

Title: In the Courtroom with God (Part 1)

Number: 0820Job9.1-24(12)

Text: Job 9:1-24

Central Idea: *The windy words of a sufferer won't leave the believer condemned in the courtroom of God*

Date: August 9, 2020

{Read Passage / Opening Prayer} / NASB95

{read 9:1-8, 32-33}

[i] Next section in Job covers chapters 9 & 10

Total of 57 vv. (incredibly difficult to o/l).

57 vv. that comprise Job's 1st reply to Bildad, 1 of Job's 3 friends who came to minister to Job in his calamity of losing his wealth, health, & family (background we saw in chapters 1 & 2).

[ii] We were in chapter 8 the last time we were in the book of Job

That chapt. consists of Bildad's 1st address to Job.

Job t/blameless man of G. is suffering having lost most everything dear to him. His 3 friends hear of his calamity & they travel to see him (saw that in chapt. 2). Once they arrive, Job t/blameless man of G., expresses his lament, his complaint over his situation (chapt. 3).

Chapts 4&5 friend #1 Eliphaz responds to Job

Chapts 6&7 Job replies to Eliphaz.

Chapt. 8 friend #2 Bildad takes his turn.

Here in chapts 9-10 Job replies to Bildad.

(if you missed that or any message I'd encourage you to go to GroundedInGrace.com and get caught up).

**[iii] The 3 friends argue from a worldview that believes God exists
- God is sovereign - God rewards righteousness & punishes evil**

So far so good. Job would agree. However, they push that axiom to t/extreme belief that if something bad happens, God did it to punish someone for their sin. Bad things happen to bad people.

Ergo: Job experienced bad things; Job must be a bad man.

The reader (us) knows better. Not only is our theology more informed, but t/BOJ tells us right at t/beg. that Job is a blameless man.

1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil.

**[iv] Job himself buys into this twisted cause and effect worldview
(dominant worldview of the day)**

That's what is driving Job to the point of insanity: He knows that he is blameless, yet he believes God is attacking him, unfairly!

[v] We noted that Job lived before any of the OT was written

He didn't have t/benefit of passages like Psalm 73 {turn there}

Psalm 73 (A Psalm of Asaph) 1 Surely God is good to Israel, To those who are pure in heart! 2 But as for me, my feet came close to stumbling, My steps had almost slipped. [why?] 3 For I was envious of the arrogant As I saw the prosperity of the wicked. 4 For there are no pains in their death, And their body is fat. [they live long lives they are well-fed] 5 They are not in trouble as other men, Nor are they plagued like mankind.

6 Therefore pride is their necklace; The garment of violence covers them. 7 Their eye bulges from fatness; The imaginations of their heart run riot. 8 They mock and wickedly speak of oppression; || [they act like they are gods=>] They speak from on high. 9 They have set their mouth against the heavens, And their tongue parades through the earth. [sounds like t/prominent, powerful wealthy talking heads of today - or liberal politicians like our governor]

Verse 11 They say, “How does God know? And is there knowledge with the Most High?” 12 Behold, these are the wicked; And always at ease, they have increased in wealth.

Like Job, Asaph writes ==>

13 Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure And washed my hands in innocence; 14 For I have been stricken all day long And chastened every morning. [I walk in t/light of God’s Word; I have kept my heart pure - all for nothing?]

Verse 16 When I pondered to understand this, It was troublesome in my sight 17 Until I came into the sanctuary of God; Then I perceived their end. 18 Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. 19 How they are destroyed in a moment! They are utterly swept away by sudden terrors!

That often happens in this life, but it always happens in t/next.

Asaph concludes (v. 28) ==>

28 But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, That I may tell of all Your works.

[vi] In the context of this life - things are not fair

Solomon in Ecclesiastes 7:15 ==>

I have seen everything during my lifetime of futility; there is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his wickedness.

There are blessings for right believing & living. You do reap what you sow, to use a biblical metaphor. HOWEVER, that doesn't mean t/child of G. will live a trouble-free life or that t/X-rejector won't appear to be outwardly blessed.

[vii] So what do we have here in Job chapters 9 & 10?

Christopher Ash sums up Job's complaint with these words ==>

“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 commends and affirms him at the end. but his perceptions are partial and flawed. We hear in these speeches the honest grappings 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]

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

IOW . . .

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)

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

1. "In Truth"

Job uses a term that was used in legal settings. It has the force of an oath. "In truth" - Hebrew *'omnam*, an adverbial form of *'amen*.

2a **"In truth I know that this is so . . .**

a. What is Job affirming as being true?

(1) We can take it back to what we called "Bildad's Axiom"

8:3 "Does God pervert justice? Or does the Almighty pervert what is right?"

Job would answer emphatically, "No!" [^]

BUT, he would add, "somehow this truth doesn't seem to fit my sit."

We go from ==>

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

To ==>

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

IOW - "I know G. is righteous & sov. But I want to argue my case before Him - why is this happening to me when all I've tried to do is serve Him in purity?"

“How can I argue my case before t/Almighty G. of t/universe?”

2b **“... But how can a man be in the right before God?”**

Eliphaz asked a similar question earlier:

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

Hebrew verb *TsaDaq* is here translated “in the right” It’s to be understood in this context as being acquitted in a legal setting.

Job is not using the term “right” in a Pauline soteriological sense. IOW - Job isn’t talking about forensic justification (salvation from sin). He’s referring to public vindication. Being viewed as innocent or publicly vindicated by God as in a criminal court.

2b **“... But how can a man be in the right before God?”**

Job cites as evidence that he can’t win a court case w/G. by citing His sov. along w/His wisdom & power

1. God’s Wisdom and Power (3-4)

a. Wisdom Demonstrated in Cross-Examination (3)

Job is playing t/role of a plaintiff. G. is t/defendant.

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

Lit. 3 **“with him he cannot answer him once in a thousand times”**

(1) That's a lot of 3d person pronouns!

Who's asking / answering? ==>

HCSB 3 If one wanted to take Him to court, he could not answer God once in a thousand times.

Job is now undergoing cross-examination. G. could ask Job 1000 ?s (I think that represents an innumerable amt.) & Job could not answer a single 1 of them!

“[T]he 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]

(2) What happens at the end of the book?

God asks Job 77 questions that Job cannot answer! 39-41

His only response was to admit his ignorance & shut his mouth!

42 “I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. . . . I retract and repent in dust and ashes.”

(3) No charge against God will stick!

John Gotti was an American gangster who became boss of the Gambino crime family in New York City. He became known as “t/Teflon Don” bc he was able to evade numerous charges against him Gotti was far from blameless & eventually t/law caught up w/him. Gotti's underboss Salvatore "Sammy the Bull" Gravano aided the FBI in finally convicting Gotti in 1991. Gotti died in prison in 2002.

(a) God is no “Teflon Don” - He is the perfect holy sovereign over all (v. 4)

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

i. How thankful we are for the Cross of Jesus Christ!

No harm, no condemnation for those who are in Christ.

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

4 “Wise in heart and mighty in strength . . .”

a. Wisdom Demonstrated in Cross-Examination (3)

b. Power Demonstrated in Creation (5-10)

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;”

(1) Picture of an earthquake — beyond that “chaos”

(a) We usually look at creation and marvel

We talk about t/ “anthropic principle” — how everything, from our human bodies to t/furthestmost stars, operates as a miraculously designed machine.

i. That parallels Job’s life before tragedy struck

He had it all: a successful business; a good reputation; family; friends.

Things were running well. B4 an earthquake struck.

In Rom. 8 Paul says that creation groans. Here it’s Job who groans.

Job knows that God is wise and powerful, but he's not so sure He is really good.

I can relate to that. After my release from t/hospital back in Feb. 2016 my hope centered on Giana's recovery. I pleaded w/God - constantly. I had so much hope with her going into rehab. "God is good. He will bring us thru this & it will be a wonderful testimony of His goodness." (B4 Giana was released from the hospital Lois and I were walking down the hallway at Strong. We passed by t/cancer center. There was a woman sitting on a bench there weeping. I felt so optimistic & so filled w/the Spirit that I introduced myself, laid my hand on her shoulder and prayed for her.)

Then it all fell thru. Giana passed from her injuries t/following June. I could not verbalize the words "God is good."

I still struggle with that. I know it's true in my head; my heart?
That's where Job was.

Like mountains who (as Job sees it) shake under the wrath of God:

5 He overturns them in His anger . . .

so Job's life has been shaken.

Job interprets all calamity rightly to the sovereignty of G.

but wrongly to t/anger of G.

(2) It is God (v. 7) ==>

7 Who commands the sun not to shine [some versions have "rise" - word can be transl. either way], **And sets a seal upon the stars;**

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

(3) Similar words in Isaiah 44

24 Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, “I, the LORD [YHWH], am the maker of all things, Stretching out t/heavens by Myself and spreading out t/earth all alone.

(a) YHWH is the Creator of everything that is not God

What do we see in Col? Speaking of JC ==>

Col. 1:16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.

Who is YHWH (Jehovah)? JC, King of kings, Lord of lords.

(4) Job was a monotheist - he believed in One God

(a) We see that here as well as in v. 9

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

“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.]

(b) These are constellations . . .

i. The Bear may refer to the Big or Little Dipper

ii. Orion is a constellation located in the winter skies toward the north

iii. The Pleiades is a small cluster of stars located in the shoulder of the bull in the constellation Taurus

iv. The chambers of the south we're not so sure about

May be the place from which the south winds blow or a general term for the southern stars

Another commentator suggests ==>

“the ‘chambers of the south’ . . . 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.

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;

b. God's Power Demonstrated in Creation (5-10)

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

(5) Eliphaz said the same thing back 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.

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

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

2. God's Sovereignty (11-24)

“God’s sovereignty means that He is the King who is in complete control of His creation. His Kingship encompasses the doctrines of predestination and providence.”

Three areas ==>

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. God Is Free to Move and Act (11-15)

(1) God is free to move

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

(a) God is imperceptible in His person

In light of G’s very visible workings, He Himself is invisible.

You see the “effects” but cannot see He that “Causes” t”effects.”

Westminster Shorter Catechism, in answering t/? “What is God?”
“God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being,
wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.”

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.

(2) God is also free to act

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

**(a) In saying “Were He to snatch away” Job may be thinking
of his children who were “snatched away” from him**

On June 15 or 16 Giana was sov. “snatched away” from us.

We couldn’t say, “What are you doing?”

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?’

(b) Then the puzzling statement of verse 13

13a **“God will not turn back His anger . . .**

Saw that in v. 5 which talked about God
“overturning mountains in His anger”

Then there's the other side of v. 13 ==>

13b . . . **"Beneath Him crouch the helpers of Rahab."**

Some scholars ID Rahab with Leviathan in 3:8 (ANE mythical creature that stood for destruction).

Rahab was also a symbol of the sea, in part. t/Red Sea. Egypt is referred to as "Rahab" in Isaiah 30:7 & Psalm 87:4.

a. God Is Free to Move and Act (11-15)

G. demonstrates His power over creation. He moves mountains; He controls constellations; He subdues the beasts of the sea.

(3) How can Job (or any man) stand before Him?

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.**

b. God Is Awesome in Power and Righteousness (16-21)

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."**

(1) God bruises me with a storm!

What killed Job's children? A great wind, a storm. For Job t/tempest that killed his 10 kids was representative of his entire existence!

Ironically, it was out of a tempest that G. addresses Job in 38:1 & 40:6.

18a **“He will not allow me to get my breath . . .**

7:19 “Will You never turn Your gaze away from me, Nor let me alone until I swallow my spittle?”

18b . . . **But saturates me with bitterness.”**

(2) Bitterness . . .

That’s a bad place to be isn’t it? Bitter. Disillusioned. I’ve been there. We all have! This is t/frustration of total lack of control. I’m suffering & I can’t change that.

I’ve lost something dear to me, & I can’t bring it back.

Naomi in Ruth 1:20 used a variation of this word when she said, “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.”

I know that in the months / years that followed from June of 2016 I was a very bitter man. I could not fix my broken daughter. And I was “Mr Fix it.” She was always bringing me her toys that had broken & I’d fix them. She I couldn’t fix. Was out of my control. After she passed I wrote several poems. 1 I didn’t finished is entitled “Daddy Can’t Fix It Anymore.”

Job says “I’m saturated with bitterness!”

The windy words of a sufferer don’t leave the believer condemned in the courtroom of God.

(3) Note the courtroom language Job uses in v. 19

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?”

He’s El Shaddai, we saw that in chapt. 8 - He is God Almighty.

One commentator writes:

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

American Commentary]

(4) In theology (using a Latin phrase) we say God is *Ex Lex*

He is above and outside t/Law. After all, nothing is above God.

Jesus demonst. that when He said He was “Lord of the Sabbath.”

That doesn’t mean that God violates his very nature, an impossibility.

It does mean that He is above and beyond any law. He is *Ex Lex*.

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.”

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]

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)

Third aspect of that sov. ==>

c. God Is In Control of the Wicked (22-24)

22 **"It is all one** [IOW "nothing matters" / "it's all t/same"]; **therefore I say, 'He destroys the guiltless and the wicked.'**"

(1) Job gives three more examples of God's sovereign will in verses 23 & 24

(a) Sudden Disaster

23 **"If the scourge [disaster] kills suddenly, He mocks the despair of the innocent."**

NCV 23 . . . **God will laugh at the suffering of the innocent.**

Really? Job overstates his case—badly. He’s accusing God of relishing in the suffering of the innocent.

Basically Job sees himself and all suffers as some sort of voodoo doll in the hands of a capricious God!

Again, Robert Alden observes:

“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?”

[New American Commentary]

(a) Sudden Disaster

(b) Free reign of the wicked

24a **“The earth is given into the hand of the wicked...”**

“G, you have surrendered t/world to the schemes of wicked men!”

One result of that is, 3d point ==>

(c) Judicial Injustice

24b **“...He covers the faces of its judges. . . .”**

Exodus 23:8 God commands the people of Israel saying,
“You shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and subverts the cause of the just.”

We’re familiar with Lady Justice, pic. as a blindfolded woman holding a scale in one hand and a sword in the other. But t/blindfold in that image is to suggest that justice should be without prejudice.

If Job could paint a picture it would be of a blindfolded judge holding 2 swords in her hands w/no eyes to see in order to impart justice.

Job comes close to his wife’s request in 2:10 {cite}

Like t/Greek myth of Icarus, Job flies close to the sun and is in danger of disaster. His wings are singed, but he manages to avoid disaster.

The windy words of a sufferer don’t leave the believer condemned in the courtroom of God.

(a) Sudden Disaster

(b) Free reign of the wicked

(c) Judicial Injustice

Job who earlier admitted that he could answer God 1 in a 1000 now attempts to lay sin at His feet.

24c . . . If it is not He, then who is it?

There's 1 more point in this chapt. but we'll save it for next time.

To bring you back to our 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)

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

What do we do with all this?

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

Because God is gracious. We didn't have time to cover it this am, but look at vv 32-33

9:32–33 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.”

Cross . . .