

# Job Replies to Bildad's First Speech

## Introduction

### a. objectives

1. subject – Job replies to Bildad's first speech, reiterating his innocence in the face of God's greatness
2. aim – To cause us to find assurance in the greatness of God in justifying us by faith in Christ
3. passage – Job 9:1-10:22

### b. outline

1. The Foundational Assertion Considered (9:1-2)
2. The Nature of God Considered (9:3-35)
3. The Place of Job Considered (Job 10:1-22)

### c. opening

1. **reminder: chaps. 4-14** represent **Round One** of Job's friends speaking to him
  - a. Job will now reply to Bildad's *assertion*
  - b. **friend's thesis (in 4-14):** it is Job's **moral failures** that account for his present plight
    1. **i.e.** the wicked *always* get what they deserve, Job is suffering, therefore Job must be an evil man suffering for his "hidden" evil, so ... he must go to God, confess his sin, and be restored
    2. Bildad's speech was a *seriously straightforward accusation of the same*
    3. but ... Job's response is to **ignore** Bildad's accusation, *and consider something deeper ...*
2. **Calvin** notes the following that we must consider:
  - a. it is a misunderstanding of God's *character* to assume (like Bildad!) that he chastises men in accordance with their "individual deserts" (**i.e.** what they do, positively or negatively)
    1. **i.e.** sometimes the wicked are spared; sometimes he chastises those he loves
    2. rather, we must assume that God is holy and righteous *regardless* of how he deals with anyone
      - a. **e.g.** the wicked afflicted = *reminding us* of justice; the righteous = *a greater purpose*
      - b. **i.e.** we must "always remain humble enough to acknowledge him as he is, namely, righteous and innocent", even if he ordains for us to be afflicted in this life (**a high view of God**)
  - b. so ... Job approaches his situation *very differently* from Bildad – instead of "boxing" God into a *simplistic character*, Job steps back and considers his situation *from a greater perspective*
    1. **IOW:** Job *knows* he is innocent (and repeats his protestation of such), but he *also believes* that attempting to "argue" with God about *why* he is suffering (as righteous) is *futile*
    2. **i.e.** the *assumption* by Bildad is *too simplistic* (and wrong!), so Job answers "away" from him

## I. The Foundational Assertion Considered (9:1-2)

### Content

#### a. the foundational assertion considered

1. **read 9:2a:** Job agrees with the *foundational assertion* that God is just (**8:3, 20**)
  - a. "truly I know that it is so" = a reference to Bildad's truthful statement – God *cannot* pervert justice, he *will not* "take the hand" of evildoers (**i.e.** embrace them as his own), and he will not reject the blameless man (**i.e.** the one righteous in his sight)
  - b. **i.e.** Job agrees that God is **absolutely consistent** – as holy, he *must* mete out justice where justice is due – God *cannot* allow the wicked to go unpunished, and (more importantly!) he *cannot* reject the upright, especially as **the upright is only so because of the nature of God**
2. **read 9:2b:** Job *reframes* Eliphaz's question to consider *a deeper reality* (**4:17**)
  - a. "can a mortal man be right before God?" becomes "*how can a man be in the right before God?*"
    1. Job reframes the question from "can" to "how" – Eliphaz: yes or no (based on deeds); Job: God is so glorious, how can *any man* (wicked or righteous) *even be considered by him?*
  3. **Job concedes that God is absolutely just, but this leaves him with a great dilemma**

## II. The Nature of God Considered (9:3-35)

### Content

#### a. the reality of dealing with God

1. **read 9:3-4, 14-16:** Job admits that attempting to make a case before God is *impossible*

- a. to “*contend with him*” = to argue with God; to debate God on a point of reality; to “advise” God on what he ought to think or do – to believe that God can *gain some insight from us*
  1. **i.e.** to “*answer him*” = to respond to a question *he might pose* or to understand what he does
  2. **i.e.** to “*hardened himself*” = to “stiffen” up as a debater and attempt to “force” an opinion through
- b. the **rhetorical** question: no one can stand on the same footing *intellectually* as God; no one can “advise” him on a better course of action; no one can be his intellectual equal (**Romans 11:33-34**)  
*“Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! ‘For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?’”*
- c. **LOW**: no man can stand before an infinite God and attempt to “change” him (or his mind)
  1. the **folly of man** is to assume that God listens to us and charts the course of history based on our *puny* opinions (**e.g.** that God is *subject* or *subordinated* to our “free” will or choices)
- d. so, Job admits that even if he *did* try to prove to God that he is righteous (or Bildad to prove Job is wicked), the gulf between God and man is so great that it would be like “shouting into the wind”
  1. **note**: Job *again* asserts his blamelessness (**i.e.** that he is *not* suffering for doing evil, as Eliphaz and Bildad have suggested; **see vv. 15, 20, 21; 10:7**) – so ...

#### b. the reality of the nature of God

1. **read 9:5-11, 14-16, 19-20, 32-33**: Job recognizes that to “plead his case” before the Almighty is a useless enterprise, given the *infinite distance* between himself and God
  - a. God can “*remove mountains*” (**v. 5**); “*shake the earth out of its place*” (**v. 6**); “*command the sun*” (**v. 7**) – it is God who “*stretched out the heavens*” and formed the constellations (**vv. 8-9**)
    1. **i.e.** the nature of God is so great that we can’t even “*perceive*” his presence (**v. 11**)
    2. **i.e.** if God is so great, why would he even *consider* us ... ?
  - b. **dilemma**: even if Job *is* righteous, how could he *possibly* prove that to an infinite God?
    1. would God even “show up” to hear the case if Job “*summoned*” him (**vv. 16, 19**)?
    2. and, if God *did* show up, would Job’s words actually “*condemn*” him, showing that he is (in reality!) “*perverse*” (against the holiness of God; **v. 20**)?
    3. because, there is no *common ground* between himself and God, for “*he is not a man*” (**v. 32**), and there is no “*arbiter*” between he and the Almighty who would bring them together (**v. 33**)
    4. thus, the “best” he can do is to “*appeal for mercy to my accuser*” (**v. 15b**) – to ask Eliphaz and Bildad to “lighten up” and leave alone him in his *miserable state* (**see below**)
2. **Job reasserts that he is blameless, but he has no way to defend the position – he can’t get Eliphaz and Bildad to recognize it, and he can’t defend his case before an infinite God**
  - a. this is a **perfect example** of two things *we* must remember from this book:
    1. Job makes his good points poorly = it is absolutely true that God is infinite, and no man can counsel God in how he is to think or act ... but, Job falls back into *fatalism* at this (**see below**)
    2. Job is a man of his times = without the fullness of revelation, the above truths *are not seen in their entirety*, and he is unable to perceive how God has overcome this “gulf” (**see below**)

### III. The Place of Job Considered (Job 10:1-22)

#### Content

##### a. the plea to God regarding Job’s place

1. **read 10:1-5, 8-15, 18-22**: Job pleads before God to leave him alone in his confusion
  - a. **note**: **chap. 10** is similar to **chaps. 3 & 7**: “there is no answer to what I am experiencing; therefore, I wish simply to be left alone to live out my miserable existence and ‘be no more’”
  - b. “*I loathe my life*” (**v. 1**) = I loathe the fact that life is filled with suffering *but without any real explanation* (**i.e.** Bildad is wrong about *why*, and God is too distant and obscure to help)
    1. **observation**: it is interesting that many approach this book as an answer to suffering – however, the *only answer* given is *thoroughly condemned* by God himself (**42:7-9**)
  - c. Job turns to appeal *directly* to God (“*I will say to God*” [**v. 2**]; in spite of his **protestations** above):
    1. **i.e.** he *inherently* knows that his only recourse is to turn to God and seek an answer ...
    2. “*does it seem good to you to oppress ... to despise the work of your hands?*” (**v. 3**) = why would you form man only to allow him to suffer; do you **sympathize** with us, even as *infinite*?
    3. “*have you eyes of flesh?*” (**v. 4**) and “*are your days as the days of man?*” (**v. 5**) = do you pass judgment over the world *only as humans do* (**i.e.** faultily and limited in nature; **e.g.** Bildad)?
    4. “*you have made me like clay*” (**v. 9**), “*you have granted me life ... love*” (**v. 12**), “*yet these things you hid in your heart*” (**v. 13**) = why have you formed me as a *fallible creature*, only to purpose your judgment over me; do you **care** about my troubles, or not?
      - a. **vv. 14-15**: if I am *guilty*, woe to me (I know your judgment is true); but, if I am “*in the right*”, I possess no strength (as a weak human) to make any claim of it before you

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5. “why did you bring me out from the womb?” (v. 18) and “leave me alone” (v. 20) = (again; see 3:11) why have you brought me to this place *with no answers?* – let me have just a few moments where I am not tormented by the idea of judgment and justice (impossible!)
  2. **Job finds himself caught between trusting the God who formed him and the nagging issue of justice – his circumstances torment him in regards to judgment, as he attempts to trust God**
- b. the understanding of God regarding our place**
1. **remember:** what *Job* does not see, **we see** ... namely, what *Job* does not know because a) the fullness of revelation re: the gospel has not yet come, and b) what is made privy to us is hidden from him, **we know**, and we must read this book **through the lens of the full gospel revelation**
    - a. specifically, although Job considers God to be so great *that he wouldn't take notice of him*, **we know** that God *has* taken notice of him *out of his sovereign grace and purpose* (1:8; 2:3)
      1. **i.e.** that the *purpose* of this suffering of Job is to demonstrate: what God has decreed *cannot be changed*, either by the evil intentions of the devil, nor of the failings of the elect
    - b. additionally, **we know** how the torment in Job *is ultimately fulfilled*:
      1. three (3) verses should “**pop out**” at us from this speech: 9:32; 10:4; 9:33
      2. 9:32: “for he is not a man, as I am ... that we should come to trial together”
        - a. **true:** the infinite, Almighty God is not inclined to take up counsel with humans; Job is right: God is *too great* to (really!) have anything to do with us *puny humans*
        - b. but ... God, in his sovereign decree, *does have* his eye upon a people, **for his elect are the objects of his entire redemptive purpose** (Ephesians 1:3-5)
 

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.”
    3. 10:4: “have you eyes of flesh? do you see as man sees?”
      - a. **true:** the infinite, Almighty God is not a man, nor does he think or judge like a man
      - b. but ... God, in his sovereign purpose, *became a man*, in order that he might **fully know the human condition and experience what it means to be as one of us** (Hebrews 2:14-18)
 

“Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery ... Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.”
  4. 9:33: “there is no arbiter between us, who might lay his hand on us both”
    - a. **true:** man, in his natural, fallen state, cannot mediate himself before God (as Job points out), and there is no one to plead his case before a perfectly just and holy God
    - b. but ... the *God-man*, in fulfilling the sovereign decree, *mediates* between God and his elect people, **for he “knows” fully what God demands and he meets that demand as a man**

“It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, according to the covenant made between them both, to be the mediator between God and man; the Prophet, Priest, and King ... unto whom He did from all eternity give a people to be His Seed ...” (1689, 8:1)
1. Jesus can “lay his hand” on both God and man, drawing them together, satisfying the *demands* of God re: justice and the *needs* of man re: atonement (1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 9:15)
 

“For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus ... he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance”
- c. **the message of Job is simple:** look away from yourself and your troubles **to the work of Christ the mediator**, for God is *very much aware of you*, and has sent his Son to *make your case*