

Job 9

Job 9:1–35

Outline of Chapter 9:

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Introduction: In Job 9 and 10, Job will give his answer to Bildad, actually answering Bildad directly and the implications made by Eliphaz. This is one of the few places where the separation of this one discourse into two chapters actually makes perfect sense. In Job 9, Job will address his friends and in Job 10, Job will speak to God in prayer. Job 9 deals with the futility of Job's position before God. Job has been accused, however subtly, by Eliphaz and by Bildad of possessing some horrible, hidden sin. Job nowhere claims that he is sinless or that he has never made a mistake. He protests that he is not guilty of the evil which Eliphaz and Bildad have obviously imputed to him. When answering Eliphaz, Job did not address the idea that he was being disciplined by God for some horrible, secret sin; however, in these next two chapters, Job deals with that issue. He does not claim that he is perfect or sinless; Job is only asking for one to take his side and to present his case before God. Keil and Delitzsch: *The maxim of the friends is: God does not pervert right, i.e., He deals justly in all that He does. They conclude from this, that no man, no sufferer, dare justify himself; it is his duty to humble himself under the just hand of God. Job assents to all this, but his assent is mere sarcasm at what they say. He admits that everything that God does is right, and must be acknowledged as right; not, however, because it is right in itself, but because it is the act of the absolute God, against whom no protest uttered by the creature, though with the clearest conviction of innocence, can avail...What God says and does must be true and right, even if it be not true and right in itself. The God represented by the friends is a God of absolute justice; the God of Job is a God of absolute power.*¹ I think that Keil and Delitzsch may have overstated the case, at least through Job 10, but it is a good contrast of ideas. We often hear the disagreement between the ultra-Calvinists and the Armenians with respect to God's sovereignty and man's free will, the ultra-Calvinists seeing the free will of man as being illusory at best and the Armenians seeing man's free will as superior to God's sovereignty in matters of salvation (i.e., they believe that man can have salvation and then lose it through an act of free will).

Barnes: *[Job] admits in general the truth of what Bildad had said, that no one can be just with God, and that if God should enter into judgment with man he could not answer him for one of a thousand of his offences. He thus shows that he had recovered his equanimity, and that he never meant in vindicating his own innocence to maintain that he was absolutely free from sin.*²

You may have noticed that in the book of Job, a speech given by any party does not necessarily refer directly back to the immediately preceding speech. It can refer to what has been said some time ago, as occurs in this chapter. Job will deal with what Eliphaz said, as well as Bildad, and pose questions for them as well.

What Job does in this chapter reminds me a little of Cassius Clay, bouncing around, jabbing here and jabbing there. *Fear, hope, confidence, despair, and a sense of the severity of his sufferings, by turns have possession of his mind, and he gives vent in turn to them all. There is, therefore, at times apparent inconsistency in his language and thoughts; but the object of the poem was to exhibit these contending emotions, and to show how the mind is*

¹ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 339.

² Barnes' *Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 207.

*agitated in scenes like these.*³ Job is utterly routed, and does not even dispute what Bildad has said, exactly, but thinks out loud, offering this scenario and that, admitting to the difficulty of his position. God is the Creator and Preserver of the universe; Job cannot call God into court. God is far too powerful for Job. Job cannot even catch his breath, he is under so much pressure from God. Job even suggests that this is the work of Satan (the wicked one or the lawless one). There is nothing that Job can do; there is no mediator between himself and God. And he knows that he is not alone.

Both Eliphaz and Bildad have presented a rather limited view of God—those who do well are blessed and it is observable; and those who rebel against God are disciplined, and it is observable. Theirs is a God of absolute justice Who soon reveals His decisions of judgment. Job sees God as One Who is absolute power; God is right simply because He has the power to be. As the Creator, He decides what is right. Job, if anything, presents a God Who is unapproachable in matters of dispute. It makes little or no sense to dispute with God, Who is perfect righteousness, perfect justice and all-powerful over a matter of justice. Job sees no venue from which he can approach God with his questions, his confusion or his protests. There is no court in which they could meet; there is no arbiter who could render a neutral, binding decision. Job is in absolute misery, he is accused by his friends, and he has nowhere to turn and no realistic options to pursue. And, in dealing with his lot in life, Job will then either express sarcasm (which I believe to be the case) or confusion at his misery (which I believe also to be the case). He will tell his friends that he does not even know his own soul, reasoning that if God is just and all-powerful, then he is under severe discipline and he has personally no clue as to why. Keil and Delitzsch: *If, then Job's suffering were not so severe, and his faith so powerfully shaken, he would comfort himself with the thought the the divine ways are unsearchable; since, on the one hand, he cannot deny the many traces of the justice of the divine government in the world (he does not deny them even here), and on the other hand, is perplexed by the equally numerous incongruities of human destiny with the divine justice. (This thought is rendered more consolatory to us by the revelation which we possess of the future life; although even in the later Old Testament times the least judgment is referred to as the adjustment of all these incongruities; vid., the conclusion of Ecclesiastes) His own lot might have remain always inexplicable to him, without his being obliged on that account to lose the consciousness of the divine love, and that faith like Asaph's, which, as Luther says, struggles towards God through wrath and disfavour, as through thorns, yea, even through spears and swords.*⁴

In the first couple verses, Job recognizes his own moral inferiority to God. One of the constant themes of the Bible is man's inherent sinfulness. Only God's Word brings resolution to the problem of God's perfection and man's sinfulness. Job asks, "[How can a man be righteous before God?](#)" What Eliphaz and Bildad suggested, Job states outright. Job does not assert his own sinlessness, but recognizes that in a dispute, he might have an answer for God one time in a thousand (which is an idiom for *never*). In vv. 4–12, Job states his knowledge of the character, essence and accomplishments of God. We must recognize that all this was written prior to any accepted books of Scripture. We have at best, Genesis, which is not alluded to, indicating that Job and his friends speak of God as they have learned from the traditions of their fathers and from what they have observed in life. The God in Job's eyes was not some part of a great and vast universe, but the Creator of same. The gods of some men are small gods, who occupy only a certain portion of space, who have weaknesses and failures, whose righteousness is not perfect. The God of Job could overturn mountains in anger (v. 5), could shake the earth from its orbit (v. 6); Job's God created the great constellations (v. 9) and His works cannot be numbered (v. 10). God does not occupy a body as we have (v. 11) and His doings cannot be questioned (v. 12). Barnes says of this portion of Scripture: *He proceeds to argue that God is an absolute sovereign; that he distributes favours and judgments in accordance with his own inscrutable will; that men ought not to presume to set in judgment on the doings of the Almighty, and that even if he had the fullest conviction of his own innocence, he would not presume to enter into an argument with him, but would make supplication to him.*⁵

In vv. 13–23, Job complains of the pain and suffering that God has caused him; it is so unrelenting, that Job cannot even catch his breath (v. 18). Job's desire is to speak to God, to beg for His mercy and grace (v. 15). But Job cannot call God into court (v. 19). Then Job has a thought—what about the wicked one, the criminal? The earth

³ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 206–207.

⁴ Keil & Delitzsch's Commentary on the Old Testament; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 340.

⁵ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 207.

was given into his hand—if he isn't the cause for all of this, then who (v. 24)? However, Job does not dwell on this thought for very long—why will be covered later. Job speaks of his previous life as days which have rushed by him and then appeals to his friends with a different line of reasoning. In vv. 27–29, Job says, if he is guilty of this unnamed, horrible sin, what good does it do him to lie to them about it? Why would he go to so much trouble to argue and disagree when it is obvious to everyone that God has him under great condemnation? Then Job accuses his friends of judging him based upon what is on the surface—his clothing is the illustration. They have, in their own minds, thrown Job into the pit and, because his clothes have come up soiled, he is therefore abhorred. They have judged Job by what has occurred on the surface. Finally, the high point of this chapter, Job cries out the universal cry for a Mediator—Someone Who is both equal to man and to God—Someone Who can stand between God and Job to state Job's case, to plead for God's mercy upon Job (v. 35). And then Job pleads directly for God to remove His hand from upon Job (v. 34). Only in the Christian faith do we have such a One to go to.

When it comes to an outline or to separating a chapter into edible chunks, people have varying reasons for making the breaks where they do. From Bible to Bible, the paragraphs will begin and end in different places. I went with the chapter delineation below by beginning a new topic after each question. It appeared to me that Job would make several statements and then sum it all up with a question, rather than the other way around. However, in reading through again, these questions appear to be transitional thoughts, blending what has been said with what is to come. There is nothing divine, or even particularly right or wrong with the way a chapter is separated into sub-topics. Both Scofield and the NASB compliment their translations with a chapter or section heading, to give the reader and general idea of what is to come. This is not adding to the Word, as they do not tout these headings as divinely inspired; they are merely offered as a quick and dirty summation to orient the reader to what is to come. My chapter divisions are meant to do the same thing.

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Introduction: How Can a Man Be Right Before God?

Literally:

Smoother English rendering:

Then Job responded; then he said:

Job 9:1

Then Job responded by saying,

The word rendered *answered* or *responded* is ʾânâh (אָנָה) [pronounced ʾaw-NAWH], a word found well over 300 times in the Bible. Strong's #6030 BDB #772.

**“Truly I know that [this is] so [or, right].
And how is [fallen] man righteous with God?**

Job 9:2

**“Truly I know that this is correct.
So, how is it possible for [fallen] man to be
righteous with God?**

The first thing that Job says is the adverb ʾâmênâm (אָמֵן) [pronounced awm-NAWM], a word found rather sparingly throughout the Old Testament (9 times), and is rendered *of a truth, indeed, truly, surely*. It is used as an emphatic assertion (called an *asseveration* in BDB), sending me to the dictionary. It is a hard call to whether Job is being truthful here, or sarcastic. It is possible that Job is saying, *well, duh!* Strong's #551 BDB #53. As we have observed in the previous chapter, what Bildad said was essentially correct. Job can agree with it. However, it has nothing to do with Job, per se.

This is followed by *I know* and the conjunction kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee] which means *when, that, for, because*. Strong's #3588 BDB #471. The last word in the first line is the adverb kên (כֵּן) [pronounced kane] is generally rendered *so, rightly, well, so very, so long, so often, it is so*. Kên also is an adjective which means *right, veritable, honest, upright*. Strong's #3651 BDB #485.

So, Job has said, **“Truly I know that this is so.”** What does Job recognize as being true? That God will not pervert that which is right (Job 8:3). Bildad has said that they should examine the wisdom of the ancients. Job can hang

with that. It is of the utmost importance to be certain of what you trust in (Job 8:13–15)—Job agrees. God will not reject a man of integrity (Job 8:20); this is correct. Bildad spoke of the lives of the godless and the recalcitrants and the fact that they might enjoy some temporary prosperity. Job also agrees with that. “Obviously, God will not reject a man of personal integrity and He will not prosper and bless people who are morally reprehensible.” (Job 8:20). Job agrees with all of these statements. Again, it is a difficult call as to how much of this is sarcasm. We don’t know how much Job is holding back if he has found Bildad to be irritating. It is a quick way of acknowledging what Bildad has said, agreeing with it, and moving on. As you recall, with Bildad, the majority of what he said was accurate—in fact, I don’t recall any statement which was blatantly false. The problem with Bildad’s word from the ancients is that it did not apply to Job’s situation. Generally speaking, in most cases, what Bildad had to say was accurate and reasonable. Even though Bildad was not as eloquent as Eliphaz, he did not come right out and say, “Job, you have committed the most grievous sin in your life and you need to deal with that sin right now. We want to know what it is, first of all, and then we want to see you repent of it, turn from it and ask God’s forgiveness for it.” He insulted Job from the get-go, but he only implied that Job had committed some horrible transgression. So Job can, “I agree with what it is that you have said.” He didn’t say, “I agree with what you’re telling me.” That is, Job didn’t say, “I agree with what you are implying; I agree with what you mean but didn’t say.” He agrees with the surface meaning of Bildad’s speech. In other words, Job has routed his accuser by agreeing with him, because, implications aside, what Bildad had to say was not something that Job could argue with. What Job then plans to do is to take the subject matter of Bildad’s speech and follow it out some more. Further, Job will insert his present personal experience, because Bildad did not really deal with that.

The word used for *man* is the masculine singular of *ʿănôwsh* (אָנוֹשׁ) [pronounced *en-OHSH*], which is often translated *mortal*, *mortal man*, *mankind*. However, this noun for *man* has the exact same primary consonants as the verb for *sick*, *weak*. Both Barnes and Zodhiates tell us that this is a word for *feeble man*, *man liable to disease and calamity*, *fallen man*, *depraved man*. This word could also be applied to lower classes of men; i.e., *peons*, *hoi polloi*, *the great unwashed*, *rabble*, *wretched man*, *peasant*. Strong’s #582 BDB #60.

Then Job posed a question. With the interrogative, he uses the Qal imperfect of the verb *tsâdaq* (צָדַק) [pronounced *tsaw-DAHK*], and it means *to be righteous*, *to be just*, *to be justified*. Strong’s #6663 BDB #842. This could read: *And is a man righteous with God?* or *Can a man be righteous with God?* Recall that Eliphaz posed almost the same question in Job 4:17: “‘Can mortal man apart from [or, more than] God be righteous? If apart from [or, more than] his Maker, is a man cleaner?’” However, this is a different context. In Eliphaz’s speech, God did not even trust his own angels with important duties—let alone man.⁶ Here, Job is presenting a different question. Man is being stood up next to God and Job is asking how is it possible for man to be righteous standing up next to God? Barnes: *The question here asked is, in itself, the most important ever propounded by man...This has been the great inquiry which has always been before the human mind, Man is conscious that he is a sinner. He feels that he must be regarded as such by God. Yet his happiness here and hereafter, his peace and all his hope, depend on his being treated as if he were righteous, or regarded as just before God.*⁷

So Job poses these questions to his friends and you may ask *why?* Job’s friends have presented themselves as theological experts. Bildad has studied the words and thoughts of the ancients and Eliphaz has had great religious visions. Therefore, in their great combined wisdom, they should be able to answer: *How can a man, a frail human being, establish his own relative justice before god? How can his righteousness be argued, or even presented, as a case?*⁸

So you may wonder—wasn’t Job saved? Didn’t he know that he was righteous before God? First of all, man’s notion of salvation was limited. In fact, in Job’s time, it was very limited. There was no extent Scripture that we know of (not that was readily available—certainly, the records to be used for Genesis existed—in fact, I believe that the manuscript for the first portion of Genesis existed. However, this was not distributed. People were saved then as they are now—God the Holy Spirit makes enough of the gospel understandable to them; they believe in Jesus

⁶ Eliphaz will reiterate this in Job 15:14–15. Bildad will ask the same question: “How then can a man be just with God? Or how can he be clean who is born of woman?” (Job 25:4).

⁷ Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 207.

⁸ The Layman’s Bible Commentary; Balmer H. Kelly, John Knox Press; Vol. 8, ©1962, p. 78.

Christ (then, Y^ehowah God) and they are saved. The exact mechanics were hidden from man and specifically hidden from Satan. When animal sacrifices were offered to God, God the Holy Spirit made enough of that act real to either the person offering the animal or the one watching to realize that a relationship with God was undeserved, that we are sinners, and that God saves us on the basis apart from our works, but because of a substitutionary death of some sort. We won't know in this lifetime how much a man could grasp—and certainly, he could not put it into words. We definitely know that Satan, the greatest genius of all time, did not grasp the message at all, but that mortal man got enough of it to believe in Y^ehowah God and become regenerated. It was clear then, as it is now, that man, next to God, is not righteous. If you took my best week as a Christian and stood me next to God, I would be filthy and embarrassed. But we stand in our Lord Jesus Christ—we share His righteousness and His perfection and in this way, we stand justified and righteous before God. When it came to the means for this, Satan, although an expert in the Old Testament writings, did not have a clue and thought that when he engineered the crucifixion of Jesus, that he was putting an end to God's walk upon the earth and that he was able to wreak his vengeance upon God the Son. We don't know if Satan began to get a clue when the earth was suddenly enshrouded in darkness or whether the victorious proclamation of Jesus Christ to the saints in the heart of the earth was the first time that he understood what had happened.

This question by Job is the basis for a major difference between Christianity and most other religions: Christianity recognizes that man is unrighteous and cannot be made righteous by his own actions of righteousness. *Hear my prayer, O Y^ehowah,...and do not enter into judgment with Your servant. For in Your sight, no man living is righteous* (Psalm 143:1a, 2). *Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth is closed and all the world is accountable to God, because by the works of the Law, no flesh will be justified in His sight, for through the Law is the knowledge of sin* (Rom. 3:19–20). *Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for The righteous man will live by faith* (Gal. 3:11 Habak. 2:4). This statement by Job also caused Barnes to briefly mention other faiths: *This inquiry has led to all forms of religion among men; to all the penances and sacrifices of different systems; to all the efforts which have been made to devise some system that shall make it proper for God to treat men as righteous. The question has never been satisfactorily answered except in the Christian revelation, where a lan is disclosed by which God "may be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth." Through the infinite merits of the Redeemer, man, though conscious that he is personally a sinner, may be treated as if he had never sinned; though feeling that he is guilty, he may consistently be for ever treated as if he were just. The question asked by Job implies that such is the evidence and the extent of human guilt, that man can never justify himself.*⁹ Our laws and judicial system is an imperfect mirror of God's justice and judicial system. When an innocent man has been accused of a crime, his correct defense is to show that he did not do it, that he is not guilty of the offense of which he has been accused. Ideally speaking, if the person did not commit the crime, then he is declared guiltless before society. If he committed the crime, then promising never to do it again does not remove the guilt from committing the crime. Saying that he feels remorse does not cleanse the criminal and make him innocent. Some sort of punishment must be exacted. Similarly, we all stand before God guilty. We have no defense. Furthermore, even when we tell God that we will never do it again, we do it again. This is, by the way, religion. Religion, at best, agrees that we have done wrong and promises that we will never do it again. Some religions do not even address the issue of crimes and offenses committed against God, because, considering the little they offer, sin would just become a thorny issue that their theology cannot resolve. This does not in any way excuse us from the punishment which we deserve for the commission of the offenses which we done before God. Ideally speaking, if you have committed a crime, the law cannot make you just before society—and, again, we are speaking of ideals as our law mirrors God's judicial system. In a like fashion, the Law of God, as set down in the books of Moses, cannot make us just before God. We are guilty of the crimes which we have committed against God. There is no slippery way that we can get out of that. We come from a family of criminals, we have a predilection towards crime against God, and we have committed innumerable crimes against God. God's Law does but one thing in this case: it condemns us to separation from God, which includes the judgment and punishment of God. Apart from serving out our just sentence, which is eternal separation from God, we cannot be just before Him.

The upshot here is that, even though Job is maintaining his personal integrity, he is not asserting that he is sinless nor that he righteous before God. However, in all of this pain that Job is suffering, even though he desires later to

⁹ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 207–208.

face God in court, to question God concerning His treatment of him, he does not abandon his faith in God or in God's perfect righteousness, as Satan said that he would. "According to Your knowledge, I am indeed not guilty; yet there is no deliverance from Your hand. Your hands fashioned and made me together and would You destroy me? Recall now, that You have made me as clay and would You turn me into dust again? Did You not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese? Did you not clothe me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews? You have granted me life and grace and Your care has preserved my spirit." (Job 10:7–12).

**"If he desires to dispute with Him
he could not answer Him once out of a
thousand.**

Job 9:3

**"If one desired to disagree with Him
one could not answer Him once out of a
thousand.**

Job begins v. 3 with the hypothetical particle and the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *châphêts* (פ) [pronounced *khaw-FATES*], which is generally translated *to delight in*; it can also mean *to take pleasure in*, *to desire*, *to long to*. Strong's #2656 BDB #343. This is an hypothetical situation that Job is introducing in the third person, removed from his circumstances and those of his friends. "Let's just say that someone wanted to take issue with God..." The second verb is the Qal infinitive construct of *rîy*^{bv} (רִיב) [pronounced *ree^{bv}*], and this word is translated *to strive* (Gen. 26:22 Job 33:13), *to plead* (Psalm 35:1 Jer. 50:34), *to contend* (Neh. 13:11 Micah 6:1), *to debate* (Prov. 25:9 Isa. 27:8), *to chide* (Ex. 17:2 Judges 8:1). This word properly means *to toss*, *to grapple*; except, apparently, it is with words that one grapples (notable exception: Ex. 21:18). We will stick with *debate*, *contend*, *dispute*. Strong's #7378 BDB #936. Barnes: *That is, if God enters into a controversy with man. If he chooses to charge crime on him, and to hold him responsible for his deeds,. The language here is taken from the courts of justice, and means that if a trial were instituted, where God should submit charges, and the matter were left to adjudication, man could not answer the charges against him.*¹⁰

The second line indicates that such a debate would be futile. How can a man debate or dispute with God? God is perfect, righteous and just—how would it be possible to have a disagreement that He could not answer? What God does is right because God is God. God has defined that which is right and correct and God has no internal contradictions. In a court of law, if a thousand charges was brought against a man by God, the man could not answer even one of them. This is just the opposite of a DA who brings a dozen or so charges against a suspect, hoping that the courts will convict on one of them. Here, God brings a thousand charges against man and a conviction is obtained on all 1000 counts. This is equivalent to saying that man cannot answer a single charge made by God against him. What is implied is that there are innumerable charges against us by God. And Job says this as a righteous man. As Barnes put it: *[A man's] sins are to be reckoned by thousands. They are numerous, as his years, his months, his weeks, his days, his hours, his moments; numerous as his privileges, his deeds, and his thoughts. For not one of those sins can he answer. He can give no satisfactory account before an impartial tribunal for any of them.*¹¹

One of the interesting parallels in the book of Job is the fact that what happens in the life of Job is based upon a courtroom dispute between God and Satan. When Satan brings an objection before God, God condescends to answer it. This is because there are millions of fallen and elect angels who will not receive a second chance, who need to know that God is just and that His ways are righteous. Also, we as man, need to understand these things as well. The language which Job uses is appropriate to the courtroom. As the NIV Study Bible pointed out, "answer him" (vv. 3,15,32), "argue with him" (v. 14), "innocent...plead...Judge" (v. 15), "summon(ed)" (v.v. 16,19), "pronounce me guilty" (v. 20), "judges" (v. 24), "court" (v. 32), "charges against me" (10:2), "witnesses" (10:17).¹²

¹⁰ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 208.

¹¹ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 208.

¹² The NIV Study Bible; ©1995; p. 734.

**“A wise of heart and mighty of strength—
Who has become obstinate regarding Him
then he is at peace?”**

Job 9:4

**“God is wise in His thinking and He is
omnipotent—
Who has become obstinate and pig-headed
against Him and is then at peace?”**

v. 4 is a continuation of v. 3—the One wise of heart and mighty of strength is God. Young: *Wise in heart and mighty in power*; Rotherham: *Wise in heart and alert in vigour*; REV: *He is wise, He is all-powerful*. With regards to His wisdom, the writer of Proverbs writes: *For Y^ehowah gives wisdom from His mouth comes knowledge and understanding* (Prov. 2:6). Barnes: *God was a sagacious adversary; that he was able to manage his cause; that he could meet and refute all objection which could be urged; and that it would be in vain to engage in a litigation before him. He so well understood the whole ground of debate, and was so entirely skilled in the merits of the controversy, and could so successfully meet all that could be alleged, that it was useless to attempt to hold an argument with him.*¹³

With regards to His power: *“And all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing. But He does according to His will in the host of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. And no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, ‘What have you done?’ ”* (Dan. 4:35). Barnes: *He is able to execute all his designs, and to carry all his purposes into effect. Man is weak and feeble, and it is hopeless for him to attempt to contend with the Almighty.*¹⁴

The next line begins with the hypothetical particle and the 3rd person masculine singular (a continuation of the hypothetical situation), Hiphil imperfect of qāshāh (קָשָׁה) [pronounced *kaw-SHAWH*], which means *to harden, to be severe, to stiffen, to be fierce*. This verb is used both with the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart (Ex. 7:3, only—it is found in Ex. 13:15) and often with *stiffening the neck* (II Kings 17:14 Jer. 7:26). In more modern language, this means *to become inflexible, unyielding and self-willed; to become obstinate, stubborn, pig-headed and unalterable*. Strong’s #7185 BDB #904.

The preposition which follows is ’el (עַל) [pronounced *el*] and it is a preposition which denotes direction and is usually rendered *in, into, toward, unto, to, regarding*. In a clear inference of hostility, ’el can mean *against*. Strong’s #413 BDB #39. Abijah spoke to the people of Israel and said, *“Sons of Israel, do not fight against Y^ehowah God of your fathers, for you will not succeed.”* (II Chron. 13:12b). *A man who hardens his neck after much reproof will suddenly be broken beyond remedy* (Prov. 29:1). *“I have set a snare for you, and you were also caught, O Babylon, while you yourself were not aware; you have been found and also seized because you have engaged in conflict with Y^ehowah.”* (Jer. 50:24). Barnes: *To harden oneself...refers to the firmness or resolution which one is obliged to adopt who opposes another. Here it means the opposition which man makes to the law and government of the Most High; and the affirmation is, that no one can make such opposition who will not be ultimately overcome...The arrangements of God will take their course, and man must yield to his claims and his government, or be prostrated.*¹⁵

The wāw consecutive is next followed by the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of shālam (שָׁלַם) [pronounced *shaw-LAHM*], and it means *to be in a covenant of peace, to have a peace treaty with, to be at peace with*. Strong’s #7999 BDB #1023. Barnes: *A prosperous voyage is made by falling in with winds and currents, and not in opposing them; prosperous agriculture is carried on by coinciding with the favourable seasons of the year, and taking advantage of the dews, and rains, and sunbeams that God sends, and not in opposing them; prosperity in regard to health is found in taking advantage of the means which God gives to secure it, and not in opposing them. And the sinner in his course has no more chance of success and prosperity, than a man would have who should make it a point or principle of life always to sail against tides, and currents, and head winds; or he who should set at defiance all the laws of husbandry, and plant on a rock, or in the dead of winter...The great principle*

¹³ Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 208.

¹⁴ Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 208.

¹⁵ Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 208–209.

is, that if a man desires prosperity, he must fall in with the arrangements of God in his providence and grace; and wisdom is seen in studying these arrangements, and in yielding to them.¹⁶

Job is saying, *I know, I know, you cannot stand in opposition to God and be at peace.* It is a simple matter here: God is omnipotent and our power is minuscule by comparison. Being obstinate and standing full-force against God is foolish. That's like walking up to the neighborhood bully who is twice your size and calling him a dork.

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How Can One Question God, the Sustainer of the Universe?

The NIV Study Bible presents the next five verses as a separate hymn. I don't believe that the context warrants that, nor does Job appear as though he is quoting some well-known hymn. However, on the other hand, this portion of what Job says, much like Job 26:6–14, could stand alone as a hymn or a poem.¹⁷

**“The One removing mountains—
and they do not know Who overturned them
in His anger.** Job 9:5

**“The One removing mountains without
warning
and they do not realize even Who
overturned them in His anger.**

Let's look at a few other translations here:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	[God] who removes the mountains, and they know it not, when He overturns them in His anger;
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Who removeth mountains, unawares, Who overturneth them in his anger;
Keil and Delitzsch	Who removeth mountains without their knowing, That He hath overturned them in His wrath;
NASB	<i>It is God</i> who removes the mountains, they know not <i>how</i> , When He overturns them in His anger;
TEV	Without warning he moves mountains and in anger he destroys them.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Who is removing mountains, And they have not known, Who hath overturned them in His anger.

Part of the problem with all the translations that I read is that the first verb is in the Hiphil participle with a definite article. Only Young is close to translating this correctly, and he throws in a relative pronoun where there is none. The first phrase should be *the [One] removing mountains*. The psalmist wrote: **Then the earth shook and quaked; and the foundations of the mountains were trembling and were shaken because He was angry** (Psalm 18:7; see also Judges 5:4–5 Psalm 46:2–3). Our Lord promised His disciples: **“If you have faith as a mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it shall move; and nothing will be impossible to you.”** (Matt. 17:20b).

This is followed by *and they don't know; they* referring back to the mountains. I must admit for all the prejudice which I have held against Today's English Version, I kind of like their very loose rendering of *without warning*. Barnes calls this a Hebraism for *suddenly, unexpectedly*. Even today, with our great technology, we cannot predict an earthquake, even though God has ordained all earthquakes from eternity past. Generally speaking, the conjunction means this should be a new line, but that does not appear to be the case here.

¹⁶ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 209.

¹⁷ At this point, the NIV Study Bible, on p. 734, says, *Job is not blessed by it [the hymn], for he does not see that God's power is controlled by goodness and justice.* Job does not feel blessed because God has allowed Satan to afflict him with great pain and suffering. Job recognizes God's perfect goodness and justice, but does not understand why God is doing this to him. It appears to him as though this is in opposition to what he knows of God, yet he does not come right out and say that, yet.

Then we have the relative pronoun, referring back to the *One removing mountains* and the verb *to overturn* with a masculine plural suffix (which refers to the mountains). The final phrase in this verse is *in His anger*. Barnes: *There could scarcely be any more terrific exhibition of the wrath of God than the sudden and tremendous violence of an earthquake.*¹⁸

**“The One shaking earth from her place
and her pillars shudder.**

Job 9:6

**“The One shaking earth from her place
and her pillars shudder.**

What the earth is shaken from is *mâqôwm* (מָקוֹמָהּ) [pronounced *maw-KOHM*], and this means *place*; for a soldier, it may mean where he is *stationed*; it might be where the ark is *situated* or *placed*; for people in general, it would be their *place of abode* (which could be their house or their town). Strong's #4725 BDB #879.

The statement found here is fascinating. I do not know how the ancients viewed planet earth, whether they saw earth as a planet, or even had a clue. The ancient Greeks, circa 400 BC, knew that the world was round and they knew the circumference. Man's understanding of the earth's place within the realm of the universe I would think was more primitive than that 2000 years prior. Today, we understand that the earth has a very distinct place in the universe; it has an exact, elliptical orbit which may be mapped; and even our solar system and galaxy has an orbit of sorts. This statement may have been understood to represent the concept of an earthquake when spoken, yet we can understand this today as being much more dramatic. We have a very similar statement in Isa. 13:13: *“Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken from its place at the fury of Y^{eh}owah of the armies in the day of His burning anger.”*

The verb to go with pillars means *shudder* and it occurs only here in the Hithpael (the reflexive intensive). Once the earth is shaken from her place, her pillars shake themselves. Strong's #6426 BDB #814. The pillars of a building often are an integral part of the structure, holding the building up—the pillars of the earth would be the gravitational pull of the sun, and, possibly to some degree, the gravitational pull of the moon. The use of the word pillars does not mean that Job saw the world as being physically supported upon pillars any more than a scientist who speaks of the sun *rising* thinks that it actually comes up here and goes down over there. That the earth may have been supported upon pillars could have very well been a belief held by all or some of Job's friends is highly likely. If this is the case, then Job would have been speaking in language of accommodation, not expressing his own personal picture of things. In other words, Job is expressing a catastrophic event in terms that his friends would be familiar with. Job did have a correct picture of the earth, as he later tells us that *“[God] hangs the world upon nothing.”* (Job 26:7b).

One of the many things which I received in the mail described the effects of the earth being hit by an asteroid. Let me quote from this: [In the 1990's] *there is almost universal agreement among scientists that Earth has experienced several enormous impacts [from giant asteroids, the size of mountains]...More than 150 impact sites have been identified and studied....[in] 1994...“Shoemaker-Levy 9”...comet plunged into Jupiter with detonating forces that far exceeds all the combined nuclear warheads on Earth. Even though the comet fragmented into 21 pieces before smashing into Jupiter, it took only one piece to blast a crater in the planet large enough to place two planets the side of Earth side-by-side!...there is a lot of debris floating around in space. In fact, scientists have recently documented more than 200 NEO's (near-Earth objects) that regularly intersect earth's orbit around the sun each year!...Earth travels in a cosmic shooting gallery...As the awareness of an asteroid threat grows, scientists have dedicated more time to this area of study. In April 1997, at Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, New Mexico, scientists created a 3-D computer model of a comet impacting the Atlantic ocean. For this computer simulation, they chose a “mile-wide comet that would impact the Atlantic ocean at a 45 degree angle. (In cosmic terms, a mile-wide comet is very small.) Using reference data tables and a new supercomputer from Intel, they calculated the impact would release the energy of 15 million Hiroshima-strength bombs...the blast could vaporize up to 1 trillion tons of water...the resulting tidal wave would be about 300 feet high—in which case, Florida and much of the East coast of the United States, along with the coastal regions of Europe would be washed away...Since the Bible predicts two impacts, one hitting the sea and the other striking a landmass, briefly consider*

¹⁸ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 209.

the dramatic outcome of such events. The ocean impact would set up a sequence of events that would have long-term consequences: First, a series of tidal waves would destroy many coastal cities. The violence of the affected ocean (caused by the displacement of billions of cubic feet of water in less than 30 seconds) would cause adjoining ocean tides to rampage, resulting in coastal regions far beyond the impacted ocean to be flooded and destroyed. The shock waves from the initial impact would sink thousands of ships. Trade between nations would immediately stop. The violence of the ocean would continue to prevent ships from carrying food and merchandise between ports for several weeks. These shock waves would also kill thousands of sea creatures. The death of many sea creatures would fill that portion of the ocean with rotten flesh and red tide. Red tide is an algae that looks like blood and flourishes in anoxic (oxygen deficient) water. Weather patterns would be violently disrupted. Great hurricanes and thousands of tornados would be spawned by powerful changes in the atmosphere. The jet stream would be moved from its seasonal course and rains from the condensing water vapor would flood certain nations of Earth for weeks, while in other areas, famine would occur in otherwise fruitful places. If an asteroid impacted a continent, the results would be no less devastating. Notice the vents that would be set into motion: an asteroid striking a continent would cause extensive death by contaminating the underground water supplies of large cities. Ground ways from the impact would sheer septic fields allowing deadly bacteria to enter the aquifers. The seismic havoc radiating from the impact site would destroy the geological integrity of toxic waste sites. The leakage of lethal chemicals and radioactive waste into underground streams would contaminate drinking water for thousands of square miles. Many people would die or become violently ill from drinking poisonous water. A great impact would trigger earthquakes and tremors worldwide by releasing huge tectonic stresses. The impact would disrupt the infrastructures of communication, travel and commerce. Even a remote impact some would have horrific effects upon people living a thousand miles away. If the impact were substantial enough, it is possible that even Earth's orbit about the Sun could be altered—seasons would be hotter or colder than they are now. Further, the gravitational effect of the moon on the tides would be much more pronounced, causing continual flooding. Obviously the loss of human life would be pandemic in either scenario.¹⁹

There are several passages of Scripture which sounded quite similar to what this pamphlet described: **And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven."** (Heb. 12:26 Hag. 2:6). **For the windows above are opened and the foundations of the earth shake. The earth is broken asunder. The earth is split through. The earth is shaken violently. The earth reels to and fro like drunkard and it totters like a shack** (Isa. 24:18b–20a). **And the first trumpet sounded and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burnt up, and a third of the trees were burn up, and all the green grass was burnt up. Then the second angel sounded and something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood and a third of the creatures, which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed. Ad the third angel sounded and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the lakes and the name of the star is called Wormwood; and a third of the waters became [polluted, like] wormwood; and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter** (Rev. 8:7–11). Whether Job's reference is to the less dramatic earthquake or if he is referring to the destruction of the earth which is to come, I don't know. I would suspect that Job probably meant the former but the Holy Spirit allows for both.

**"The one speaking to the sun
and it does not rise;
and He seals up the stars.**

Job 9:7

**"The One Who commands the sun
and it does not rise;
and He seals up the stars.**

It has been a part of language since time immemorial to speak of the *sun rising and setting*, although that phrase is inaccurate. However, few of us would wince if Einstein spoke of taking an early walk shortly after the sun arose, so there is no need to fault the Bible for using conventional language. However, this is not the word for which means *to rise up*; that is verb *gā`āh* (גָּאָה) [pronounced *gaw-AW*]. Strong's #1342 BDB #144; nor is this the word *ālāh* (אָלָה) [pronounced *gaw-LAWH*], which means *to go up, to ascend, to rise*. Strong's #5927 BDB #748; nor is this the verb *qûwm* (קוּם) [pronounced *koom*], which means, among other things, *to stand, to rise up*.

¹⁹ A Pamphlet (actually, a mailer) entitled *Asteroid Impact! Scientific Lunacy or Bible Prophecy?*, written by Larry Wilson and put out by Wake Up America Seminars, Inc. in 1998.

Strong's #6965 BDB #877. All three of these verbs have already been found in the book of Job and Job did not use any of them here. He used the Qal imperfect of *zârach* (נָצַח) [pronounced *zaw-RAHKKH*], which properly means *to scatter rays, to shine forth, to break out*, and even, when speaking of a plant, *to spring forth* (this is a cognate referred to in this latter case). We find this verb used once to refer to leprosy *breaking out* upon the skin (II Chron. 26:19). Strong's #2224 BDB #280. It is closely related to another verb, *zârâh* (נָהַח) [pronounced *zaw-RAW*], which means *to scatter*. Strong's #2219 BDB #279.

Let's allow Barnes to explain the verb *seal*: *The word seal in the Scriptures...is used with considerable latitude of signification. It is employed in the sense of shutting, closing, making fast—as when any thing was sealed, it was shut up or made fast. The Hebrews often used a seal where we would use a lock, and depended on the protection derived from the belief that one would not break open that which was sealed, where we are obliged to rely on the security of the lock against force. If there were honour and honesty among men everywhere, a seal would be as secure as a lock—as in a virtuous community a sealed letter is as secure as a merchant's iron "safe." To seal up the stars, means so to shut them up in the heavens, as to prevent their shining; to hide them from the view. They are concealed, hidden, made close—as the contents of a letter, a package, or a room are by a seal, indicating that no one is to examine them, and concealing them from the view. So God hides from our view the stars by the interposition of clouds.*²⁰ Strong's #2856 BDB #367.

All this verse means is that from our vantage point, there would be no sighting of the sun and the stars. However, the miracle which would be impressive, to us, anyway, is for the sun to be removed from our periphery and to still be sustained. For God, the hiding of the sun, the removal of the sun, or the retaining of the sun in the sky for an extended period of time is all equally easy. Later, we will see one of the most impressive of miracles in Joshua 10:12 where the sun is kept overhead for roughly an additional 12 hours. This particular verse does not look back to that event, as in Joshua's time, the sun remained out for an additional half a day. Furthermore, through our examination of the book of Job, we have seen that the incidents herein recorded occurred quite a long time prior to the time of Joshua.

The prophets do speak of a time when the sun will be darkened to us: *For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash forth their light. The sun will be dark when it rises and the moon will not shed its light* (Isa. 13:10). *"I will cover the heavens and I will darken their stars; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon will not give forth its light. All the shining lights in the heavens I will darken over you and I will set darkness on your land," declares Y^ehowah God.*" (Ezek. 32:7b–8). This is not necessarily anything which is that miraculous. In this case, we could be speaking of massive amounts of air pollution, again along the lines of the result of a meteor of significant size striking the earth. *"For the day of Y^ehowah is coming; certainly it is near. A day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness...Before Him, the earth quakes, the heavens tremble, the sun and the moon grow dark and the stars lose their brightness."* (Joel 2:1b–2a, 10; see also Jer. 4:28 32:8 Joel 2:31 3:15 Zeph. 1:15 Zech. 14:6).

In terms of interpretation, there is no need to suppose that Job was referring back to a particular time in history—not the great flood where mountains rose and fell; and not some unknown time when the sun cannot be seen due to clouds and rainy weather (which would be trivial). Job is recognizing God's absolute power over the entire universe. A second point to briefly ponder here is, did Job have some amount of prophecy given to very early man about the time that is to come? I don't believe that to be the case either. I believe the reasoning that Job is operating from is that these are things which God is fully capable of doing, not necessarily things which He has done nor things which Job sees God doing on the horizon. This in no way lessens Job's stance—in fact, he is expressing faith the God can do these things because of His omnipotence, which is in stark contrast to Job himself and his shadow of a life. Job did not require any sort of prophecy; nor did his friends.

Now this leads us off on a tangent which I want to pursue. Why did the people of Isaiah's time need to know about the prophecies of the end times? In fact, most of the prophets and even many of the Apostles spoke of the end times, which, as we have seen, are at least 2000-3000 years removed from their time period—so why were these prophecies made then rather than God bringing a prophet along right before the tribulation to give believers all the

²⁰ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 210–211. Keil and Delitzsch

concur with his opinion.

pertinent information? What Isaiah and many other prophets did was known as dual prophecy—they prophesied something which was going to occur in the near future and something which was going to occur in the far future. Sometimes these prophecies blended into one another and sometimes a prophetic utterance could be applied to both the near and the far future. Now, I just explained what occurred, but I did not explain why it occurred. God knew that He was going to close the canon of Scripture. At the last *pen stroke* of John, that would be the end of the recording of Scripture. Therefore, God saw to it that everything that we need to know up until the end times is included in His Word. He did not forget a thing, including an outline of the history which is to come and specific directions as to what believers are to do during that time period. His prophets recorded things which they certainly did not fully understand, using the vocabulary of their generation—however, thousands of years later, the very words that they used have come to make more and more sense to us. Why did God close the canon of Scripture? For at least two reasons: (1) God is perfect and His plan is perfect. He has recorded everything that we need to know in His Word. God has the ability to do so and He did so. He has left His Word with us which has been the source of comfort, direction and spiritual growth for untold millions of believers. It stands as a witness against many untold millions of believers and unbelievers as well. (2) God has sponsored several different programs throughout human history. Man will not be able to make some objection that had God's Plan been handled differently, then man would have fared better. Mankind has operated under a number of different programs and has essentially failed, as a whole, under every single one. There were generations who knew Adam and the woman and what had transpired prior to the first pregnancy. There were generations who heard directly from Noah the judgment of God which was immediately to come. There were generations who refused to listen to God, but desired that Moses hear God and then tell them (the demanded an mediator!). There were generations who listened to the prophets of God tell them what was going to happen in the near future and they would see these things come to pass. There was a generation who observed first-hand the teaching of our Lord—God come in the flesh to the earth and spoke directly to man. There was a generation of two who experienced the first baptism and subsequent filling of the Holy Spirit, so that there would be period of time in their lives when they would be in fellowship and sinless and their lives, no matter how mediocre, could count for God. And there have been many generations who have the entire canon of Scripture, whose riches cannot be unearthed in a lifetime, who have the Holy Spirit to guide them, and who have provided for them pastor teachers to teach them God's Word. The closing of the canon of Scripture merely ushers in a new era of a different program so that man will be without excuse in the end times. (3) Finally, God closed the canon of Scripture to protect us. We do not have to test every prophet who comes along. We do not have to be confused about such things as papal authority, false prophets like Joseph Smith, oddball charismatics who have daily revelations from God, men who wash dishes with Jesus and report on what our Lord had to say, etc. We don't have to be concerned with that because we know that every single one of those people are inspired of Satan and that the canon of Scripture, God's Word, has been closed. There is no prophecy and there is no additional inspired utterance because everything that we need to know is recorded in God's Word. There are no appendices to be added to Scripture and there is nothing which God has forgotten to include. God's Word spoke to man in 300 AD just as well as it will speak to man in 2000 AD.

**“Stretching out the heavens for Himself
and trampling upon the high places of the
sea.**

Job 9:8

**“Enveloping us in an atmosphere by Himself
and marching over the raging waves of the
seas.**

The earth had to be enveloped by an atmosphere, which holds our oxygen and our water; God stretched this atmosphere about the earth alone. Job uses the *lamed* preposition with the 3rd person masculine singular suffix. It could read *for Himself, in regard to Himself, with reference to Himself*. Strong's #none BDB #510. The stretching out of the heavens, as man later found out, is a great deal of stretching out. Most scientists believe that the universe is still in a state of expansion; in any case, the distance that the universe goes is totally beyond the range of our comprehension. Scientists can associate great numbers with the size of the universe, if it can be sized, but these numbers cannot be truly appreciated or fathomed by man. It is somewhat like counting the number of molecules in the ocean—it could be done and we could associate a number with it, but that number would be so huge as to being far beyond our grasp. The stretching out of the heavens is found throughout Scripture: **“Covering Yourself with light as with a cloak, stretching out heaven like a tent curtain.”** (Psalm 104:2). God's dwelling place is said to be in the heavens: **It is He Who is enthroned above the sphere of the earth and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers** (Isa. 40:22). **“Listen to Me, Jacob; and [listen to Me], Israel, whom I have called.**

I am He. I am the first; I am also the last. Certainly My hand founded the earth and My right hand spread out the heavens.” (Isa. 48:12–13a; see also 44:24).

The second verb is the Qal active participle of *dârak*^o (דָּרַךְ) [pronounced *daw-RAHK*^o] and it means *to march, to tread*. This is not *treading water*, mind you, but walking over the water. Strong’s #1869 BDB #201. What is being tread upon is *the heights* or *the high places* (Strong’s #1116 BDB #119) of the seas (Strong’s #3220 BDB #410). Some languages render this as *waves* rather than *heights*; this is acceptable in this context. There is the Mugah codex (which Rotherham calls the *celebrated* Mugah codex) which provides the possible rendering *clouds*, but I believe the correct rendering is *the seas*. Job’s reference here is to the omnipresence of God. The heights of the sea refers to the water while it is under great turmoil. Treading over the seas in itself is amazing; however, treading over seas during a great storm is even more incomprehensible.

Now, the Bible was inspired by the Holy Spirit and our Lord literally fulfilled this verse in Matt. 14:22–26: **And immediately He made the disciples get into the boat, and go ahead of Him to the other side while He sent the multitudes away. And after He had sent the multitudes away, He went up to the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone. But the boat was already many stadia away from the land, battered by the waves; for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night, He came to them, walking upon the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were frightened, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out for fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.”** (Also see Mark 6:45–50 John 6:16–20). In fact, in fulfilling this verse, our Lord has given evidence of His deity once again.

**“Constructing ʿAyish, Kêçîyl and Kîymâh
and chambers of south.**

Job 9:9

**“Making the Great Bear, Orion and Pleiades
and the inner chambers of the south.**

McGee: *We can see that Job knew something about the stars. However, he is not attempting to say that he is in the situation of his misery because he was born under a certain star. That is without a doubt one of the most foolish things men say. Shakespeare had the answer to that. Brutus was talking it over with Mark Anthony and he said, “It is not in our stars that we are underlings but it is in ourselves.” Job knew the stars did not account for its situation. He recognized God as the Creator of the stars.*²¹

In the Massoretic text, the first constellation is written ʿâsh (אֶשׁ) [pronounced *awsh*] (Strong’s #5906 BDB #798), but it is probably a typo²² or the abbreviated form of the word ʿayish (אֵישׁ) [pronounced *GAH-yish*], which is a reference to a constellation—possibly the Great Bear. The Arabic equivalent is probably *nash* and this is a reference to Ursa Major, also known as the Big Dipper, the Wagon or the Plow. The Greek has here instead, Pleiada (Πλειάδα) [pronounced *ply-AH-da*], which we transliterated Pleiades. Strong’s #5906 BDB #747. I mention this because some translations give the transliterated form. The Pleiades [pronounced *PLEA-yuh-deez*] means *the seven sisters*; however, we can only see six stars with the naked eye and an additional 200 starts from this portion of the constellation Taurus with the aide of a telescope, off in the eastern sky. These stars are often confused with the little dipper. In mythology, these seven sisters are the daughters of Atlas and the nymph Pleione. One myth has it that Zeus transformed them into stars (after first transforming them into cloves, of course) to avoid the attention of Orion. The seventh sister is said to be hiding in shame as she married a mere mortal.²³ Perhaps, she was the wife of one of the sons of Noah? See below for information about the Great Bear.

The second constellation is *kêçîyl* (כִּיִּיל) [pronounced *k^eSEAL*] and this either means *fool* (Strong’s #3684 BDB #493—see Psalm 49:10 Eccles. 2:14) or *Orion* (Strong’s #3685 BDB #493—see Isa. 13:10 Amos 5:8). BDB admits that the relationship between the two words is obscure. Barnes, at first, was not much help either, as he wrote: *The word...kesil is from...[a word meaning] to be fat or fleshy; to be strong, lusty firm; and then to be dull, sluggish, stupid—as fat persons usually are.*²⁴ This is the same word, *fool*, to which I referred. However,

²¹ Job; J. Vernon McGee, ©1977, p. 66.

²² this is as per BDB and Owen; I assume their reasoning is the preferred rendering is found once more in Job 38:32.

²³ *World Book Encyclopedia*; ©1983 World Books Inc., Vol. 15, p. 508.

²⁴ *Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 212.

Barnes points out that this is a southern constellation which the Orientals generally refer to as *Giant*, concurring with Gesenius. The reference to Job 38:31b: “[Can you loosen the chains of Orion?](#)” refers to the gravitational pull and the orbits of the stars, not to a superstition that Orion is a giant bound up in the sky. Rotherham also renders this *the Giant*. Keil and Delitzsch explain that Orion is seen as both a powerful giant and, simultaneously, as a insolent fool. Certainly, you have known someone who fits this description. Every grammar school bully can be so described. The Septuagint has ‘Esperon (Ἑσπερον) [pronounced *HES-per-on*], which is the evening star or Venus. In Job 38:31, we have Ὀρίωνος (Ὀρίωνος) [pronounced *oh-RYE-oh-naus*] instead—that is, Orion. This is a difference in the Septuagint, not in the original Hebrew. Orion is also known as the Great Hunter, a easily seen constellation which is on both sides of the celestial equator. There are at least two different myths which refer to Orion as a great hunter and have his death as the result of the sting of a small scorpion; and both myths also have him being translated into heaven or being placed into the stars as a constellation, directly opposite the scorpion which caused his death.²⁵ Betelgeuse [pronounced *BEE-tuhl-jooz*], a deep red star, marks his right shoulder. Three bright star are his belt. A system of gases and dust, the Great Nebula of Orion, makes up the center portion of the sword. Orion is facing Taurus the Bull and appears to be warding off the bull’s attack, using a lion’s skin as a shield.²⁶ I do want to mention just a couple of things about Betelgeuse: Betelgeuse has a diameter which is roughly equal to the orbit of mars. That is, you could fit the first four planets and their orbits and our sun into the star of Betelgeuse—it is that large. It also appears to be expanding and shrinking from 300 million to 400 million miles in diameter. It is 500 light years away from our earth.²⁷

The third constellation mentioned is kîymâh (כִּימָה) [pronounced *kee-MAW*] and most regard this as Pleiades. *The Amplified Bible* calls this a *loose cluster* and the previous two *constellations*. Rotherham renders this one simply as *the Cluster*. Strong’s #3598 BDB #465. In the third place, the LXX has Ἀρκτοῦρον (Ἀρκτοῦρον) [pronounced *ark-TOO-ron*]. Most English translations associate Pleiades with the third Hebrew word here and the Great Bear with the first Hebrew word (in the Greek, this is reversed). Our English transliteration of the Greek is Arcturus, which is the fourth brightest star (excluding the sun) to us. Arcturus, an orange (cool) star, is 80 times brighter than the sun and 36 light years away. The star ship Enterprise traveling at Warp Speed would take 36 years to get there. Its diameter is 30 times that of our sun’s and we have been able to map the orbit of this great star by comparing charts of a thousand years ago compared to the position of the star as we see it now. We estimate that it travels at a rate of 70 miles pers second, four times the speed of our own planet. If you follow out the handle of the Big Dipper, it will point to Arcturus. This star is found in the constellation, Bootes [pronounced *boh-OH-teez*], called the Huntsman, and also known as *the Bear Driver* as it appears to be driving the constellation, Ursa Major (the Great Bear) and the Ursa Minor (the Small Bear) across the sky. One mythological legend calls him the son of Callisto, the Great Bear.²⁸

Finally, Ursa Major, the Big Dipper, or the Great Bear²⁹ is another constellation to which one of these words might refer. The Big Dipper properly is the upper portion of the larger constellation, the Great Bear (Ursa Major), of the northern sky. These stars are roughly 70-80 light years from the earth. *In Greek Mythology, Ursa Major is the nymph Callisto and Ursa Minor is her son Arcas. According to one myth, Zeus loved Callisto and this angered his wife Hera. When Hera tried to kill her, Zeus changed Callisto into a bear. Arcas did not know the bear was his mother, and tried to kill it. So Zeus changed Arcas into a bear, and put them other into the sky to save them from harm.*³⁰

With regards to the Great Bear, Barnes wrote: *It is seen at al times in the northern part of the heavens, perpetually revolving around the North Star, and two of its principal stars point to the North Star always. Its resemblance to a bear, is quite fanciful—as it might be imagined as well to resemble any other object. The design of this fancy was merely to assist the memory. They only thing which seems to have suggested it was its slight resemblance to an*

²⁵ Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 212–213.

²⁶ *World Book Encyclopedia*; ©1983 World Books Inc., Vol.14, p. 648.

²⁷ *World Book Encyclopedia*; ©1983 World Books Inc., Vol. 2, p. 214.

²⁸ *World Book Encyclopedia*; ©1983 World Books Inc., Vol. 2, p. 392.

²⁹ The English know this constellation as the “Waggon” or “Plough”; the Greeks saw it as a wagon drawn by a team of horses (alluded to by their poet, Aratus); and the Egyptians know it as the Bear.

³⁰ *World Book Encyclopedia*; ©1983 World Books Inc., Vol. 2, p. 229.

animal followed by its young. Thus the stars, now known as the “tail,” might have been supposed to resemble to cubs of a bear following their dam... This constellation is so conspicuous, that it has been an object of interest in all ages, and has been one of the groups of stars most attentively observed by navigators, as a guide in sailing. The reason was, probably, that as it constantly revolved around the North Pole, it could always be seen in clear weather, and thus the direction in which they were sailing could always be told. It has had a great variety of names. The name Ursa Major, or the Great Bear, is that which is commonly given to it. It is a remarkable fact, also, that while this name was given to it in the East, a tribe of the American Indians—the Iroquois, also gave the same name of the Great Bear to it. This is remarkable, because, so far as known, they had no communication with each other, and because the name is perfectly arbitrary. Is this evidence that the natives of our country [North America] derived their origin from some of the nations of the East? ³¹

So that you see how the various translations deal with this:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	...the Bear, the Giant and the Cluster.
Keil and Delitzsch	...the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades,... [also found in <i>The Amplified Bible</i> , NAB, NIV, NJB, NKJV, NRSV]
Scofield KJV	...Arcturus, Orion, and the Pleiades,... [also found in Noyes]
Owen's Translation	...Great Bear, Orion, and Pleiades,...
REB	...Aldebaran, and Orion, the Pleiades,...
The Septuagint	...Pleiada and Hesperon and Arktouron,...
TEV	...Dipper, Orion, the Pleiades,...
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	...Osh, Kesil, and Kimah,...

As I have mentioned, when it comes to space, its size is beyond our comprehension. Just the fact of space has inspired tens of thousands of authors to write of it, either in fiction or in the realm of science. The stars themselves are huge beyond our ability to comprehend them and they are added in with creation is almost a footnote. **And God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; He made the stars also** (Gen. 1:16). As we have found, these groups of stars are tremendously huge, all with their own orbits and paths to follow. **“Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades or loosen the cords of Orion? Can you lead a constellation forth in its seas and guide the Bear with her satellites?”** (Job 38:31–32; see also Amos 5:8).

The last line by Job, *the inner chambers of south*, is fascinating. *The Amplified Bible* renders this *and the [vast starry] spaces of the south*. My personal guess is that Job, inspired by the Holy Spirit, refers to the star constellations seen from the southern hemisphere of the earth. I don't know of any other explanation which makes as much sense. Barnes concurs with this, writing, *Probably it means the remote regions of the south, or the part of the heavens which is not visible to the inhabitants of the northern hemisphere. The word rendered chambers means in the Scriptures a private apartment or a dwelling; a part that is separated from the rest by a curtain; a harem, &c. Hence it may mean the abodes of the stars in the south—comparing the heavens with an immense tent, and regarding it as divided into separate apartments. It may mean here the stars which are hidden, as it were, in the recesses of the southern hemisphere, like the private apartments of a house, which all were not allowed to enter. There are some intimations in the book of Job that the true structure of the earth was not unknown at that remote period of the world...and if so, then this may refer to the constellations in the south which are invisible to an inhabitant of the northern hemisphere. There is no impropriety, at any rate, in supposing that those who had traveled into the south had brought reports of stars and constellations seen there which are invisible to an inhabitant of northern Arabia.*³²

Barnes: *This verse, with others of the same description in the book of Job, is of especial importance, as they furnish an illustration of the views which prevailed among the patriarchs on the subject of astronomy. There are frequent references to the sciences in this book...and there is no source of illustration of the views which prevailed in the earliest times in regard to the state of the sciences, so copious as can be found in this poem. The thoughts of men were early turned to the science of astronomy. Not only were they led to this by the beauty of the heavens,*

³¹ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 212.

³² Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 214–215.

and by the instinctive promptings of the human mind to know something about them, but the attention of the Chaldeans and of the other Oriental nations was early drawn to them by the fact that they were shepherds, and that they passed much of their time in the open air at night, watching their flocks. Having nothing else to do, and being much awake, they would naturally contrive to relieve the tediousness of the night by watching the movements of the stars; and they early gave employment to their talents, by endeavouring to ascertain the influence which the stars exerted over the fates of men, and of their imagination, by dividing the heavens into portions having a fancied resemblance to certain animals, and by given them appropriate names. Hence arose the arrangement of the starts into constellations, and the names which they still bear.³³ Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these stars. The One Who leads forth their armies by number. He calls them all by name, because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power. Not one is missing (Isa. 40:26). From a land with a sky relatively of pollution, there would appear to be many stars in the sky; however, Isaiah here speaks of them in groups compared to armies. In days prior to telescopes, this might have seemed to be perhaps a bit of exaggeration. Now that we have an idea as to what is in space, this verse no longer appears to be an exaggeration but an under-exaggeration. Scientists guess that there are as many as 100 billion galaxies, each consisting of 200 billion stars.

Barnes: *It may furnish an illustration of the vastness of the starry heavens to remark, that in the sword of the constellation Orion there is a nebula which is almost visible to the naked eye, which is computed to be 2,200,000,000,000,000,000, or two trillions, two hundred thousand billions times larger than the sun!...If, then, Job, with his limited views of astronomy, saw in this constellation an impressive proof of the greatness of the Almighty, how much more sublime should our views of God! We see this constellation not merely as a beautiful object in the sky...but we see it as so vast as to surpass our comprehension, and behold in it a single nebula, or speck,—not quite visible to the naked eye—that mocks all our powers of conception!*³⁴

Freeman writes about the worship of heavenly bodies: *...[which] is the most ancient and widely spread form of idolatry, and frequent allusions are made to it in the Scriptures. Its chief promoters were called Sabians, and sometimes Zabians; and the idolatry itself is know as Sabaism or Zabaism; probably from the Hebrew tsaba, a host. Thus in the name of the system of objects of worship are indicated: the “hosts of heaven.” It is supposed that many of the precepts in the Mosaic law were directed against Zabaism in its various corrupt forms...The many texts in which the expression “the Lord of hosts” occurs, seem to be directly leveled at Zabaism; teaching that there is a being superior to the hosts of the Zabians worshipped...in Job ix, 7–9...God is declared to be the Creator of the heavenly bodies, and therefore far above them...according to Maimonides the Zabians made images of the sun in gold and of the moon in silver. They built chapels and placed these images in them, believing that the power of the stars flowed into them. They offered to the sun at certain times “seven bats, seven mice, and seven reptiles, together with certain other matters.”*³⁵

**“Doing great things to the point of nothing
of searching;
and marvels [or, extraordinary phenomena]
to the point of nothing of numbering.**

Job 9:10

**“He does significant and astonishing things
which cannot be discovered by simple
human perception;
and extraordinary phenomena beyond
enumeration.**

Let's see how others dealt with this verse:

The Amplified Bible
The Emphasized Bible
NJB
NIV

Who does great things past find out, yes, marvelous things without number.
Who doeth great things, past finding out, And marvels, beyond number.
The works he does are great and unfathomable, and his marvels cannot be counted.
He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted.

³³ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 211.

³⁴ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 213.

³⁵ *Manners and Customs of the Bible*; James M. Freeman; ©1972; pp. 104–105. I looked through Durant and the World Book Encyclopedia and several Bible encyclopedias and could not find corroboration for these names. Although I do not doubt the worship or the practices, I could not find the terms *Sabians*, *Zabians*, *Sabaism* or *Zabaism* anywhere else.

REB	...who does great, unsearchable things, marvels beyond all reckoning.
The Septuagint	Who does great and unsearchable things; glorious also and excellent things innumerable.
TEV	We cannot understand the great things he does, and to his miracles there is no end.
Young's Lit. Translation	Doing great things till there is no searching, And wonderful, till there is no numbering

Of the dozen and a half translations which I peruse, only Young sticks with the completely literal rendering of the Qal active participle of *ʿâsâh* (עָשָׂה) [pronounced *gaw-SAWH*] which means, in the Qal active participle, *making, doing*. Strong's #6213 BDB #793. What God is making is *gâdôwl* (גָּדוֹל) [pronounced *gaw-DOLE*], which means *great in quantity, great in magnitude and extent, vast, unyielding, immutable*. As is often done in the Hebrew, the adjective is used as a substantive and it means *great things, significant and astonishing [or, mind-blowing] things*. Strong's #1419 (& 1431) BDB #147.

These things are further described by the preposition *ʿad* (עַד) [pronounced *gad*] which means *as far as, even to, up to, until, while*. Strong's #5704 BDB #723. This same word can also be considered a conjunction that means *until, until that, to the point that, so that even*. Strong's #5704 BDB #724.

This is followed by the construct of the negative substantive and the noun for *searching*. With the negative onstruct, this means *unsearchable*. Strong's #2714 BDB #350. Literally, we have: *doing great things so that even nothing of a search*. We do little damage by rendering this: *doing significant and extraordinary things to the point of being unsearchable*. These things are called *unsearchable* not because they cannot be scientifically explained, but that the entire process involved to get from point A to point B is beyond human comprehension. The illustration which I have used before are the miracles which God performed in Egypt. Not all of these were necessarily miracles in the sense that God created something instantaneously that was not there before. That kind of a miracle for God is extremely easy for Him to perform. It is like us walking or breathing—we can do it without thinking. However, what God did was set things into motion from eternity past which suddenly seemed to come to pass in Egypt. How should I put this? We can take a single sperm and a single egg and from that and the infusion of life from God, have a person who will have a specific hair-color, specific head shape, specific build, etc., etc., so that if our computers were great enough, we could, by the dissection and examination of these tiny bits of matter, construct almost an exact likeness of what this person would be like at any given age. The fact that all of this information is carried in these few cells is phenomenal and extraordinary. The fact that God knew exactly what must be done in eternity past to insure that at the exact time that Moses gave the command, that Egypt would suddenly be engulfed in frogs—that is an occurrence that goes far beyond human understanding. These are the things which God does and to which Job refers.

The next thing which God does is the Niphal participle of *pâlâ'* (פָּלַא) [pronounced *paw-LAW*] which is often used in conjunction with God performing or doing marvelous and miraculous things (e.g., Ex. 3:20 34:10). Here, it acts as a substantive and should be rendered *that which is extraordinary, extraordinary phenomenon (-na is plural)*; the standard pansy rendering being *marvels*. Strong's #6381 BDB #810.

Then we have the same construction as we did in the previous line: *to the point of nothing of...* This is followed by Hebrew word for number: *miç^ephâr* (מִי־פָאֵר) [pronounced *mis^e-FAWR*]; with the negational construct, it means *innumerable*. Strong's #4557 BDB #708.

Job is simply agreeing with Eliphaz, who said, "[God] does great and unsearchable things—wonders without number." (Job 5:9). In fact, Job almost quotes him exactly, the difference being that Job uses a preposition in the middle of this verse where Eliphaz used a conjunction. Moses told his people, before they entered the land, "Furthermore, Y^ehowah showed great and distressing signs and wonders before our eyes against Egypt, Pharaoh and all his household." (Deut. 6:22).

**“Behold, He passes by me and I see Him not
and He passes through and I do not
perceive in regards to Him.**

Job 9:11

**“Listen, He passes by me yet I don’t see
Him;
furthermore, He passes through and I do not
even perceive His presence.**

The translations of the first verb surprised me. It is the Qal imperfect of *ʿāḇar* (עָבַר) [pronounced *aw-BAHR*]³⁶—Young translates this *goeth over* and Rotherham renders this as *cometh [upon]*; however, Owen gives the simple rendering of *passes over*, which is the meaning BDB gives it. Usually Owen gives a looser translation than does Rotherham or Young. Strong’s #5674 BDB #716.

The rest of the line is, literally, *over me and not I see*; there is no 3rd person suffix.

The second verb is the Qal imperfect of *chālah* (חָלַח) [pronounced *chaw-LAHF*], which means *to pass through, to pass on* (among other things). Strong’s #2498 BDB #322. The second verb in this line is the Qal imperfect of *bīyn* (בִּין) [pronounced *bean*] and it means *discern, perceive, consider, understand*. Strong’s #995 BDB #106. This is followed by the *lāmed* preposition with a 3rd person suffix.

Job alludes at once to both God’s omnipresence and His immaterial, spiritual being. Also to the fact that we may not physically behold God. **“Observe, I go forward, but [God] is not there. And backward, but I cannot perceive Him. When He acts on the left, I cannot see Him; He turns on the right, I cannot see Him.”** (Job 23:8–9).

Barnes connects this verse to what has preceded it: *That is, he passes along—as the silent movements of the heavenly bodies. “I see the evidence of his existence. I can see that God must be there—moving along by me in the orbs of night and in the march of the constellations, but I cannot see God himself. He passes by, or rather, he passes over me...as in the majestic movement of the heavenly bodies over my head.” That is, I think, the idea, and the image is exceedingly poetic and beautiful. The heavens are seen to move in silent grandeur. The northern constellation rolls around the pole. The others move on as a marshalled army. They go in silent and solemn order, and God must be there. But, says Job, I cannot see him. I can feel that he must be there, and I look out on the heavens to see him, but my eyes fail, and I cannot behold him. He passes on, and I see him not. Who has ever looked upon the heavens in the still night, and seen the silent grandeur of such movements of the heavenly host, without some such feeling—some emotion of inexpressible awe—as if he, if I may so express it, could almost see God?*³⁶

**“Behold, He snatches away, could one [lit.,
he] cause him to reconsider?
Who will say unto Him, ‘What are you doing?’**

Job 9:12

**“Listen, if He chooses to remove what you
have, could anyone make him reconsider?
Who could say to Him, ‘Why did you do that?’**

It appears as though this verse will need some work:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Behold, He snatches away; who can hinder or turn Him back? Who will say to Him, What are You doing?
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Lo! he snatcheth away, who can bring it back? Who shall say unto him, What wouldst thou do?
Keil and Delitzsch	Behold, He taketh away, who will hold Him back? Who will say to Him: What doest Thou?
NAB	Should he seize me forcibly, who can say to him nay? Who can say to him, “What are you doing?”
NASB	“Were He to snatch away, who could restrain Him? Who could say to Him, What art Thou doing?”
NJB	If he snatches his prey, who is going to stop him or dare to ask, ‘What are you doing?’

³⁶ Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 215.

REB If he hurries on, who can bring him back? Who will ask him what he is doing?
Young's Lit. Translation Lo, He snatches away, who bringeth it back? Who saith unto Him, 'What does Thou?'

The first verb, translated *snatches away*, *seizes forcibly*, *taketh away*, *hurries on*, is found only in this passage and there is only one cognate which would help us with this meaning, and that appears to be found only in one passage. Verb: Strong's #2862 BDB #368. Noun: Strong's #2863 BDB #369 (Prov. 23:28—translated as both *prey* and *robber*). This is followed by the interrogative particle and the Hiphil imperfect of *shûb* (שׁוּב) [pronounced *shooḇ*]; which means *return*, *to be caused to return*, *to return something*, *to restore*, *to bring back*, *to regain*, *to recover*, *to make restitution*, *reconsider*, *think again*. Strong's #7725 BDB #996. This refers to Job's property, his wealth, his friends, his family and his health—all these things were taken from him by God—who could restore these things to him?

Furthermore, and this will irritate some—we don't have the right or the standing to question what God is doing. We don't get to stand in opposition to God and say, this just isn't right. God is sovereign and He created us. There are only rare situations when God has allowed man to argue with Him—and His will to do what He did was still from His sovereignty. That is, when Moses argued with God to spare the Israelites—God had the power to destroy them all but had planned not to do so from eternity past in answer to the prayer of Moses in time. When Abraham argued with God about the destruction of Sodom, God had planned in eternity past to destroy it and knew precisely what the prayer of Abraham would be.

God's sovereignty is a constant theme throughout Scripture. "For Y^howah of the armies has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretch-out hand, who can turn it back?" (Isa. 14:27). "Woe to the one who quarrels with his Maker—an earthenware vessel among the vessels of earth! Will the clay say to the potter, 'What are you doing?' Or the thing you are making, 'He has no hands'?" (Isa. 45:9). "And it is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding. It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness and the light dwells with Him. To You, O God, of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for You have given me wisdom and power." (Dan. 2:21–23a). "And all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing; but He does according to His will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, 'What have You done?' (Dan. 4:35). Who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, 'Why did you make me like this?' will it? Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use? (Rom. 9:20–21). In our passage, Job likewise recognizes the omnipotence and sovereignty of God. *God has a right to remove any thing which we possess. Our friends, property, health, and lives, are his gift, and he has a right to them all. When he takes them away, he is but taking that which is his own, and which has been lent to us for a little time, and which he has a right to remove when it seems good to him. This truth Job fully admits, and in the calm contemplation of all his losses and his sorrows, he acknowledges that God had a right to do as he had done.*³⁷

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God Completely Overpowers Job

**"God will not turn back His anger;
under Him, helpers of Rahab are bowed.**

Job 9:13

**"God does not turn back His anger;
under Him, the minions of Rahab prostrate
themselves.**

Now God is not some sort of ethereal Being with a constantly angry attitude. "Y^howah is slow to anger and abundant in grace, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generations." (Num. 14:18). But He, being compassionate, forgave their iniquity, and He did not destroy them; and often He has restrained His anger and did not arouse all of

³⁷ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 215.

His wrath (Psalm 78:38). When it comes to the administration of divine justice, God does not change his mind for maudlin reasons. **Woe to the recalcitrant! Badly to him. For what he deserves will be done to him** (Isa. 3:11).

The second line is much more difficult. Let's just look at a couple of translations:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	...the [proud] helpers of Rahab [arrogant monster of the sea] bow under Him.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	Under him will have submitted themselves—the proud helpers [or, “the helpers of Rahab (Egypt)”—Fuerst]
Keil and Delitzsch	The helpers of Rahab stoop under Him—
NEB	The partisans of Rahab lie prostrate at his feet.
NJB	...beneath him, Rahab's minions still lie prostrate.
The Septuagint	...the whales under heaven have stooped under him.
TEV	He crushed his enemies who help Rahab [a legendary sea monster which represented the forces of chaos and evil], the sea monster, oppose him.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Under Him bowed have proud helpers.

First of all, this is no way a reference to Rahab the prostitute of Joshua 2. The time periods could not be the same. Given the fact that Israel and the things of the Law and the things pertaining to Israel are never mentioned, we know that the book of Job probably took place prior to the formation of the nation Israel and prior to the giving of the Law. Given the age of Job at the end of the book (he lived for an additional 140 years after this incident—Job 42:16), and given the mentioned of the area of Teman, we are dealing with a time period after the flood, but not too long after the flood.

The problem word here is *râha^bv* (רָהַב) [pronounced *raw-HAH^bV*], which is listed as a verb which means *to act boisterously, to act stormily*. It has a corresponding noun and adjective, which have slightly different vowel points. Change the vowel points, which were added long after the time of Christ on earth, and you have *helpers of [the] defiant [or, proud]*. However, there appears to be a strong oral tradition favoring this rendering of Rahab as a proper name. We find this same rendering in Job 9:13 26:12 Psalm 87:4 89:11 Isa. 30:7. So let's examine those passages:

Râha^bv		
Passage:	Text:	Associations:
Job 9:13	God does not turn back His anger; Under Him the helpers of Rahab have bowed.	Associated with God's anger.
Job 26:12	By His power He has quieted the sea; and by His understanding, He has struck down Rahab.	Associated with God's anger and with the sea.
Psalm 87:4	I mention Rahab and Babylon to those knowing Me. Observe, Philistia and Tyre, with Ethiopia! This one was born there.	Associated with countries which have fallen under God's judgment.
Psalm 89:10	You crushed Rahab, as one wounded, with the arm of Your strength; You have scattered Your enemies.	Associated with the seas (v. 9) and with the enemies of God.
Isa. 30:7	And Egypt, empty and vain helpers; therefore, I have called to this one, Rahab, they [are] ceased.	Associated with Egypt.
Isa. 51:9	Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of Y ^e howah. Awake, as in days of old, generations of the ages. You You not He that cut down Rahab, piercing a dragon?	V. 10 then deals with the sea and Israel crossing over on dry land.

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What we find is that Rahab is associated primarily with the enemies of God, with the sea, with God's anger and lastly with Egypt. Therefore, Rahab is either a name which is representative of demonic powers or a poetic name for Egypt or Babylon. Keil and Delitzsch reject the reference to Egypt in this context *because direct references to events in the history of Israel are contrary to the character of the book, which, with remarkable consistency, avoids everything that is at all Israelitish.*³⁸ The third identification is with a sea-monster (except, insofar as, again, being representative of existent demonic powers). Keil and Delitzsch: *It is evident that Rahab properly denotes a sea-monster, which has become the symbol of Egypt, like tannin and leviathan elsewhere...It is not clear whether these "sea-monsters" denote rebels cast down into the sea beneath the sky, or chained upon the sky; but at any rate the consciousness of a distinct mythological meaning...is expressed by [the Septuagint].*³⁹ Some sources indicate that Rahab is the mythical Babylonian female monsters of chaos. In this context, we must accept this as a reference to well-known myths of that day and time. Some mythology is rooted in the truth of the pre-millennial giants who walked the earth and some is directly related to demons. Here, as the mythical creature who is related to the chaos of the seas, God has her and all of her demon underlings under Him. Later, due to the parting of the sea, showing God's control over the sea and those who allegedly rule over the seas, Rahab became associated with Egypt. *But this imagery in the Old Testament is usually transferred from the creation story to the narrative of the redemption of Israel from Egypt, when God again showed His mastery over the sea and other forces opposed to His will; it is the Exodus that is indicated by reference to the smiting of Rahab [in later passages]...From this usage Rahab comes to be employed quite generally as a poetic synonym for Egypt [in Psalm 87:4 and Isa. 30:7].*⁴⁰ **Verb:** Strong's #7292 BDB #923 **Noun:** Strong's #7296 BDB #923 **Adj.** Strong's #7295 BDB #923. **Proper Noun:** Strong's #7293–7294 BDB #923.

It is important that we do not see Rahab in this context as simply a mythological being that God is greater than. Anyone is greater than a non-existent being of man's fruitful imagination. Behind those things which are worshipped are demons and demon organizations. These are representative of the demonic forces behind a demonic nation. What God is clearly greater than is all of the forces of evil and all those who oppose Him. The key to understanding this is that even that which is behind the greatest of the mythological powers do obsequience to the True God of the Universe. Therefore, if these great demonic organizations are subject to God's absolute power, where does that leave Job?

**"So, I, [even] I answer Him.
I must choose my words with Him.**

Job 9:14

**"So, then, I—Job—can answer Him?
Let me carefully choose my words with Him.**

Let's see what others have done:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	How much less shall I answer Him, choosing out my words to reason with Him?
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	How much less that I should answer him, Should choose my words with him?
Keil and Delitzsch	How much less that I should address Him, That I should choose the right words in answer to Him;
NAB	How much less shall I give him any answer, or choose out arguments against him!
NJB	And here am I, proposing to defend myself and select my arguments against him!
NRSV	How can I answer him, choosing my words with him?
The Septuagint	Oh then that he would listen to me, or judge my cause.
TEV	So how can I find words to answer God?
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	How much less do I—I answer Him? Choose out my words with Him?

³⁸ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, p. 327.

³⁹ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, pp. 327–328.

⁴⁰ *The New Bible Dictionary*; edited by J.D. Douglas; ©1962 by the Inter-Varsity Fellowship; Pub. By Eerdmans Publishing Co.; contributor: F.F. Bruce; p 1074.

This verse does not begin with the interrogatory *how*, but with the conjunction *`aph* (אֲפֹ) [pronounced *ahf*], which means *also, yea, even, indeed, in fact*. In this case, then a reference is made to a preceding passage. What is indicated is addition, especially of something greater or a strong contrast is set up. Job is not so much asking a question as he is stating the majesty and power of God, and then contrasting his puny words with all of that. It is a statement of personal demeaning. It is sarcastic, or, at the very least, tongue-in-cheek. God is all of these things—Job will stipulate to that—and God is righteous in all that He does; furthermore, God is omniscient—He knows everything and has set the world in motion with a thought to a perfect, pre-determined plan; therefore Job says, “I’d better be extra extra careful in the argument that I make here.” This sarcasm is not rendered towards God, but toward Bildad. In this case, I think we can get by with the simple rendering of *so*. The reason that so many translators opt for a question is that it illustrates roughly the statement made by Job. Strong’s #637 BDB #64.

The second line begins with the voluntative Qal imperfect of *choose*; so far, we have been going with the added *I must* when dealing with the voluntative. This is followed by the simple prepositional phrase *with Him*. Barnes take on this verse: *If the most might objects in the universe are under his control; if the constellations are directed by him; if the earth is shaken, and mountains moved from their places, by his power, and if the men of most exalted rank are prostrated by him, how can I presume to contend with God?...such was the veneration which Job had for the character of God, that should he attempt to answer him, he would select his words with the utmost care and attention.*⁴¹

**“Which though I am righteous [or, justified], I
cannot answer Him;
for my justice, I keep petitioning for grace.**

Job 9:15

**“For even though I am innocent, I cannot
answer Him;
for my just judgment, I can only appeal to His
grace.**

Although this verse begins with the relative pronoun and the hypothetical particle; however, when followed by the perfect tense, the hypothetical particle acts more like an assumption than a supposition. The verb is the Qal perfect of *tsâdaq* (צָדַק) [pronounced *tsaw-DAHK*], which means *to be righteous, to be just, to be justified*. In this case, *I am innocent* is not inaccurate. Strong’s #6663 BDB #842.

The second line has the prepositional phrase *for my* and the substantive *mîsh^epâṭ* (מִשְׁפָּט) [pronounced *mish^e-PAWT* or *meesh^e-PAWT*], which means *just, justice, right, rightness*. There is no evidence that this word means *judge* as found in the NIV. Strong’s #4941 BDB #1048. Rotherham does a certain amount of interpretation here, rendering this phrase *to be absolved* and giving, in the alternative, *for my absolution* (quoting Fuerst).

The final verb is *chânan* (חָנַן) [pronounced *khaw-NAHN*] means *to bend, to stoop over, to show favor, to show grace as a superior would do on behalf of an inferior*. Here, this word is in the Hithpael imperfect; which is continuous, reflexive intensive action, and it should be rendered *petition for grace, make a request for grace, appeal for grace*. Strong’s #2603, 2589 BDB #335.

Job knows that he has not done anything to deserve what he has gotten. He knows that he cannot be under discipline. Job may be righteous, but God is absolute, perfect righteousness. Job knows that the essence of everything that God does is related to His righteousness and to His perfection—so how can Job go to God with his own personal righteousness? We’re not talking now of being justified by works as opposed to being justified by faith. That is not the issue here. The issue is that Job is a believer, he has done nothing deserving of the pain and suffering that he is tormented with, yet how can he go to God and question his treatment, if God is perfect righteousness? In fact, in this passage, the emphasis is upon the fact that Job is a believer, since the verb, *tsâdaq*, is in the perfect tense. At best, Job can beg for God’s mercy and His grace. However, Job has an enduring belief in that mercy and grace: **“Even today my complaint is rebellion. His hand is heavy despite my groaning. Oh that I knew where I might find Him that I might come to His seat. I would present my case before Him and fill my mouth with arguments. I would learn the words which He would answer and perceive what He would say to me. Would**

⁴¹ Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 216.

He contend with me by the greatness of His power? No, surely, He would pay attention to me. There the upright would reason with Him; and I would be delivered forever from my Judge.” (Job 7:2–7). Recall the Bildad suggested that Job simply seek out God, but Bildad’s idea was for Job to seek out God and ask for forgiveness for whatever he had done (Job 8:5). It never occurred to him that Job was not guilty of any grave sin.

Now Job, believing himself to be innocent, would approach God as righteous—however, if God viewed him as different, then Job would have nothing to say, but to beg for God’s graciousness. Job has so much faith in his Creator’s perfection and righteousness, that if God declared Job guilty, then Job would have no recourse but to God’s grace, judging God to be correct and himself wrong. *God is a much better judge of our character than we can possibly be, and that his regarding us as sinners is the highest proof that we are such, whatever may be our views to the contrary. This shows the extent of the confidence which Job had in God and is an indication of true piety. And it is founded in reason as well as in piety. Men often suppose they are righteous, and yet they know that God adjudges otherwise, and regards them as sinners. He offers them pardon as sinners...The question is, whether they shall act on their own feelings and judgment in the case, or on his? Shall they adhere obstinately to their views, and refuse to yield to his declarations? Now that Job was right in his views of the case, may appear from the following considerations. (1.) God knows the heart. He cannot be deceived; we may be. In nothing are we more liable to be deceived than in regard to our own character. We should, therefore, distrust our own judgment in this case, but we should never distrust God. (2.) God is infinitely benevolent, and will not judge unkindly. He has no wish to find us sinners; he will have no pleasure in making us out to be transgressors. A heart of infinite benevolence would prefer to find all men holy...none would so delight to find that we were free from the charge of guilt. (3.) God will act on his own views of our character, and not on ours; and it is prudent and wise, therefore, for us to act on his views now...(4.) No man can persuade himself that he is wholly righteous; and being conscious of guilt, though in the slightest degree, he should make supplication to his judge.*⁴²

**“Assume I call and then He answers me;
I would not believe that he was listening
[and considering] my voice.**

Job 9:16

**“So, assume I call and He answers me;
I could not believe that he was listening to
and considering my plea.**

In the second line, we have the negative and the Hiphil imperfect of *ʾāman* (אָמַן) [pronounced *aw-MAHN*], which means *to trust to, to believe*. Strong’s #539 BDB #52. This is with a negative.

The second verb is the Hiphil imperfect of *ʾāzan* (אָזַן) [pronounced *aw-ZAHN*], which means *to broaden out the ear with the hand in order to hear*. It is commonly translated *to hear, to listen, to give ear to*; when used of God, it means that *He listens with grace, He listens to prayer, He listens and considers*. Strong’s #238 BDB #24.

Job is a man of God. He has been in prayer hundreds of times since this all began. After all of this time, Job would have a hard time trusting that God would listen to him. Bildad has suggested that Job turn to God. It never occurs to Bildad that Job has been in constant prayer, in between bouts of severe pain and distress. Why would God hear Job now, at the suggestion of Bildad, whereas He would not hear him before?

As a side-note from Barnes: *It is remarked by Schultens, that the expressions in these verses are all taken from courts of justice. If so the meaning is, that even if Job should call the Almighty to a judicial action, and he should respond to him, and consent to submit the great question about his innocences, and about the justice of the divine dealing with him, to trial, yet that such was the distance between God and him, that he could not hope successfully to contend with him in the argument. He would, therefore, prostrate himself in a suppliant manner, and implore his mercy and compassion—submitting to him as having all power, and as being a just and righteous Sovereign.*⁴³

⁴² Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 216–217.

⁴³ Barnes’ Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 217.

**“For with a tempest He falls upon me [in
attack];
and He has multiplied my wounds
undeservedly.**

Job 9:17

**“For He falls upon me with a tempest;
and He multiplies my wounds undeservedly.**

Let's look at a few other translations first:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	For He overwhelms <i>and</i> breaks me with a tempest, and multiplies my wounds without cause.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	For with a tempest would he fall upon me, And would multiply my wounds without need;
<i>The Septuagint</i>	Let him not crush me with a dark storm: but he has made my bruises many without cause.
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Because with a tempest He bruise me, And hath multiplied my wounds for nought.

This verse begins with the relative pronoun *ʾăšher* (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced *ash-ER*], which can also function as a conjunction and be rendered, *that, in order that, because that, because, for*. Strong's #834 BDB #81. Here, Job explains why he would not believe that God would listen to him and consider his request.

The next word is *sê-ârah* (שֶׂעָרָה) [pronounced *sê-ğaw-RAW*], which means *tempest, storm*. This word has several different spellings and the difference in meaning are hard to determine. One of the spellings begins with a *çâmek* [pronounced *SAW-mek*] = *ç* = *o*. Strong's #8183 BDB #973 Without the “âh” ending = Strong's #8178 BDB #973 With the “ç” with or without “âh” Strong's #5591 BDB #704. It is preceded by the *bêyth* preposition, which means *with*, in this case.

The verb here is the Qal imperfect of *shûph* (שׁוּף) [pronounced *shoof*], which is found four times in the Old Testament and translated *bruise, break, cover*, in Gen. 3:15 Job 9:17 Psalm 139:11, respectively. BDB gives the meaning as *bruise, to rub off, to grind away*, pointing out that these meanings for Psalm 139:11 are unsuitable. Gesenius gives a different slant on this. He gives the meaning as *to lie in wait for someone in order to attack or to fall upon them*. Strong's #7779 BDB #1003. The tempest which lie in wait to attack Job was both the literal one which killed his family (Job 1:19), but refers in general to the force and strength and power of God falling upon Job. “You lift me up in the wind causing me to glide; and You dissolve me in a storm.” (Job 30:22). Against the Godless, the psalmist writes: “Pursue them with You tempest and terrify them with Your storm.” (Psalm 83:15; see also Jonah 1:4).

Barnes: *The idea seems to be, that God acted towards him not as a judge determining matters by rule of law, but as a sovereign—determining them by his own will. If it were a matter of law; if he could come before him as a judge, and maintain his cause there; if the case could be fairly adjudicated whether he deserved the calamities that came upon him, he would be willing to enter into such a trial. But where the matter was determined solely by will, and God acted as a sovereign, doing as he pleased, and giving no account for his matters to any one, then it would be useless to argue the cause. He would not know what to expect, or understand the principles on which an adjudication would be made. It is true that God acts as a sovereign, but he does not act without reference to law. He dispenses his favours and his judgments as he pleases, but he violates none of the rules of right...[however] sovereignty is not necessarily inconsistent with respect for law; and He who presides with the most absolute power over the universe is He who is most directed by the rules of right. In Him sovereignty and law coincide; and to come to Him as a sovereign, is to come to with the assurance that supreme rectitude will be done.*⁴⁴

The final word in the second line is *chinnâm* (כִּינָם) [pronounced *khin-NAHM*], which can be rendered *without cause, undeservedly* particularly in connection to groundless hostility or attack. Strong's #2600 BDB #336. Job feels as though he is under attack from God. God is a great storm over Job and has suddenly fallen upon Job in attack and God has multiplied Job's wounds and pain; and, insofar as Job can determine, God has done this to him

⁴⁴ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 217.

undeservedly. Recall what Y^ehowah said to Satan: “Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, even though you incited Me against him, to swallow him up without cause.” (Job 2:3b). One of the most basic questions that we as man often cry out is, that if God is good, then how could He allow all the pain and suffering that we see? Even though Satan has done all of this evil against Job, God acknowledges that it is He Who has done it—that is, God is directly responsible, even though He merely allowed it. Job recognizes that his pain and suffering is undeserved and God recognizes that as well. We have examined suffering before and it no matter how many times we look at it, it will never seem palatable, particularly not to the weak in faith—although here, Job is likely the greatest believer of his day, and he feels terribly discouraged and pained at his own suffering. Because of sin and rebellion against God—both Satan’s and our own—undeserved suffering and deserved suffering will be a part of human history until our resurrection. However, Job himself is a picture of Christ, a righteous man who had heaped upon him suffering unparalleled. Our Lord suffered more undeserved pain and hurt under the hand of God the Father than we could ever fathom. Finally, we will be forced to admit that each and every iota of suffering which we received and which we observed was absolutely necessary to the plan of God and not once did the pain and suffering endured by anyone every fall outside the realm of God’s perfect justice and righteousness. All of God’s creation, both human and angelic, both fallen and saved, will all admit to His perfect justice and righteousness, which we observe in this fallen world in which we live from these decadent bodies that we inhabit. And what is most difficult is that the pain and suffering which we observe in Job—far greater than these words can even relate—is still a part of God’s perfect righteousness and justice and is not an aberration, even though the sufferings endured by Job were inordinantly disproportionate to his culpability. Finally, for the little that it is worth, many of you parents have caused your children to suffer pain greater than their transgression—running out in the street with exuberant enthusiasm, in one of their more pleasantly innocent moments—yet you were forced to spank them or speak to them harshly so that they did not repeat this mistake to their detriment. There are many transgressions which a youngster commits, far outside their ability to grasp as immoral, but which we often need to punish so that they can begin to grasp its inherent evil. One of the great sufferings which we have observed as a society is the spread and suffering caused by AIDS, which was a disease which originally struck drug abusers and homosexuals, but has spread throughout society to strike those who are innocent as well. It is a disease which illustrated the far-reaching affects of sin of those who would proclaim that it (1) what they did was their natural predilection; and (2) what they did hurt no one else. Our natural predilection, ladies and gentlemen, is to sin—that is our genetic predisposition. I have heard the argument that why would a person choose a gay lifestyle, knowing that this would cause him all kinds of trouble with his family and with society. The upshot of the argument is that he has no other choice, even if it means going against everything and everyone that they believe. I have worked with young people for three decades—guaranteed, because of the workings of the old sin nature, because of their natural predilection, because of their genetic predisposition, they will often do things which is in total opposition to family and society; they will often do things which will bring great hurt and misery onto themselves, despite all the information to the contrary, despite all their training. That is human nature. If it were not human nature to do these things, we would not have drug addicts, alcoholics, lotharios and the like. I don’t doubt that there is some genetic predisposition for homosexuality; nor do I doubt that there is some genetic predisposition for child abuse in the sexual realm. It doesn’t make it any less wrong.

**“He will not permit me to return my spirit
and He causes me to be filled with bitter
things.**

Job 9:18

**“He will not permit me to regain my breath
and He causes me to be filled with bitter
things.**

In this verse, Job continues explaining why he could not believe that God would answer his plea.

In this first line, we have verb *nāthan* (נָתַן) [pronounced *naw-THAHN*], which should usually be rendered *give, grant, place, put, set*; context should guide us. However, when followed by an infinitive and an accusative (or the personal pronoun prefix), it can be rendered *permit*. In this case, it means, literally, *to give to me to return*. Strong’s #5414 BDB #678. With this is the negative and the infinitive of the verb *shûb* (שׁוּב) [pronounced *shoo^b*]; which means *to turn back, to return, to turn around, to return something, to restore, to bring back, to regain, to recover*. Strong’s #7725 BDB #996. What is being recovered is *rûwach* (רוּחַ) [pronounced *ROO-ahkh*], means

wind, breath, spirit, apparition. Strong's #7307 BDB #924. Even knowing these things, this sentence is difficult to understand, so let me show you what others have done:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	He will not allow me to catch my breath,...
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	He would not suffer me to recover my breath [or, "spirit," "courage"]...
Keil and Delitzsch	He would not suffer me to take my breath.
NEB	He leaves me no respite to recover my breath...
NJB	...not even letting me regain my breath,...
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	He permitteth me not to refresh my spirit,...

The idea is that God has pummeled Job again and again with blow after blow and Job is still reeling; he cannot even regain his breath long enough to speak to God. On several occasions, Job asks for God to let up, if only for a moment: "Will You not turn Your gaze away from me, nor let me alone until I swallow my own phlem?" (Job 7:19). "Would He not let my few days alone? Withdraw from me that I may have a little cheer." (Job 10:20).

In the next line, we have the Hiphil imperfect of *sāḇva* (סָבַח) [pronounced *saw^b-VAHG*], which means *to satisfy, to fill, to satiate*. Strong's #7646 BDB #959. What Job has been filled with is *bitter things* (or, *bitter experiences*). Strong's #4472 BDB #601.

How can God answer Job? God has lain in wait for Job and has attacked him. God has multiplied Job's wounds. God has continually increased Job's pain and misery so much so that Job cannot even catch his breath enough to speak. God is continually filling Job with pain and bitterness. Job will later refer to God as, "...the Almighty, who embittered my soul." (Job 27:2b). God is so busy inflicting pain upon Job that He hasn't even time to respond to Job.

**"If a strength of a mighty one—behold;
and if of justice, who can summon [or,
arraign] me [possibly, Him]?"**

Job 9:19 **"If a strength of a mighty one—just look!
And if of justice, just who would summon [or,
arraign] me [Him]?"**

Before we even exegete, we should look at some other translations:

Albert Barnes	If the contest had respect to strength, lo! how strong is He! If it relates to justice, who would summon for me the witnesses for trial?
<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	If I speak of strength, lo, He is mighty! And if of justice, Who, says He, will summon Me?
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	If it regardeth vigour bold is he! If justice who could summon him?
Keil and Delitzsch	If it is a question of the strength of the strong—: "Behold here!" And if of right—: "Who will challenge me?"
NJB	Shall I try force? Look how strong he is! Or go to court? But who will summon him?
NIV	If it is a matter of strength, he is might! And if it is a matter of justice, who will summon him?
REB	If the appeal is to force, see how mighty he is; if to justice, who can compel him to give me a hearing?
The Septuagint	For indeed he is strong in power: who then shall resist his judgment?
TEV	Should I try force? Try force on God? Should I take him to court? Could anyone make him go?
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	If of power, lo, the Strong One; And if of judgment—who doth convene me?

This verse appears as though it will be tough to translate and probably easy to interpret. If begins this verse, then the *lâmed* preposition and the construct of *kôach* (כֹּחַ) [pronounced *KOE-ahkh*] and it means *strength, power, ability*. Strong's #3581 BDB #470. The next substantive is a masculine singular adjective, which acts as a substantive: *mighty one*. This gives us: **If regarding a strength of a mighty one**. This is followed by the demonstrative particle *behold*.

The rest of the verse is, literally: *and if regarding justice, who*; and this is followed by the Hiphil imperfect of yâ'ad (יָעַד) [pronounced yaw-GAHD], which means, in the Hiphil *to summon, to arraign, to appoint a time to call, to appoint a time to assemble*. Strong's #3259 BDB #416. With the 1st person, personal suffix, it means *who will arraign [or, summon] me?* You will notice that Rotherham renders this: *who could summon him?*, and, footnotes this that it should be rendered thus, citing Ginsberg's notes to his Hebrew Bible. This rendering does make more sense. The NASB also footnotes this as *Him* in the Septuagint and *me* in the Hebrew manuscripts. One of the precepts of textual criticism is that when there are two dissimilar readings, then you generally go with the one which makes the least amount of sense. The first time you hear that, you will certainly think that's backwards. However, the reasoning is, it is more likely that a scribe, whether intentionally or unintentionally, revised a verse in such a way that it would make more sense to him, not less. Therefore, if there was a change from the original manuscript, it would be toward that which made more sense to a particular scribe. The same applies to a translation, which is what the Septuagint is. There are two major exceptions to this rule of textual criticism: (1) when the lettering is so similar that a damaged or creased manuscript might have caused the change in the passage; (2) if it is obvious that the scribe transcribed another verse or a portion of another verse and inserted it incorrectly. In this case, there is little or no chance that damage to a manuscript would have caused the misreading. The pronomial suffix for an imperfect verb for the 1st person singular is nîy (נִי) [pronounced *nee*] and the pronomial suffix for Him would be w (ו) or v (וּ) or hûw (הוּ) [pronounced *hew*]. That is why this is not an easy call. By the rules of textual criticism, we would go with *me*. However, *Him* makes more sense. This is why there is such an even split on the translations. We do have a similar passage in Jer. 49:19, where God is speaking: *"Observe, one will come up like a lion from the thickets of the Jordan against a perennially watered pasture; for in an instant I will make him run away from it, and whoever is chosen, I will appoint over it. For who is like Me, and who will summon Me [into court]? And who then is the shepherd who can stand against Me?"* Now, with regards to going with the Hebrew *me* in this passage, Barnes writes: *Noyes renders this, "Who shall summon me at trial?" Dr. Good, "Who should become a witness for me?" The sense is, "Who would summon witnesses for me? If it was a mere trial of strength, God is too mighty for me; if it were a question of justice, who would compel witnesses to come on my side? Who could make them willing to appear against God, and to bear testimony for me in a controversy with the Almighty?"*⁴⁵ Let me quickly add that Job is speaking to, presumably, his three closest friends on earth. They have all lined up against him not even knowing all the facts. If they are so predisposed already, who could Job call on his own behalf into court?

With regards to the Greek, there is also the problem that the verbs are so dissimilar. The Hebrew verb means *to summon, to arraign* and the Greek verb means *to oppose, to withstand, to resist*.

When it comes to relative strength, all Job's friends need to do is to look at Job. He is without strength and God is omnipotent. And if Job has a just cause, in what court can he be summoned to speak of what has happened to him? Who would call him forward as a witness? Barnes wrote: *There has been a considerable variety in the interpretation of this passage. The meaning seems to be this. It refers to a judicial contest and Job is speaking of the effect if he and God were to come to a trial, and the cause were to be settled before judges. He is urging reasons why he would have no hope of success in such a case. He says, therefore, "If the matter pertained only to strength, or if it were to be determined by strength, lo, he is more mighty than I am, and I could have no hope of success in such a controversy; and if the controversy was one of judgment, i.e., of justice or right, I have no one to manage my cause—no one that could cope with him in the pleadings—no one who could equal him in setting forth my arguments, or presenting my side of the case. It would, therefore, be wholly an unequal contest, where I could have no hope of success; and I am unwilling to engage in such a controversy or trial with God...[I will] submit my case without argument, and I will not attempt to plead with my Maker."* And then Barnes asks: *But who has not had something of this feeling when deeply afflicted? And yet who, when he has had it, has not felt that it was far from being what it should be? Our feeling should be, "we deserve all that we suffer, and more than we have yet endured. God is a sovereign; but He is right. Though he afflicts us much, and others little, yet it is not because he is unjust, but because he sees that there is some good reason why we should suffer. That reason may be seen yet by us, but if not, we should never doubt that it exists."*⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 218.

⁴⁶ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 218.

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Maybe it Is the Wicked One

**“If [or, though] I am justified, my mouth
condemns me;
I [am] blameless, then he [it] would declare
me crooked.**

Job 9:20

**“For though I am innocent, my own mouth
condemns me;
and though I am without blame, it still
declares me crooked.**

This verse again begins with the hypothetical particle *ʾîm* (אִם) [pronounced *eem*], which is immediately followed by a Maqqêph (־) [pronounced *mak-KAYF*], which looks like a hyphen and is not pronounced. It unites two words for the purpose of pronunciation. The pronunciation is moved to the last syllable of the next word. *ʾîm* can be used as a particle of conceding, and would be translated *though, although*. Strong's #518 BDB #49.

Back in v. 15 we had the verb *tsâdaq* (צַדִּיק) [pronounced *tsaw-DAHK*], which means *to be righteous, to be just, to be justified*. Here it is in the Qal imperfect, meaning that Job *is in a state of innocence, righteousness, justification*. In this verse, emphasis is upon Job's spiritual life. His salvation comes first—v. 15, and his spiritual life afterward. Strong's #6663 BDB #842.

The next verb is the 3rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect with a 1st person singular suffix of *râsha'* (רָשָׁא) [pronounced *raw-SHAH*] and should be translated *to condemn as guilty*. In the Hiphil, this word has a judicial edge to it. Strong's #7561 BDB #957. Eliphaz hardily agrees: “*Your own mouth condemns you, and not I; and your own lips testify against you.*” (Job 15:6).

Job has just spent verse after verse explaining why he cannot just go to God and everything will be alright. So, even though he is in a state of innocence as a believer in Jesus Christ, his own mouth has just condemned him.

The next line begins with the adjective *tâm* (טָמֵא) [pronounced *tawm*], which means *perfected, completed, finished, innocent, blameless*. Strong's #8535 BDB #1070. This is followed by the personal pronoun, which generally should be accompanied by the verb *to be*; not written, but understood. One of the great problems with the KJV is that this word is often rendered *perfect* and that has led to all kinds of perversions of doctrine. There are actually people who are so self-deluded as to think that they lead perfect, sinless lives—that they go for months and years without sin. As Barnes wrote: *Does not the very setting up of such a claim in fact indicate a pride of heart, a self-satisfaction, and an ignorance of the true state of the soul, which is full demonstration that the heart is far from being perfect? God adjudges man to be exceedingly sinful; and if I do not mistake the meaning of the Scriptures, this is his testimony of every human heart—totally until renewed—partially ever onward till death. If this be the account in the Scriptures, then the claim to absolute perfection is prima facie, if not full proof, that the heart is in some way perverse...There is in this verse an energy in the original which is very feebly conveyed by our translation. It is the language of strong and decided indignation at the very idea of asserting that he was perfect...“perfect !” or, “I perfect! The thought is absurd! It can only prove that I am perverse to attempt to set up any such claim!” Stuhlman renders this, “However good I may be, I must condemn myself; however free from guilt, I must call myself evil.”*⁴⁷ I am personally well-aware that I carry within myself a desire and natural predilection to sin. Most of the problems and troubles of my life are a result of carrying out the desires of my own depraved heart. Job knew that he was not perfect. He had been redeemed by God's mercy, and he was a mature believer, but he still carried within him an old sin nature. He was still genetically predisposed to sin.

The next verb is the 3rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect, 1st person suffix of *ʿâqash* (עָקַשׁ) [pronounced *aw-KAHSH* or *gaw-CASH*] means *to twist, to make crooked*; in the Hiphil, it means *to declare one to be twisted or crooked*. Strong's #6140 BDB #786. Job says that he has integrity, but his own mouth would declare him lacking in integrity.

⁴⁷ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 219.

Barnes: [Job], referring still to the form of a judicial trial, if I should undertake to manage my own cause, I should lay myself open to condemnation even in my argument on the subject, and should show that I was far from the perfection which I had undertaken to maintain. By passionate expressions; by the language of complaint and murmuring; by a want of suitable reverence; by showing my ignorance of the principles of the divine government; by arguments unsound and based on false positions; or by contradictions and self-refutations, I should show that my position was untenable, and that God was right in charging me with guilt. In some or in all of these ways Job felt, probably, that in an argument before God he would be self-condemned, and that even an attempt to justify himself, or to prove that he was innocent, would prove that he was guilty. And is it not always so? Did a man ever yet undertake to repel the charges of guilt brought against him by his Maker, and to prove that he was innocent, in which he did not himself show the truth of what he was denying? Did not his false views of God and of His Law; his passion, murmuring, and irreverence; his unwillingness to admit...that he was guilty...that he was at heart a sinner, and that he was unsubmissive and rebellious? The very attempt to enter into such an argument against God, shows that the heart is not right; and the manner in which such an argument is commonly conducted demonstrates that he who does it is sinful.⁴⁸

Let me pass on to you a little story recounted by J. Vernon McGee: *There are many men today who because they do not know the Word of God feel that they will be able to stand before God and meet His standards and are actually well-pleasing to Him. I remember an oil man in Nashville, Tennessee. He was one of a group of business men with whom I used to play volleyball three times a week. He was a godless man although he was a church member. He and I were always on opposite sides and he didn't like me to beat him. One night he had really been beaten, so he began to argue with me in the locker room. He said, "I heard you speak [I had a morning devotion on the radio in those days] about a religion that calls men sinners who need to come to Christ. I don't believe that stuff. I believe in helping people. In my business I give men jobs. I pay them money so they can put beans to put on their tables. I think that is better than any religion you have to offer." How do you answer a man like that before a group of men all gathered in the locker room? Some of the men were church members but most of them were godless men and unsaved men. It was difficult to know how to answer that—until about a year later when we were in the locker room and that man was not there. He was in jail. He had been arrested for the way he had been conducting his business. He defrauded not only the government but also his own employees. I shall never forget that another of the men mentioned his name and said, "Well, I don't think he'd have much of a chance before God. He didn't do so well before Judge So-and-So the other day. They found out he really wasn't putting beans on the plates of his employees but he was really taking them off their plate." That really shook those men. Very candidly, I saw several of them in my church services and I even had the privilege of leading one of those men to the Lord. But the point is that men have a misconception of God. They think they are good enough to stand before Him. Job is saying in effect, "If I come into God's presence, He will think of something in me that I am not aware of, and I won't be able to answer Him."*⁴⁹

**"I [am] honorable [or, I have integrity]
I do not know my soul.
I reject my life.**

Job 9:21

**"I am blameless.
I do not know my soul.
I loathe my life.**

Job repeats "I [am] blameless." He is not saying that he is perfect, that he has not sinned, nor is he saying that he has gone for three years without sinning. It is as though Job has gone to court, was convicted of a crime and now he is being punished for a crime which he did not commit. In that regard, he is blameless. And, we already know that what he is saying is correct. Job reiterates this position on several occasions (Job 12:3 13:18). God described Job with the very same word in Job 1:8, and the author of this book (possibly Job) described Job with the same word in Job 1:1. Although we will question from time to time some of the things said by Job and his friends, the narrative is God-breathed and 100% accurate in the original autographs. Then Job said:

The Amplified Bible I regard not myself.
The Emphasized Bible I should not know my own soul.

⁴⁸ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 218.

⁴⁹ Job; J. Vernon McGee, ©1977, pp. 67–68.

Keil and Delitzsch	I know not myself.
KJV	...yet would I not know my own soul.
NASB	"I do not take notice of myself.
NIV	"I have no concern for myself."
TEV	...but I no longer care.
Young's Lit. Translation	I know not my soul.

Literally, this should read: **I do not know my soul.** Job again is being bitterly sarcastic—it is obvious to everyone that he is under discipline and it is obvious to him that he is not guilty of any such offense to deserve what he is getting. Since he is guilty of something which no one can see, therefore, he does not even know his own soul. Keil and Delitzsch give this a slightly different spin, eliminating the sarcasm, contending that Job believes himself to be innocent, yet cannot reconcile his innocence with his lot in life, leading him to say, **"I don't know by own soul."**

For the last line, we have the Qal imperfect of mā'aṣ (מֵאָס) [pronounced *maw-AHS*], which means *to reject, to despise*. Strong's #3988 BDB #549. What Job rejects is *my life*. Barnes quoted from other theologians at this point, and I provide this, not by way of interpretation, but because you may wonder what was written: [Barnes quoting Rosenmüller] *"Although I should be wholly conscious of innocence, yet that clear consciousness could not sustain me against the infinite splendour of the divine glory and majesty; but I should be compelled to appear ignorant of my own soul, and to reprobate, condemn, and despise my life passed with integrity and virtue."*⁵⁰ To which, I think, huh? Job is making three statements which are all tied together: "I am innocent (or, I have personal integrity); I apparently don't know my own soul (if God is punishing me). I abhor and reject my life (because I am in total and absolute misery)." Any man who had to endure what Job endured would hate his own life as well.

"This one [thing], on this account I say, 'He destroys honorable and corrupt.'	Job 9:22	"This one thing, I would say, therefore: 'He destroys both the honorable and the corrupt.'
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I want to look at other translations primarily for the first phrase:

Albert Barnes	There is but one result; therefore I maintained it—The perfect and the wicked he destroyeth alike.
<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	It is all one; therefore I say, God [does not discriminate, but] destroys the blameless and the wicked.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	One thing there is for which cause I have said it, The blameless and the lawless he bringeth to an end.
Keil and Delitzsch	There is one thing—therefore I maintain—;The innocent and wicked He destroyeth.
Albert Barnes	There is but one result; therefore I maintained it—The perfect and the wicked he destroyeth alike.
NKJV	It is all one thing: Therefore I say, 'He destroys the blameless and the wicked.'
The Septuagint	Wherefore I said, Wrath slays the great and mighty man.
Young's Lit. Translation	It is the same thing, therefore, I said, 'The perfect and the wicked He is consuming.'

You will notice the variety of renderings given to the first couple words. This verse begins with the adjective numeral ʿechād (אֶחָד) [pronounced *eh-KHAWD*] and it means *one, first*. Strong's #259 BDB #25. This is followed by the demonstrative adjective hîy' (הִיא) [pronounced *hee*], which can be translated *she* or *it*. This can be used as the far demonstrative, particularly with the definite article, for *that, those*; and this word is used as a pronoun, as an emphatic *he, she* or *it*. Strong's #1931 BDB #214. Both of these words are in the feminine singular, meaning that they are linked together here. I think that we could be fairly literal here and say: **this one thing**. However, these two words together are certainly idiomatic and I may have not put my finger on the correct meaning here.

⁵⁰ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 219.

Even Barnes had a difficult time with the phrase *one thing*; he wrote: *This may mean, "it is all the same thing. It makes no difference whether a man be righteous or wicked. God treats them substantially alike; he has one and the same rule on the subject. Nothing can be argued certainly about the character of a man from the divine dealings with him here." This was the point in dispute, this the position that Job maintained—that God did not deal with men here in strict accordance with their character, but that the righteous and the wicked in this world were afflicted alike.*⁵¹

This is followed by the preposition *ʿal* (עַל) [pronounced *ahl*] (*upon, beyond, against, concerning*) Strong's #5920, 5921 BDB #752 and the adverb *kên* (כֵּן) [pronounced *kane*], generally rendered *so*. Together, they reply to an objection, to state the ground upon which the answer is made, so together they mean *this being so, therefore, on this account*. Strong's #3651 BDB #467 & BDB #485.

The rest of the verse is rather straightforward. Job knows that God does destroy both the justified and the unjustified. Life has been going on for a millennium prior to Job and all those who have believed in Jesus Christ have died and all those who were malevolent also died. It is automatic. In fact, from some vantage points, one does not always observe a clear difference between the saved and the unsaved. *For I have taken all this to my heart and explain it that righteous men, wise men, and their deeds are in the hand of God. Man does not know whether love or hatred; anything awaits him. It is the same for all. There is one fate for the righteous and for the wicked; for the good, for the clean, and for the unclean; for the man who offers a sacrifice and for the one who does not sacrifice. As the good man is, so is the sinner; as the swearer is, so is the one who is afraid to swear. This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that there is one fate for all men. Furthermore, the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil, and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives. Afterwards they go to the dead* (Eccles. 9:1–3). Recall, this was the observation of Solomon as a man *under the sun*; from the vantage point of a very intelligent unbeliever or a very intelligent believer out of fellowship. At times, there does not appear to be a difference, and we all suffer the same final fate: death. And to Job right at this moment, in the pain and suffering of his life, feels that there is not difference between his life and the life of a reprobate. Job is suffering as much, if not more. He later will say: *"According to Your knowledge I am certainly not guilty, yet there is no deliverance from Your hand. Your hands fashioned and made me altogether and would You destroy me?"* (Job 10:7–8). Even our Lord said, *"But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be sons of your Father Who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on evil and good, and He sends rain on righteous and unrighteous."* (Matt. 5:44–45). The point our Lord is making is somewhat different, however. Jesus Christ died for all men; I don't care how much you look down upon Charlie Brown, Jesus Christ died for him and Charlie Brown has just as much right to salvation as you do. Jesus Christ died for our worst enemy and if he believes in Jesus Christ, he will be saved eternally. God provides a certain amount of blessing (the sun and the rain) for all man, and He provides the greatest blessing of all, salvation, for all men—and this is why we are, in many ways, treated the same in this life. This does not mean that the believer does not often enjoy great blessing and kindness at the hand of God. The Bible is a very balanced book, in many respects, and those who take a fringe position miss what is being taught. It is both true that there are times and situations when God treats the believer and the unbeliever alike. There are times and situations when God also showers the believer with great blessing (for instance, Job and the beginning and Job at the end of this book).

On earth, there are times that one will not be able to distinguish the believer from the unbeliever with respect to the blessing afforded them by God. However, when it comes to eternity, there will be a great difference in our positions and status—even between believers. Barnes: *With our full views of the state of retribution in the future world, we can have no doubt on the subject. Heavy and sudden judgments do not necessarily prove that they who are cut off are peculiarly guilty, and long prosperity is no evidence that a man is holy. Calamity, by fire and flood, on a steamboat, or in the pestilence, does not demonstrate the peculiar and eminent wickedness of those who suffer...nor should those who escape from such calamities infer that of necessity they are the objects of the divine favour.*⁵²

⁵¹ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 219–220.

⁵² Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 220.

**“If a scourging causes death suddenly,
it ridicules with reference to testing of the
innocent ones.** Job 9:23

**“If a scourging unexpectedly results in
death,
it insults the concept of evaluating those
who are innocent.**

The word found here is *shôwt* (שׁוֹט) [pronounced *shohf*] and it means *scourge, whip*. It literally means *to stir about and beat*. Strong's #7752 BDB #1002.

The first verb is the Hiphil imperfect of *mûwth* (מוֹת) [pronounced *mooth*], the simple word for *die*. The Hiphil is the causative stem, so this means *to cause to die, to kill, to destroy, to put to death, to execute*. Strong's #4191 BDB #559.

The picture here is that a person is under discipline and in that discipline, he dies suddenly and unexpectedly.

The subject of the next verb is important. The verb is in the 3rd person masculine singular, so *he* is a reasonable rendering of the subject. However, *scourging* is also in the 3rd person masculine singular, and we should look near for our subjects rather than far. Therefore, I have rendered the subject as *it*. The verb is the Qal imperfect of *lâ'ag* (לָאָג) [pronounced *law-GAHG*], which means *to mock, to stammer, to deride, to ridicule*. Strong's #3932 BDB #541.

In the Hebrew, prior to the verb, we have what is being *ridiculed*. We have the *lâmed* preposition (*to, for, with reference to*) and the construct of *maççâh* (מַחֵה) [pronounced *mahs-SAW*], and it means *trial, testing*; this word is used relatively few times in the Old Testament (9 times), and most of those times it is a proper noun (Ex. 17:7 Deut. 6:16 9:22). Strong's #4531 and 4532 BDB #650 and 588.

The final adjective in this phrase is the masculine plural adjective *nâqîy* (נָקִי) [pronounced *naw-KEE*] and it means *acquitted, clear, free from, unpunished, innocent*. Strong's #5355 BDB #667. In some translations, there are three or four different words in this chapter alone which are translated *innocent* or *blameless*. In vv. 15, 20a, we have the verb for *being honorable, having integrity*. In vv. 20b, 21 we have the adjective for *righteous, justified*; and here, in v. 23, we have the adjective for *innocent, acquitted*., all or most of which are translated *blameless* or *innocent* in some translations.

I was disappointed with Barnes take on this, as well as the NIV Study Bible, so I will not refer to them in this verse. My educated guess here is that scourging is done as a part of the law in order to determine guilt or innocence—it is not necessarily a practice which is approved of in Scripture, but one that apparently existed at that time. Job says that when this scourging causes an innocent person to die, it makes a mockery of the testing of their innocence. We aren't used to this kind of determination of justice, so I may not be making this clear. A person is scourged and beaten in order to get the truth from them. They might be innocent and they might be guilty, but they are beaten until they reveal either their innocence or guilt. An innocent person will maintain their innocence while a guilty person will eventually break down and confess their guilt under the pain. However, when an innocent person dies at the hands of the scourger, this makes a mockery of this method for determining guilt or innocence. This application is clearly to himself. He is being scourged to show his innocence; yet this scourging has him so close to death that if he dies, it will make a mockery of justice. Because of the heavy trials that we sometimes find ourselves under, Saint Peter urges Job and urges us to hold on: **In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, though necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the testing of your faith, more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revealing of Jesus Christ** (I Peter 1:6–7).

**“Earth is given into [the] hand of a criminal
[or, lawless one];
He covers over faces of her judges—
if not then, who [is] he?**

Job 9:24

**“Earth is given into the hand of a lawless
one;
He covers over the faces of her judges—
if not the lawless one, then who obscures
the judgment of the judges?**

At first perusal, this appears to be a particularly difficult verse to sort out. Job’s vocabulary, sentence structure and thinking is all much more complex than Bildad’s. Generally, most of what Bildad had to say was easily discerned, other than the poem which he quoted and the application of same. Let’s see what other translators have done with this verse:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	The earth is given into the hand of the wicked; He covers the faces of its judges [so that they are blinded to justice]. If it is not [God], who then is it [responsible for all this inequality]?
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	The earth hath been given into the hand of a lawless one, The faces of her judges he covereth, If not then who is it?
Keil and Delitzsch	Countries are given into the hand of the wicked, The countenance of its rulers He veileth—Is it not so, who else doeth it?
KJV	The earth is given into the hand of the wicked; he covereth the faces of the judges thereof; if not, where, <i>and</i> who is he?
NIV	When a land falls into the hands of the wicked, he blindfolds its judges. If it is not he, then who is it?
REB	When a country is delivered into the power of the wicked, he blindfolds the eyes of its judges.
The Septuagint	For they are delivered into the hands of the unrighteous; he covers the faces of the judges; but if it be not he, who is it?
TEV	God gave the world to the wicked. He made all the judges blind. And if God didn’t do it, who did?
<i>Young’s Lit. Translation</i>	Earth hath been given Into the hand of the wicked one. The face of its judges he covereth, If not—where, who <i>is</i> he?

This translation actually will be fairly easy, until that last line. The interpretation might be more difficult. As you can see by examining these two translations that there are two predominant and diametrically opposed views—who covers the faces of the judges? God or Satan?

We have seen the word for *earth* several times. However, we have to be careful as to how tightly we constrain its meaning. As you know, my preference is to tighten down the meaning of every word as much as possible, admiring the work of Robert Young, the translator of *Young’s Literal Translation of the Holy Bible*. However, *earth* is the feminine singular substantive *ʿerets* (עֶרֶץ) [pronounced *EH-rets*], and it can mean (1) *planet earth* (Gen. 18:18, 25 22:18 Job 37:12); (2) *a specific portion of the earth*, such as a *country, region, or territory* (Gen. 11:28, 31 21:21 Psalm 78:12—you will note that in these instances, *ʿerets* is in the construct and generally translated *the land of*); (3) *the ground, the soil* (Gen. 1:11–12, 30 18:2 33:3 Lev. 19:9); (4) and *ʿerats* is found in miscellaneous phrases. Strong’s #776 BDB #75.

The verb is the 3rd person feminine singular, Niphal (passive) perfect of *nāthan* (נָתַן) [pronounced *naw-THAHN*], which means *to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set*; the Niphal stem and context guiding us to the meaning *is given, is bestowed upon, is entrusted to, is provided for*. Strong’s #5414 BDB #678. This is followed by the phrase *into a hand of a criminal*. The last word is the masculine singular adjective (which acts as a substantive) *rāshâʿ* (רָשָׁע) [pronounced *raw-SHAWG*], which means *malevolent one, lawless one, criminal, corrupt*. Strong’s #7563 BDB #957. Literally, the first line reads: **Earth is given into a hand of a criminal [or, a lawless one]**. At the first temptation, when the woman and then Adam fell, the rulership of the earth was transferred over from Adam to Satan. It is arguable at this point as to how well Job realized that. It is unlikely that portions of Genesis had been widely distributed, and how much of the Genesis revelation Job knew is also difficult to ascertain. Even an

unbeliever knows that we live in an unjust and corrupt world. My opinion here is that, because this point is not emphasized by Job or any of his friends, Job is far enough removed from creation to not know the full story, but he proposes a theory which is logical and reasonable, as well as being accurate. How far he took this in his own mind, we do not know. That is, perhaps Job is thinking like a Deist—that is, God created the world and just walked away from it, effectively leaving it in the hands of Satan. However, although this verse could imply that notion, it does not state it outright. What I am trying to get across is difficult—I can't seem to find the right words for it. What we have right here in the text is completely accurate. The earth has fallen into the hand of the lawless one, who is Satan. What Job is thinking, but not saying, may be deistic in its suggestion and inaccurate. In fact, it is a thought too horrible to express, so he does not. However, what is admirable, given that this interpretation is correct, is that God the Holy Spirit so inspired the author of this book and so inspired Job, that he could think something which is false, and be caused to say something which is completely true as a result of his faulty thinking. Now Job follows his thinking out later in this book—that is, deism, and he correctly states: “Who among all these does not know that the hand of Y^{ehowah} has done this—in whose hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind?” (Job 12:9).

What I see here is a man under tremendous pain and pressure who realizes that what his friends have intimated is incorrect, yet, is grasping at straws to try to explain to them and to himself just what is happening. He pursues several thoughts throughout this chapter, all which have merit, but underlying all of this is a cry for truth to cling to. We have no true appreciation for how marvelous our life is—we have the completed canon of Scripture, our absolute guide in the realm of truth and, for many of us, the comfort afforded us by God. These questions with which Job is struggling are cleared up by Scripture—many, specifically, by the book of Job. How marvelous it would be for him to be able to go to the book of Genesis and quote chapter and verse. We are at a point in human history where the information passed down verbally from fathers to sons is not enough any more—man needs to have this information provided for him in writing.

I should say a word about an alternate, but incorrect view. The word *râshâ'* (רָשָׁא) [pronounced *raw-SHAW* or *raw-SHAWG*], from above, can also refer to *the wicked* in terms of a collective whole—a singular noun which stands for a group of people. A good modern rendering would be *the corrupt*. We see this usage in several places: Gen. 18:23, 25 Num. 16:26 Psalm 1:5. And, with regard to *râshâ'* being used as a collective whole, the NIV has a long list of marvelous reference passages at this point—but few which are applicable to this particular verse. However, the tenor of the remainder of the verse tends to imply a true singular subject: “He covers over faces of her judges—if not then, who [is] he?” Barnes interprets this verse in this way, and remarks that Job is speaking to the inequity of the distribution of rewards and punishment according to character.⁵³

Now, we have a saying that justice should be blind, and that means that every man, rich or poor, regardless of race, creed or background, should receive the same justice as any other man. Certainly, this is not true—anywhere—but it is an admirable goal for our society. However, that is not what is spoken of here. The NIV Study Bible reads: *Our statues of Lady Justice are blindfolded, implying that she will judge impartially. But Job's accusation against God is that he has blindfolded the judges so that they see neither crimes nor innocence.*⁵⁴ Since the next verb is in the 3rd person masculine singular, then we ought to assume that the subject is the nearest 3rd person masculine singular, which means *the lawless one*. It does not make good grammar sense to refer specifically to the lawless one in line one and then to God by implication in line two. The verb in question is the Piel imperfect of *kâçâh* (כָּצָה) [pronounced *kaw-SAWH*] and it means *to cover, to clothe, to conceal, to engulf*. The Piel meanings are *to cover, to clothe, to spread over, to overwhelm*. Strong's #3680 BDB #491. What is concealed are *the faces* of the Qal active participle of *shâphaṭ* (שָׁפַט) [pronounced *shaw-FAHT*], which means *to judge, to govern*. The Qal active participle is often used to refer to one's occupation or activity in life; so the proper rendering here is *her [referring back to earth's] judges [or, governors]*. Strong's #8199 BDB #1047. Therefore, the second line should read: *he covers over faces of her judges*. Here the concept of *justice is blind* is more *justice has been blinded*. We cannot

⁵³ Now and again I mention some interpretations to show how far off the mark they are; however, I mention Barnes' out of respect. However, since Barnes misunderstood the first sentence, he ends up giving three or four different explanations for the second, choosing the best in his opinion. Refer to *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; pp. 220–221 for more information.

⁵⁴ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995; p. 735.

allow ourselves to be confused with something which is ingrained in our society and force the Bible into that mold. Note the context; note the previous verse, which names a miscarriage of justice. In order to get at the truth, an innocent person is scourged until he dies. One of the aspects of justice is to examine all of the facts and make a reasonable determination concerning all of the facts—when judges are blinded, they cannot make a correct assessment, an honest evaluation or proper judgment of the situation. Job, without coming out and directly saying it, has just told his friends that they, as his judges and evaluators, are blinded to all of the facts. Satan, the god of this world, has blinded them. However, what Job is saying more directly is that there is no real and true justice in this world. I have been before a great many judges in one capacity or another and in every case, I have observed that they made a sincere effort to render an honest and just decision.

You may have guessed that the last line is going to be somewhat of a struggle, in that it is idiomatic. It begins with the hypothetical particle and the negative and is followed by the enclitic particle *ʾêphôw* (אֵפֹה) [pronounced *ay-FOH*] and it means *then*. Strong's #645 BDB #66. Together, literally, this is *if not then*.

This is followed by the pronominal interrogative *mîy* (מִי) [pronounced *mee*], which means *who*. This verse ends with the demonstrative adjective, also used as a personal pronoun, *hûw* (הוּא) [pronounced *hoo*] and it is used here as an emphatic *he*. Strong's #1931 BDB #214. Often with this pronoun, we should include the verb *to be* as understood. The final line is, literally: *if not then, who [is] he?* What Job is saying, in context, is *if not the lawless one, then who obscures the judgment of the judges?*

Now, a reasonable question would be, why doesn't Job further pursue this line of reasoning? It doesn't make sense for God to be doing all of this to Job, but it does make sense that Satan is involved. So why doesn't Job continue with this thought? Inside, as Job thinks this, he realizes that if Satan is responsible, then Satan's power is as great as God's. Job has just rightly attributed to God great power and majesty (vv. 5–10); would it make sense for Satan to have dominion over Job, who belongs to God? My opinion is that Job is thinking as he goes, which we would naturally expect, and follows this argument out to its obvious conclusion and therefore truncates it. This does not mean that Job does not continue to consider Satan in his arguments; in Job 10:3, Job will say, *"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 one?"* And, again in Job 16:11: *"God hands me over to ruffians and tosses me into the hands of the wicked one."* So Job gives thought to the intrusion of Satan, but can only take that argument so far, because he lacks the divine revelation to go further with it—and some of the thoughts that Job has, as has been mentioned, when taken to their logical conclusion, given his present knowledge, result in blasphemous thinking. Therefore, Job throws out a thought, but does not take it any further. In any case, Job's point here is, if this is not the work of the wicked one, whose work could it be?

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Job: "What Can I Do?"

**"And my days are [caused to be] swifter
more than a runner;
they have fled;
they don't see good things.**

Job 9:25

**"Furthermore, my old days have been
caused to pass by swifter than any runner;
they have fled;
my days no longer enjoy good things.**

The word for *runner* was also applied to Persian *couriers* who carried royal edicts to distant provinces (Esther 3:13, 15–8:14), as well as to the body-guards and royal messengers of Saul and David (I Sam. 22:17 II Kings 10:25). Since caravans moved at the slow pace of 2 miles per hour, these couriers went by horse, camel or on foot at a much faster rate. *In Egypt, it is a common thing for an Arab on foot to accompany a rider, and to keep up with the horse when at full gallop, and to do this for a long time without apparent fatigue.*⁵⁵ Freeman: *Swift runners were often*

⁵⁵ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 221. Barnes gave two or three other illustrations for ancient history, but the gist of the matter is we are speaking of *fast* in terms of the ancient world. Today, we might use the expression *my days have sped by with the speed of a leer jet [or, at warp speed]*.

employed in ancient times to convey important messages. Kings kept a number of such in their service as a part of the royal household. When Hezekiah sent invitations to the solemn passover which he designed holding at Jerusalem, it is said that "the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah." 2 Chron. xxx,6. In the times of Jeremiah there seems to have been a regular postal service established, for he says, in prophesying the destruction of Babylon: "one post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to show the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end." Jer. li, 31...While there may have been no systematic communication of this sort in the time of Job, yet it is evident from the text that men fleet of foot were employed when occasion required the patriarch compares the rapid flight of his days to a post; literally, a runner, a man hastening with news. This was the swiftest mode of communication with which he was familiar, and his days went swifter still.⁵⁶ Job has already mentioned how quickly his days have gone by. "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle and come to an end without hope." (Job 7:6). I did not grasp what he was saying until this verse. He is not referring to the last three or four days of his life nor to the past month. What he is referring to is the many years of his life that he has enjoyed this prosperity. Suddenly, those days are gone, as if they had just sped by at warp speed. When we come to the end of our lives, or when tragedy strikes, the good times that we had, the thrills and excitement of our lives, our successes which we have enjoyed—all of these things will be as though they passed by in a moment and our focus will be upon that time of pain, of need, of suffering. Now, in Job's present state, he no longer enjoys any good thing of the life which he once had. This is what he means when he says that his days *do not see good things*. "Recall that my life is but breath. My eye will not again see good." (Job 7:7).

**"They [quickly] glide by with [or, like] ships
of reed [papyrus];
like an eagle rushes upon food.**

Job 9:26

**"They quickly glide by like ships of papyrus-
reed
like an eagle rushes upon food.**

We should look at what others have done with this verse:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	They have passed away with boats of paper-reed, Like a vulture [which] rusheth upon food.
Keil and Delitzsch	The shot by as ships of reeds, As an eagle which dasheth upon its prey.
NASB	"They slip by like reed boats, Like an eagle that swoops on its prey."
NEB	...they have raced by like reed-built skiffs, swift as vultures swooping on carrion.
NJB	They skim past like a reed canoe, like an eagle swooping on its prey.
NIV	"They skim past like boats of papyrus, like eagles swooping down on their prey."
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	They have passed on with ships of reed, As an eagle darteth on food.

The Septuagint reads: *Is there any track left by ships in their passage?*; the implication being that Job's days of great prosperity were left behind like the path of the reed ship. The problem verb is the Qal perfect of *châlah* (חָלַף) [pronounced *chaw-LAHF*], which is variously translated to *sprout up, stricken through, go on forward, groweth up, is over, shall change, shall be changed, pass on, pass away, pass through, to come on anew, to sprout again, glide, floated along, brushed across and slip*. This is tough to determine how the word should be rendered, so I will go along with Gesenius where he claims this word is the equivalent of *âbar* (עָבַר) [pronounced *gaw^b-VAHR*] (Strong's #5674 BDB #716), which meaning is given as *to pass over, to pass through, to pass by*. However, with *châlah*, according to Gesenius, what we are looking at is the swift motion of anything which is smooth and slippery. Therefore, we will render this *[quickly] glide by*. Strong's #2498 BDB #322

What we would expect to follow would be the Hebrew word for *like* or *as*. However, we have the preposition *îm* (עִם) [pronounced *geem*], which is generally rendered *with*. BDB allows for the generally concept of fellowship and coupling to be extended to a relationship of equality or resemblance, therefore allowing for the rendering *like*, as in the passages Job 9:26 37:18 40:15 Psalm 28:1 88:3 143:7. Strong's #5973 BDB #767. The kind of ships mentioned here is also a mystery. However, Gesenius matches the word with *reed, bulrush, papyrus*, from an

⁵⁶ *Manners and Customs of the Bible*; James M. Freeman; ©1972; pp. 208–209.

Arabic use of the same word. Although there is not 100% agreement, this is the most likely rendering.⁵⁷ Strong's #16 BDB #3.

The idea is fairly easy here—Job's former days have passed by into oblivion. *Rosenmüller has correctly observed that, in order to describe the fleetness of his life, Job brings together that which is swiftest on land (the runners or couriers), in water (fast-sailing ships), and in the air (the swooping eagle).*⁵⁸ Just as a ship of papyrus on the sea quickly passes by leaving no trace of its path; and just as quickly as eagles swoop down upon their prey and when you look again, it is as if their prey was never there—this is how quickly the days of Job have gone by and how unsubstantial his past is to him now.

At one time, the push in psychiatry was to examine one's past life, to place blame upon one's environment or parents or upbringing, to explain a person's behavior. Job's past is just the opposite. Rather than being a significant portion of his present life, it is as though it had never existed. He looks into his past and it is as though he was born yesterday into a life of misery and pain. His gay life of abundance had been tragically cut off.

**"If to my saying of, I must forget my
complaint;
I must forsake my faces
and I must smile [brightly]."**

Job 9:27

**"If I think to myself, I'll just simply forget my
complaint;
I will ignore my own feelings
and I will smile like a clown."**

Job is entering into the realm of idiom again, which means we must consult what other translators have done:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will lay aside my said countenance and brighten up...
Keil and Delitzsch	If my thought is: I will forget my complaint, I will give up my dark looks and look cheerful;
NJB	If I decide to stifle my complaining, change countenance, and wear a smiling face,...
NIV	"If I say, 'I will forget my complaint, I will change my expression, and smile,'"
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	Though I say, 'I forget my talking, I forsake my corner, and I brighten up!'

It is the first couple of words which are confusing. Literally, what we have is *if to my say*. We have the Qal infinitive construct, with a 1st person personal suffix of *ʾamar* (אָמַר) [pronounced *aw-MARH*] which means *to say, to utter*. What we would expect to find here is the 1st person singular, Qal perfect (or imperfect). In the Septuagint, this is rendered as if a Qal perfect—simply, *if I said*. The infinitive would be rendered *to say*; the infinitive construct would be *to say of*; but I am at a loss for translating this with the pronominal suffix in a way that makes sense; perhaps, *to my saying of*. Since this is a rather difficult notion, my thought is that this is more than just poetic license, but idiomatic as well. Strong's #559 BDB #55.

The second verb is the Qal imperfect of *shâkach* (שָׁכַח) [pronounced *shaw-KAHKH*], which means *to forget; to forget and leave*. Strong's #7911 BDB #1013. Since this is the voluntative, we will insert *I must*. This is followed by *I will forget my complaint*. What suffering Job is experiencing is quite difficult for him—he knows that there is nothing he can do about it and his friends will think whatever they are going to think, despite what he says.

The third verb is the Qal imperfect voluntative of *ʾâzaḥ* (אַזַּח) [pronounced *aw-ZAḤV*] which means *to leave, to forsake*. Strong's #5800 BDB #736. What Job says he must leave is his *face*. There are some people whose mood can be seen in their face—Job, whether he was this sort or not, had such a difficult time of life over the past few months that you could see in his face how difficult his life had been. Job's face reveals how he feels, how difficult his life has been, and he says he must leave that expression (recall that this is part of a conditional statement); what he is saying is that he must forget how he feels—completely forsake his feelings.

⁵⁷ Keil and Delitzsch give the basic options on p. 331 of Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV.

⁵⁸ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. IV, pp. 330–331.

The last verb is the Hiphil imperfect voluntative of bâlag (בָּלַג) [pronounced *baw-LAHG*], which means *gleem, to smile, to turn your lips up like a clown* (perhaps not that graphic—I record that to indicate the sarcasm that Job is employing here). The corresponding Arabic word means *to be bright, to shine forth*, e.g. the dawn. We find this use in Joel 2:2. The more idiomatic use is found in Psalm 39:14 Job 9:27 10:20. Strong's #1082 BDB #114.

What has happened to Job is overpowering. He suggests here that he just ignore it and smile like a clown. Job has already indicated his willingness to speak about his trouble before in Job 7:11: “**Therefore, I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, and will complain in the bitterness of my soul.**” In this verse, Job says that he cannot even hide his troubles; the calamity which has befallen him is so great that there is no way he can turn his lips up like a clown, endure it, and keep it to himself. In fact, his great desire prior to the coming of his friends was just someone to share his misery with.

<p>“I dread all of my pains. I know that you will not vindicate me.</p>	<p>Job 9:28</p>	<p>“I stand in constant fear of my continued pains. Certainly, I know that you will not vindicate me.</p>
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Let's check some of the other renderings:

<p>Albert Barnes <i>The Emphasized Bible</i> Keil and Delitzsch NJB NIV REB <i>Young's Lit. Translation</i></p>	<p>Still I am in dread of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent. I am afraid of all my pains, I know that thou wilt not pronounce me innocent. I shudder at all my pains, I feel that Thou doest not pronounce me innocent. ...fear seizes me at the thought of all my woes, for I know you do not regard me as innocent. I still dread all my sufferings, for I know you will not hold me innocent. I still dread all I must suffer; I know that you will not acquit me. I have been afraid of all my griefs, I have known that Thou doest not acquit me.</p>
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The first verb is yâgôr (יָגַר) [pronounced *yaw-GOHR*] and it means *to fear, to be afraid, to dread*. This only occurs 7 times in Scripture (Qal Perfect: Deut. 9:19 28:60 Job 3:25 9:28 Psalm 119:39 Qal participle: Jer. 22:25 39:17*). Unfortunately, this verb does not occur enough to determine whether it should be followed by a preposition or whether it can be followed by a substantive. Most of the time, it follows the relative particle. Strong's #3025 BDB #388. This would give us two possible renderings: *I am in dread* or *I dread all of my suffering*. Interestingly enough, this is a verb I would have seen as mostly being found in the imperfect, as fear is an emotion which is continuous and this is spoken by Job while in the midst of being in dread; however, Zodhiates says that the perfect tense can stand for some action which has begun in the past (or the present) and continues into the present (or the future). It is a tense which examines the action of the verb as a whole, whether the action is still ongoing or not. Context tells us whether we are viewing the action of the verb from its inception, progression or completion. So Job speaks of his fear as an event which he sees as a whole, although this certainly began in the past and continues on through the future.

The phrase that follows is *all of my pains*. The latter word is also relatively rare. It is ʿatstse^bveth (אֶתְצִעַבְתִּי) [pronounced *ahts-TSEH^B-veth* or *gahts-TSEH^B-veth*] and it is translated *sorrows* (Job 9:28 Psalm 16:4 Prov. 10:10 15:13) and *wounds* (Psalm 147:3*) in the KJV. BDB gives the meanings as *hurt, injury, pain*. We will go with *pain*. Strong's #6094 BDB #781. Job has already spoken of his tremendous fear: “**For what I fear comes upon me and what I dread befalls me.**” (Job 3:25). Most of us feel a certain amount of fear going to the doctor's, to a dentist, prior to an operation, and anything which involves pain. Job lived in this fear constantly. He never knew when he would be struck by intense physical pain, due to his disease. We're so used to reaching for aspirin or some other pain reliever, and for it to deal with pain much less than Job's—Job had nothing which would alleviate his pain and suffering.

A minor consideration is whether *I know* could be placed with *all of my pains* or whether that belongs with the previous verb. *I know* is followed by the conjunction kîy (כִּי) [pronounced *kee*] which means *when, that, for*,

because. Strong's #3588 BDB #471. This conjunction often connects the two verbs, unlike the *wâw* conjunction, which often indicates the beginning of a new sentence.

The final verb is the 2nd masculine singular, Piel imperfect, and a 1st person suffix of *nâqâh* (נָקַח) [pronounced *naw-KAWH*], which means *to cleanse, to acquit, to declare innocent*. Strong #5352 BDB #667. The next major problem is to determine who the 2nd person is. Most Bibles indicate that this is God by capitalizing the *thou*. However, as you probably realize, there are no capital letters in the Hebrew (and in the New Testament, all the letters were written as capitals). Most of this chapter refers to God in the 3rd person (vv. 2–14, 16–20, 22, 32–35). There are two references in this chapter to the 2nd person—this verse and v. 31. It is okay to refer to God in the 2nd and in the 3rd person—this is done in poetry and normal speech a great deal. However, there is no need to do this unless no other explanation makes sense (as in the change from Job 10:2 to vv. 3 and following—and there, no interpretation is involved; we will hear what Job would say to God—v. 2). Therefore, we have no reason to interpret this as *God* will not acquit Job. In fact, that is flat out wrong—God has acquitted Job for every wrong thing that he has ever done. *If You, Lord, would mark iniquities, O Y^ehowah who could stand?* (Psalm 130:3). In this passage, it is Job's friends which will not acquit him. Therefore, we do not capitalize the *you*. The point being that Job is in tremendous pain, so difficult that he cannot disguise it from his friends, and he cannot look to them for comfort because they have condemned him, believing that he was getting what he deserved.

**"I [even] I am guilty [of committing
reprehensible acts].
Why here do I keep becoming weary in vain?"**

Job 9:29

**"Assuming that I am guilty of committing
such reprehensible acts,
then why do I exhaust myself by arguing in
vain about this?"**

Job is not suddenly admitting that he is guilty in this verse. His friends won't acquit him; they have seen him as guilty. He is setting them up for a logical argument. He understands Who and What God is; 99.9% of the time he is wrong and God is right (recall 9:3). God has inflicted Job with great pain and hurt and this will certainly continue if he remains out of fellowship. Job's friends have made up their minds. They know that he is guilty. So, Job asks, "Knowing all of this, why the heck do I continue to argue with you about this? I am a beaten man. God, Who is greater than all His universe, has caused me untold pain. If I am guilty, why would I even bother to argue that I am innocent?"

I thought that this would be essentially an easy verse, but there are some significant differences in the translations:

<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	I shall be held guilty,—Wherefore then in vain should I toil?
Keil and Delitzsch	If I am wicked, why do I exert myself in vain?
NASB	"I am accounted wicked. Why then should I toil in vain?"
NIV	"Since I am already found guilty, why should I struggle in vain?"
The Septuagint	But since I am ungodly, why have I not died?
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	—I am become wicked; why is this? In vain I labour.

This verse does not begin with any sort of conjunction or hypothetical particle, but with the emphatic use of the personal pronoun, as Young and Rotherham show (I do not place all of the emphatic markings which Rotherham has throughout his translation; however, in his translation of the Bible, he shows the *I* as being in the emphatic position). The verb is the Qal imperfect of *râsha'* (רָשָׁע) [pronounced *raw-SHAH*] means *to be wicked, to act wickedly, to be guilty of acting wickedly*; to update this, we would render this verb *to behave in a reprehensible manner, to act in malevolence, to commit corrupt acts, to be guilty of same*. In the Hiphil, this word has a judicial edge to it, which helps to define the other use: it means, in the context of rendering judicial decision, *to condemn as guilty* (Ex. 22:9). Strong's #7561 BDB #957.

The *lâmed* prefixed preposition and the interrogative can generally be rendered *why*. Strong's #4100 BDB #552. This is followed by the demonstrative adjective/adverb *zeh* (זֶה) [pronounced *zeh*] which means *here, this, that, thus*. After spending some time in Strong's, Gesenius and BDB, I am not coming up with a reason to render this *then*, although several translators go with that translation here. Strong's #2063, 2088, 2090 BDB #260.

The final verb is somewhat of a play on words. In the previous verse, Job used *I dread*; and in this verse he uses the Qal imperfect of *yâga'* (יָגַעַ) [pronounced *yaw-GAH*], which means *to toil, to grow or to be weary, to become exhausted from toil, exertion, endurance or to become weary from same*. Strong's #3021 BDB #388.

The point is that Job's friends have already concluded that he is guilty. God has already poured all kinds of harm upon him. Why should he even bother to state his case if he is guilty? Recall a few verses back where he said he should put on a front—to disguise the pain and suffering that he has endured. It is incongruous for Job to allow his friends to see his pain and suffering, knowing that they will conclude that he is guilty of committing some horrible act or acts, and then to still blatantly argue that he is innocent—this doesn't make sense for a sensible man to do this.⁵⁹

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There Is No Mediator Between God and Man

**“Though I wash myself with snow water
and cleanse my hands with lye [or, soda];**

Job 9:30

**“Though I wash myself with snow water
and cleanse my hands with soap;**

This verse begins with a hypothetical particle; however, since it is followed by the Hithpael perfect, it acts more like a Greek first class condition and should be rendered *though*. Snow water is used, not because it is more cleansing, but snow is white and looks clean. In the ancient world, the snow was probably the cleanest of water, unmixed with soil or sand as rainwater would be in a stream, pond or river. Freeman tells us that some in the ancient world attributed virtues to the use of snow water when washing one's hands *It was thought that the skin was whitened by it, and that it contracted the fibers and prevent perspiration*.⁶⁰

The Hithpael is the reflexive of the Piel, so this is where we get *myself* in the translation. The hands represent what we do—therefore, Job's hands represent the supposed horrible sin which he committed. The cleansing of his hands is the actual cleansing from that sin or the cleansing from the guilt of that sin. In Psalm 26:6, we read: **I will wash my hands in innocence and I will go about Your altar, O Y^howah**. Psalm 123:13: **I have certainly kept my heart pure and I have washed my hands in innocence**. We recall Pontius Pilate, who recognized that our Lord was innocent, but allowed Him to be crucified under the concept of political expediency. Shakespear recalled this in Richard III: How fain, like Pilate, would I was my hands of this most grievous, guilty murder done!

The second line has the Hiphil perfect of *zâkak*^e (זָכַקַ) [pronounced *zaw-KAHK^e*], which means *to be bright, clean, pure* in the Qal, and *to cleanse* in the Hiphil. Strong's #2141 BDB #269. The ancients did not use the same kind of soap as we did, but alkali, lye or vegetable soda which was mixed with oil. Jeremiah wrote the words of God, saying, **“Although you wash yourself with lye and use much soap, the stain of your iniquity is before Me,” declared Lord Y^howah** (Jer. 2:22). Apart from salavation, this remains the case for all man. Unders salvation, we have: **“Come now, and let us reason together,” says Y^howah, “though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool.”** (Isa. 1:18). Again, all of this is prefatory for the next verse:

**“Yet into the pit you would plunge me
and my clothes abhor me.**

Job 9:31

**“Yet you would still plunge me into the pit
so that my own clothes would abhor me.**

We'll glance at a couple of other renderings:

The Emphasized Bible

Then in a ditch wouldst thou plunge me, And mine own clothes should abhor me;

⁵⁹ Barnes incorrectly gives a slightly different twist to this verse, as he interprets this passage as Job speaking to God. See *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 222 for more details.

⁶⁰ *Manners and Customs of the Bible*; James M. Freeman; ©1972; p. 209.

NEB ...thou wilt thrust me into the mud and my clothes will make me loathsome.
 NJB ...you will only plunge me into the dung, till my clothes themselves recoil from me!
 NIV ...you would plunge me into a slime pit so that even my clothes would detest me.
 The Septuagint ...you have thoroughly plunged me in filth, and my garment abhors me.
 Young's Lit. Translation Then in corruption Thou dost dip me, And my garments have abominated me.

Note that Young, without fudging on the translation, interprets this for us as the 2nd person singular being God; however, Job is still speaking to Bildad. Job is making an analogy—even if he cleans himself thoroughly, Bildad still has him in such a dung hole that even Job's own clothes cannot stand to be on him. It is God Who brings us out of the pit. **He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay; and He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm** (Psalm 40:2).⁶¹ It is Job's friends who desire to see him filthy, to know the reason for his discipline, as they see it.

The initial temporal adverb here is *ʾāz* (אָז) [pronounced *awz*], which means *then, at that time, in that case* (when following an *if* or *though*), *now, as things are; that being so*. Strong's #227 BDB #23. What Job says Bildad will throw him into is the simple word for *pit*: *shachath* (שַׁחַת) [pronounced *SHAH-kahth*], rendered *pit, corruption* and *grave* in the KJV. Strong's #7845 BDB #1001.

Although, between the two lines we just have the common *wāw* conjunction, the implication that the first phrase leads to the second is valid. No matter what Job did in terms of personal cleansing, Bildad would still throw him into a pit of filth so that even Job's own clothes would hate him (perhaps a saying of that time?). The idea behind the saying is that no matter how clean Job is, his friends would still toss him into a filthy pit so that he would be despised if only because of his clothes. The fact that Job was completely clean before being thrown into a pit does not make him less repulsive. Job has been saved, he is in fellowship, but the disease eating away at his body and the tragedies which have destroyed his life make him appear filthy.

**“For not a man like I—I would answer Him;
 we would come together into the judgment.**

Job 9:32

**“For He is not a man like I am—that I could
 respond to Him in court;
 nor could we come even together to trial.**

**“If only a man like I—I could answer Him;
 we could come together into the judgment.**

Job 9:32
 alternate

**“For if only He were a man like I am, I could
 respond to Him in court;
 and we could face each other at trial.**

Let's see what others have done with this verse:

Albert Barnes For he is not a man as I am that I should contend with him And that we should come together to trial.
 The Emphasized Bible For he is not a man like myself, whom I might answer, Nor could we come together into judgment;
 Keil and Delitzsch For He is not a man as I, that I should answer Him, That we should go together to judgment.
 The Septuagint For you are not man like me, with whom I could contend, that we might come together to judgment.
 Young's Lit. Translation But if a man like myself—I answer him, We come together into judgment.

You will note that Young stands in opposition to every other translation (and every translation which I read). I must admit to being slightly confused at this point. Young rarely acts as a textual critic—it seems that his translation is based upon the best Hebrew manuscripts, but not upon the various codices. The way that Young has rendered

⁶¹ This is Nahum 3:6 notwithstanding, which reads: **“I will throw filth on you and make you vile and set you up as a spectacle.”** That was directed at Nineveh when she had reached her full cycle of degeneracy some time after the evangelizing of Jonah.

this places an *if* in place of the *not*; the words are too different in the Hebrew for this to be a result of an old manuscript which was, somewhere along the way, misread. The word *if* is *ʾîm* (אִם) [pronounced *eem*] (Strong's #518 BDB #49), and the negative particle is *lôʾ* (לֹא) [pronounced *low*] (Strong's #3808 BDB #518). However, I must admit to its clean simplicity of meaning. However, there is another word that this could have been, and that will be covered in the next verse. Out of respect to Mr. Young, I have included his rendering as well as an alternate reading, assuming that he must have had god reason for making this choice.⁶² I should also point out that there is no *you* or *he* in this first phrase.

This first phrase is literally: *for not man as I*; and, possibly, *for if a man as I*. *ʿĀnâh* (אָנָה) [pronounced *gaw-NAWH*] means *to answer, to respond*. This word occasionally has a very technical meaning of giving a response in court, as in Deut. 19:18. Strong's #6030 BDB #772. *“Observe, one will come up like a lion from the thickets of the Jordan against a perennially watered pasture; for in an instant, I will make him run away from it, and whoever is chosen I will appoint over it. For who is like Me, and who will summon Me [into court]? And who then is the shepherd who can stand against Me?”* (Jer. 49:19). What this boils down to is that who are we to have a dispute with our Maker? *“Woe to the one quarreling with his Maker—an earthenware vessel among the vessels of earth! Will the clay say to the potter, ‘what are you doing?’ Or the thing you are making, ‘He has no hands’?”* (Isa. 45:9).

The remainder of the verse is, literally, *we [would] come together into the judgment*. Job does not know exactly the reason all this calamity has happened to him. His friends assume discipline and Job realizes that he is not perfect—that is, he is a man, and all men have feet of clay. He knows that God is perfect and that it is foolish to get into an argument with God. Job would more lean in the direction of his friends, that he is being disciplined rather than to impugn the character of God. If God were only a man and they could resolve their differences in court.

“There is no mediator between us who might lay his hand upon us both.	Job 9:33	“There is no mediator between us who might find an impartial resolution to our conflict.
“Would that there were a mediator between us who might lay his hand upon us both.	Job 9:33 alternate	“If only there were a mediator between us who could render an impartial decision to resolve our conflict.

Here is one of the most marvelous statements in the book of Job! Job feels as though he has grounds to dispute what God has done to him; something is terribly wrong in his case. However, how could there be someone equal to them both who would fairly and accurately assess the situation. Those who believe in God whose lives are hard, they often cry out for God to experience what they have experienced—for God to understand the pain which they themselves have been caused to go through.

We have a disputed reading in this verse. The Syriac and Septuagint codices do not have the negative; what they have instead is their equivalent of the Hebrew word *lû* (לוֹ) [also written *lûʾ* (לֹא)] [pronounced *lue*] and it means *O that, would that, if only, if*. Strong's #3863 BDB #530. In this case, we might have reason for the alternate rendering which could be based upon a mistake in transcribing or upon an old manuscript and a similar mistake could have been made in the previous verse (although I am not aware of any manuscript evidence to support that).

What Job wishes for is the Hiphil participle of *yâkach* (יָכַח) [pronounced *yaw-KAHK*], which means *to decide, to adjudge, to make a cause clear*,⁶³ *to prove, to render a decision*. When there are two parties involved in a dispute, it means *to hammer out a decision or an agreement, to resolve a conflict, to render a decision*. As a participle, this means *a mediator, an arbitrator, an arbiter, a neutral third party, an intercessor, an intermediary, one who*

⁶² For a mathematician, this is like Fermat's Last Theorem; although it has not been proven yet, Fermat himself claimed to have figured out how to prove it, but his proof has never been discovered. Out of respect for his great brilliance, this has been called a theorem (something which has been proven) rather than an hypothesis or a postulate (something which has been assumed).

⁶³ This is from *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 224.

reconciles. Strong's #3198 (and 3197) BDB #406. The mediator who can lay his hand upon Job and God both is One Who would be equal to both man and God. Although Barnes rejects mediator as being the exact meaning of this term, he says that what Job desires is: *one before whom the cause might be tried, who could lay the hand of restraint on either party, who could confine the pleadings within proper bounds, who could preserve the parties within the limits of order and propriety, and who had power to determine the question at issue. Job complains that there could be no such tribunal. He feels that God was so great that the cause could be referred to no other, and that he had no prospect of success in the unequal contest. It does not appear, therefore, that he desired a mediator, in the sense in which we understand that word—one who shall come between us and God, and manage our cause before him, and be our advocate at his bar. He rather says that there was no one above God, or no umpire uninterested in the controversy, before whom the cause could be argued, and who would be competent to decide the matter in issue between him and his Maker. He had no hope, therefore, in a cause where one of the parties was to be the judge, and where that party was omnipotent; and he must give up the cause in despair.* The idea of someone equal to man and equal to God would have seemed too farfetched to Job. He presents the idea of an arbiter also as an impossible desire of his. However, the phrase, *who could lay his hand on us both* is one implying some sort of an equality between the two disagreeing parties, Job and man. It is reasonable to suppose that this is some sort of a court ritual to indicate impartiality on the part of the judge. It would also indicate some sort of power over both parties—how should I put this so that it is not blasphemous? The arbiter would have the authority vested in him to make a decision which is binding to both parties and clearly be still within the constraints of the law. Furthermore, the Septuagint translates this *yâkach* by the Greek word *mesitês* (μεσίτης) [pronounced *meh-SEE-tace*], the same word used by Paul in his letter to Timothy when he tells Timothy that there is one Mediator between God and man (quoted below).

Job continues with this desire for some sort of equal footing with God when it comes to bringing his complaint to Him. *"Do You have eyes of flesh? Do You see as a man sees? Are Your days as the days of mortal man? Or, are Your years as man's?"* (Job 10:4–5). *"O, that man may plead with God as a man pleads with his neighbor."* (Job 16:21). *"O, that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come to His throne."* (Job 23:3). And what is quite fascinating is that, even though God does speak to Job directly at the end of this book, divine viewpoint is actually communicated through Elihu, a younger man, who finally speaks as a mediator—not between Job and his friends, but between Job and God. *"Observe, I belong to God as you do; I also have been cut out of clay. Observe, no fear of me should terrify you nor should my pressure weigh heavily upon you...If there is an angel—a Mediator—for Him, One out of a thousand, to remind a man what is His righteousness is, then let him [God] be gracious to Him [the man] and say [to the Mediator], 'Deliver him [the man] from going down to the pit—I have found a ransom [the Mediator].'"* (Job 33:6–7, 23–24).

The desire to have an intermediary between man and God has been man's desire since the dawn of time. *"If one man sins against another, God will mediate for him; but if a man sins against Y^{ehowah}, who can intercede for him?"* (1 Sam. 2:25a). For those who do not know their Lord and Savior, they often call to God, "If only You knew what I had to go through." Our Lord Jesus Christ more than fulfills all the desires of Job and of mankind throughout the ages. God came in the person of a man—a man who suffered as did all of us. A man of perfection thrown into a world of sin and evil. A man equal to us but, at the same time, equal to God. *Why the law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed should come to whom the promise had been made. Now a mediator is not for one side only—whereas, God is One* (Gal. 3:19–20). *For there is one God and one Mediator also between God and men—the man, Christ Jesus* (1 Tim. 2:5). *But now, He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises* (Heb. 8:6). *But you have come...to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood from Abel* (Heb. 12:22a, 24).

McGee: *The song that says, "Put your hand in the hand of the Man of Galilee" is only half true. The Man of Galilee has another hand and that hand is in the hand of God. Jesus is God, my friend, He is the God-Man. What a glorious, wonderful truth that is. Oh, how Job longed for Him!* ⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Job; J. Vernon McGee, ©1977, p. 69.

There are many, including myself at one time, who desire that the book of Job not be a part of the canon of Scripture. After all, it is just a few guys sitting around talking, one complaining about God and three complaining about him. It is often uncertain when divine viewpoint is being spoken and when human viewpoint is expressed. Even though this book is old, it has no particular significance to the Jewish people, who were chosen by God in Abraham.⁶⁵ Furthermore, the picture of God, when this book is viewed superficially, is of a rather capricious Being. Satan goes to God and God asks Satan if he has observed His servant Job. Satan claims that Job just realizes Who pays his salary and responds appropriately. So God gives Job to Satan to torment. This is not a picture that we like to have of God. And sometimes, the only people who seem to cling to this book are those who are in a mess, which they put themselves into; that is, they see themselves as Job, unjustly crushed and tormented when, in fact, they are the main cause of their own torment. So we have a book where it is difficult to determine when divine viewpoint is expressed and one which paints a portrait of God that we would rather not view; and those who often like this book tend to incorrectly misapply it to themselves. So why do we find this book in the canon of Scripture? (1) It is a part of the canon of Scripture—that is God's divine decree, so we don't have a choice here. (2) The book of Job, for a long time, was the gospel to some groups of people. I do not know the historicity of the distribution of the book of Job itself, however it is my educated opinion that this was the gospel for many non-Jewish peoples. We have in this book the utter depravity of Satan and an example of his works in this world. We have the unjust suffering of the innocent before the guilty (Job before his friends). We have a desperate cry by Job for a Mediator. And we have the sudden arrival of such a Mediator to stand in the gap, after which Job is restored to his former prosperity. God used this book perhaps millions of times with ancient man to present to them the gospel of Jesus Christ. What we need is a less than superficial view of this book.

**“Let Him [the Mediator] remove from upon
me His [God’s] rod
and [the] dread of Him will not terrify me.**

Job 9:34

**“Let Him, the Mediator, remove God’s rod
from beating me
and then the the dread of Him will no longer
terrify me.**

The verb here is the Hiphil imperfect, apocopated voluntative of שׁוּר (סור) [pronounced *soor*] which means *to turn aside*; in the Hiphil, it means *to cause to depart, to remove, to take away*. When followed by the preposition *mîn*, it means *to turn away from, to shun*. Here this is followed by two prepositions: *mîn* and *‘al*, so it means *to remove from upon, to take away from upon*. Strong's #5493 (and #5494) BDB #693. This is followed by the 1st person suffix and the word for *rod* with the 3rd person suffix, so the first line should read: **Let Him remove from upon me His rod**. Barnes: *Let him suspend my sufferings, and let us come together on equal terms. His terror now is upon me, and I can do nothing. I am oppressed, and broken down, and crushed under his hand, and I could not hope to maintain my cause with any degree of success. If my sufferings were lightened, and I could approach the question with the vigour of health and the power of reasoning unweakened by calamity, I could then do justice to the views which I entertain. Now there would be obvious disparity, while one of the parties has crushed the enervated the other by the mere exercise of power.*⁶⁶ Since Job is asking for the rod to be removed from upon him, that means that Job certainly feels as though the rod is beating him. God's rod is used to speak of His divine discipline. David wrote: **When I kept silent [concerning my transgression], my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night, Your hand was heavy upon me. My vitality was drained away as with the fever-heat of summer** (Psalm 32:3–4). One of the things that most people do not grasp is that God does not discipline unbelievers, unless they have attacked one of His own. When in a grocery store observing a child doing wrong, you rarely walk over to him and discipline him. Similarly, God does not discipline those who are not His. Job recognizes this later: **“Why do the wicked live, continue on and become very powerful? Their descendants are established with them in their sight and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear and the rod of God is not on them.”** (Job 21:7–9; see also Psalm 73:3–9).

What Barnes and other expositors fail to catch (which I must confess I originally missed as well), is that v. 34 continues v. 33; **the Mediator places His hands upon Job and upon God the Father and the Mediator**

⁶⁵ As we have been chosen by God in Christ.

⁶⁶ Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 225.

removes the rod of God from Job. This is a marvelous picture of the saving work of Jesus Christ, obscured by the simple marking off of the verse.

In the second line, we have the Piel imperfect of *bâ'ath* (בָּאֵת) [pronounced *baw-AHTH* or *baw-GAHTH*], which it means *to fall upon, to fall upon suddenly* and therefore *to startle, to terrify* due to the surprise. Strong's #1204 BDB #129. What Job asks not to terrify him is *his dread* (or, *terror*). I have carried the apocopated voluntative into the second line, even though it is not there. Literally, apart from the first line, all we have is *and dread of Him will not terrify me*. With an intervening Mediator from v. 33 standing between God and Job—One Who is able to remove God's scourging of Job—Job will no longer have to dread God and what God is doing to him.

**"I would speak and I would not fear Him;
and for not so I [am] with myself."**

Job 9:35

**"I would speak and I would not fear Him;
but this is not how the matter stands; I am
alone against God."**

This last line of this chapter will require some unraveling, so we had better go to the other translations first:

Albert Barnes	And I will speak and not be afraid of him—But not thus can I as I am now.
<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>	I could speak, and not be afraid of him, Although not so am I in myself!
Keil and Delitzsch	Then I would speak and not fear Him, For not thus do I stand with myself.
NASB	"Then I would speak and not fear Him; But I am not like that in myself."
NEB	I would then speak without fear of him; for I know I am not what I am thought to be.
NJB	Nonetheless, unafraid of him, I shall speak; since I do not see myself like that at all!
NIV	"Then I would speak up without fear of him, but as it now stands with me, I cannot."
<i>Young's Lit. Translation</i>	I speak, and do not fear Him, but I am not right with myself.

And just that last line:

Barnes' Translation	"...for not thus I with myself."
Dr. Good	"...but not thus could I in my present state."
Noyes	"...I am not so at heart."
The Syriac codex	"...for neither am I his adversary."

This verse begins with the Piel imperfect, voluntative of *to speak*; Most of the other translators went with *I would* to possibly express the voluntative, so I will too. Perhaps the voluntative could be rendered *could speak*? Job would be able to speak and make a reasonable defense, if the calamities and pain were lifted from him. The second verb is the Qal imperfect of *to fear*. I am going to take both of these as being a direct result of vv. 32–33, where Job is on some sort of equal footing with God. Later, he asks again, "**Only two things do not do to me, then I will not hide from Your face. Remove Your hand from me and let not the dread of You terrify me. Then call, and I will answer; or let me speak, then reply to me**" (Job 13:20–22).

It is the last line of this chapter which is the most confusing. It begins with *kî* (כִּי) [pronounced *kee*] which means *when, that, for, because*. This conjunction often connects the two verbs, unlike the *wâw* conjunction, which often indicates the beginning of a new sentence. Once and awhile it can mean *indeed, surely*. Strong's #3588 BDB #471.

This is followed by the negative and the adverb *kên* (כֵּן) [pronounced *kane*] is generally rendered *so, rightly, well, so very, so long, so often, it is so*. This particle is built upon the participle *to stand, to be upright, to be erect*; a very free translation might be *so this is how the matter stands*. A good short rendering would be *thus*. Strong's #3651 BDB #467 & BDB #485. Literally, so far, we have, *for not so*. I would think that this would be a phrase which means more than the sum of the meanings, although I could not find anything in Gesenius or BDB to support this view. An educated guess would be *but this is not how things are; however, this is not how the matter stands*. The key to understanding this is to look at the context of this entire passage. What is vital to grasp is that Job is still speaking of a Mediator—actually, that he does not have a Mediator. He says in v. 33–35, if there were only a

Mediator between God and himself; that Mediator could intervene and remove this terrible scourging from Job. Then Job would not longer be terrified. Job wants to speak more freely, which he could through a Mediator. However, this is not how the matter stands. Job is alone.

The final portion of this unusual sentence is the personal pronoun *I* (which often should be accompanied by the verb *to be*; the preposition *ʿim* (עִם) [pronounced *geem*], which is generally rendered *with*. BDB gives the following confusing explanation concerning this passage: *in one's consciousness, whether of knowledge or memory or purpose...not so am I with myself (my consciousness—or conscience—does not tell me that I need dread him).*⁶⁷ You will not find the explanation of Gesenius to be any more satisfying: *"not so (am) I with myself," i.e. my mind is not such within me, sc. that I should fear.*⁶⁸ I am going to get rather free with the second translation and render this as: *because this is how the matter stands: I am not alone.* Strong's #5973 BDB #767.

Although Keil and Delitzsch places these last two verses with the next chapter, what we have here is how Job would be able to related to God if God were a man or if there were a Mediator between them. He could bring his case before God without fear. Right now, Job feels that if he protests too much concerning his situation, that God will beat him down even more. Barnes shed this light upon those last few words: *Very various interpretations have been given of this phrase. The Jews, with Aben Ezra, suppose it means, "for I am not such as you suppose me to be. You take me to be a guilty man; but I am innocent, and if I had a fair opportunity for trial, I could show that I am." Others suppose it to me, "I am held to be guilty by the Most High, and am treated accordingly. But I am not so. I am conscious to myself that I am innocent." It seems to me that Dr. Good has come nearer the true sense than any other interpreter, and certainly his exposition accord with the connection. According to this the meaning is, "I am not able thus to vindicate myself in my present circumstances. I am oppressed and crushed beneath a load of calamities. But if these were removed, and if I had a fair opportunity of trial, then I could so state my cause as to make it appear to be just."*⁶⁹

At the end of this chapter, Barnes and I disagree about the general demeanor of Job. His opinion was that Job was occasionally irreverent and impatient, although that would be understandable. However, Barnes takes many of the 2nd person references in this chapter to refer to God, and I would be of the correct opinion that they do not, but refer to Bildad in particular, and the other two friends by association. What this leaves us is with a lot of substantial questions asked by Job from a position of pain and suffering—however, irreverence does not to be a portion of what Job has to say in this chapter.

What most commentaries miss is that the call by Job for a Mediator to intercede is a part of his thinking from v. 32 onto the end of the chapter. Therefore, all of what Job says must take that into account. Then, the last line, which appears to be so obscure and abstruse when taken by itself, suddenly makes full and complete sense. Job desires a Mediator in order to face God in court, but that is just not an option available to Job—it is just him alone. To get a better grasp of what this last line, let's pull together the last few verses, Job 9:32–35:

Job 9:32–35	
Literally:	Less literally:

⁶⁷ *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew-English Lexicon*; Hendrickson, ©1996, p. 768.

⁶⁸ *Geseius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; H.W.F. Gesenius, translated by Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, LL.D.; ©1979 by Baker Books, p. 636.

⁶⁹ *Barnes' Notes, Job, Volume 1*; Baker Books, ©1996; p. 225.

<p>“For not a man like I—I would answer Him; we would come together into the judgment. Would that there were a Mediator between us Who might lay his hand upon us both. Let Him [the Mediator] remove from upon me His [God’s] rod and [the] dread of Him will not terrify me. I would speak and I would not fear Him; and for not so I [am] with myself.”</p>	<p>“For He is not a man like I am—that I could respond to Him in court; nor could we come even together to trial. There is no Mediator between us who might find an impartial resolution to our conflict. Let Him, the Mediator, remove God’s rod from beating me and then the dread of Him will no longer terrify me. I would speak and I would not fear Him; but this is not how the matter stands; I am alone against God.”</p>
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