact that my existence was and is used by God to bless others: my parents; my wife; Giana (who would never have been born apart from my life).

On v. 21, cf. Psalm 39:13:

“Turn Your gaze away from me, that I may smile again Before I depart and am no more.”

Job refers to sheol.

Job’s complaint ends with a thesaurus of terms for darkness. “Deepest night” translates two words: ‘ēpâ, which is found elsewhere only in Amos 4:13, and ’ōpel, which occurs a second time at the end of the verse. “Deep shadow” (or “shadow of death”; šalmāwet) was in the preceding verse. “Order,” šēdārîm, is a hapax but is known in postbiblical Hebrew. With this gloomy picture of the grave Job concluded his second speech of the debate. He wondered, and so might we, if what he expected would not indeed come true. [New American Commentary]