

KEY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Basic English Diagram / Structure

Chapter 36

- 1 Then Elihu continued and said,
2 “Wait for me a little, and I will show you
 That there is yet more to be said in God’s behalf.
3 “I will fetch my knowledge from afar,
 And I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.
4 “For truly my words are not false;
 One who is perfect in knowledge is with you.
- 5 “Behold, God is mighty but does not despise any;
 He is mighty in strength of understanding.
6 “He does not keep the wicked alive,
 But gives justice to the afflicted. 7
 “He does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous;
 But with kings on the throne He has seated them forever, and they are exalted.
- 8 “And if they are bound in fetters,
 And are caught in the cords of affliction,
9 Then He declares to them their work
 And their transgressions, that they have magnified themselves.
10 “He opens their ear to instruction,
 And commands that they return from evil.
- 11 “If they hear and serve Him,
 They will end their days in prosperity
 And their years in pleasures.
12 “But if they do not hear,
 they shall perish by the sword
 And they will die without knowledge.
- 13 “But the godless in heart lay up anger;
 They do not cry for help when He binds them.
14 “They die in youth,
 And their life perishes among the cult prostitutes.
- 15 “He delivers the afflicted in their affliction,
 And opens their ear in time of oppression.
- 16 “Then indeed, He enticed you from the mouth of distress,
 Instead of it, a broad place with no constraint;
 And that which was set on your table was full of fatness.
- 17 “But you were full of judgment on the wicked;
 Judgment and justice take hold of you.

18 “Beware that wrath does not entice you to scoffing;
And do not let the greatness of the ransom turn you aside.

19 “Will your riches keep you from distress,
Or all the forces of your strength?

20 “Do not long for the night,
When people vanish in their place.

21 “Be careful, do not turn to evil,
For you have preferred this to affliction.

22 “Behold, God is exalted in His power;
Who is a teacher like Him?

23 “Who has appointed Him His way,
And who has said, ‘You have done wrong’?

24 “Remember that you should exalt His work,
Of which men have sung.

25 “All men have seen it;
Man beholds from afar.

26 “Behold, God is exalted,
and we do not know Him;
The number of His years is unsearchable.

27 “For He draws up the drops of water,
They distill rain from the mist,

28 Which the clouds pour down,
They drip upon man abundantly.

29 “Can anyone understand the spreading of the clouds,
The thundering of His pavilion?

30 “Behold, He spreads His lightning about Him,
And He covers the depths of the sea.

31 “For by these He judges peoples;
He gives food in abundance.

32 “He covers His hands with the lightning,
And commands it to strike the mark.

33 “Its noise declares His presence;
The cattle also, concerning what is coming up.

Chapter 37

1 “At this also my heart trembles,
And leaps from its place.

2 “Listen closely to the thunder of His voice,
And the rumbling that goes out from His mouth.

3 “Under the whole heaven He lets it loose,
And His lightning to the ends of the earth.

4 “After it, a voice roars;
He thunders with His majestic voice,
And He does not restrain the lightnings when His voice is heard.

5 “God thunders with His voice wondrously,
Doing great things which we cannot comprehend.

6 “For to the snow He says,
‘Fall on the earth,’
And to the downpour and the rain,
‘Be strong.’

7 “He seals the hand of every man,
That all men may know His work.

8 “Then the beast goes into its lair
And remains in its den.

9 “Out of the south comes the storm,
And out of the north the cold.

10 “From the breath of God ice is made,
And the expanse of the waters is frozen.

11 “Also with moisture He loads the thick cloud;
He disperses the cloud of His lightning.

12 “It changes direction, turning around by His guidance,
That it may do whatever He commands it On the face of the inhabited earth.

13 “Whether for correction,
or for His world,
Or for lovingkindness,
He causes it to happen.

14 “Listen to this, O Job,
Stand and consider the wonders of God.

15 “Do you know how God establishes them,
And makes the lightning of His cloud to shine?

16 “Do you know about the layers of the thick clouds,
The wonders of one perfect in knowledge,

17 You whose garments are hot,
When the land is still because of the south wind?

18 “Can you, with Him, spread out the skies,
Strong as a molten mirror?

19 “Teach us what we shall say to Him;
We cannot arrange our case because of darkness.

- 20 “Shall it be told Him that I would speak?
Or should a man say that he would be swallowed up?
- 21 “Now men do not see the light which is bright in the skies;
But the wind has passed and cleared them.
- 22 “Out of the north comes golden splendor;
Around God is awesome majesty.
- 23 “The Almighty—we cannot find Him;
He is exalted in power
And He will not do violence to justice and abundant righteousness.
- 24 “Therefore men fear Him;
He does not regard any who are wise of heart.”

TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

ENGLISH TRANSLATION (NASB95):

Job 36:1-33 1 Then Elihu continued and said, 2 “Wait for me a little, and I will show you That there is yet more to be said in God’s behalf. 3 “I will fetch my knowledge from afar, And I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker. 4 “For truly my words are not false; One who is perfect in knowledge is with you. 5 “Behold, God is mighty but does not despise any; He is mighty in strength of understanding. 6 “He does not keep the wicked alive, But gives justice to the afflicted. 7 “He does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous; But with kings on the throne He has seated them forever, and they are exalted. 8 “And if they are bound in fetters, And are caught in the cords of affliction, 9 Then He declares to them their work And their transgressions, that they have magnified themselves. 10 “He opens their ear to instruction, And commands that they return from evil. 11 “If they hear and serve Him, They will end their days in prosperity And their years in pleasures. 12 “But if they do not hear, they shall perish by the sword And they will die without knowledge. 13 “But the godless in heart lay up anger; They do not cry for help when He binds them. 14 “They die in youth, And their life perishes among the cult prostitutes. 15 “He delivers the afflicted in their affliction, And opens their ear in time of oppression. 16 “Then indeed, He enticed you from the mouth of distress, Instead of it, a broad place with no constraint; And that which was set on your table was full of fatness. 17 “But you were full of judgment on the wicked; Judgment and justice take hold of you. 18 “Beware that wrath does not entice you to scoffing; And do not let the greatness of the ransom turn you aside. 19 “Will your riches keep you from distress, Or all the forces of your strength? 20 “Do not long for the night, When people vanish in their place. 21 “Be careful, do not turn to evil, For you have preferred this to affliction. 22 “Behold, God is exalted in His power; Who is a teacher like Him? 23 “Who has appointed Him His way, And who has said, ‘You have done wrong’? 24 “Remember that you should exalt His work, Of which men have sung. 25 “All men have seen it; Man beholds from afar. 26 “Behold, God is exalted, and we do not know Him; The number of His years is unsearchable. 27 “For He draws up the drops of water, They distill rain from the mist, 28 Which the clouds pour down, They drip upon man abundantly. 29 “Can anyone understand the spreading of the clouds, The thundering of His pavilion? 30 “Behold, He spreads His lightning about Him, And He covers the depths of the sea. 31 “For by these He judges peoples; He gives food in abundance. 32 “He covers His hands with the lightning, And commands it to strike the mark. 33 “Its noise declares His presence; The cattle also, concerning what is coming up.

Job 37:1-24 1 “At this also my heart trembles, And leaps from its place. 2 “Listen closely to the thunder of His voice, And the rumbling that goes out from His mouth. 3 “Under the whole heaven He lets it loose, And His lightning to the ends of the earth. 4 “After it, a voice roars; He thunders with His majestic voice, And He does not restrain the lightnings when His voice is heard. 5 “God thunders with His voice wondrously, Doing great things which we cannot comprehend. 6 “For to the snow He says, ‘Fall on the earth,’ And to the downpour and the rain, ‘Be strong.’ 7 “He seals the hand of every man, That all men may know His work. 8 “Then the beast goes into its lair And remains in its den. 9 “Out of the south comes the storm, And out of the north the cold. 10 “From the breath of God ice is made, And the expanse of the waters is frozen. 11 “Also with moisture He loads the thick cloud; He disperses the cloud of His lightning.

12 “It changes direction, turning around by His guidance, That it may do whatever He commands it On the face of the inhabited earth. 13 “Whether for correction, or for His world, Or for lovingkindness, He causes it to happen. 14 “Listen to this, O Job, Stand and consider the wonders of God. 15 “Do you know how God establishes them, And makes the lightning of His cloud to shine? 16 “Do you know about the layers of the thick clouds, The wonders of one perfect in knowledge, 17 You whose garments are hot, When the land is still because of the south wind? 18 “Can you, with Him, spread out the skies, Strong as a molten mirror? 19 “Teach us what we shall say to Him; We cannot arrange our case because of darkness. 20 “Shall it be told Him that I would speak? Or should a man say that he would be swallowed up? 21 “Now men do not see the light which is bright in the skies; But the wind has passed and cleared them. 22 “Out of the north comes golden splendor; Around God is awesome majesty. 23 “The Almighty—we cannot find Him; He is exalted in power And He will not do violence to justice and abundant righteousness. 24 “Therefore men fear Him; He does not regard any who are wise of heart.”

PASSAGE OUTLINE:

Bible Knowledge Commentary

- IV. ELIHU'S FOURTH SPEECH (CHAPS. 36–37)
 - A. Elihu's defense of God's justice and power in His dealings with man (36:1–26)
 - 1. Elihu's confidence in his own insights. (36:1–4)
 - 2. God's just dealings with the wicked and the righteous (36:5–7)
 - 3. God's design in suffering—to lead people to repent of pride (36:8–12)
 - 4. The reactions of people to suffering (36:13–15)
 - 5. The reactions of Job to suffering (36:16–26)
 - B. Elihu's defense of God's sovereignty and benevolence in His dealings with nature (36:27–37:24)
 - 1. God's sovereignty in the autumn storm (36:27–33)
 - 2. God's sovereignty in the winter (37:1–13)
 - 3. God's sovereignty in the summer (37:14–18)
 - 4. Job's inability to understand God's ways (37:19–24)

UBS Handbook Series

- IV. Elihu's Final Speech Job 36:1–37:24
 - A. Elihu Speaks the Truth for God Job 36:1–4
 - B. God is Just, and So People Suffer Job 36:5–15
 - C. Elihu Warns Job That He is Being Punished As He Deserves Job 36:16–21
 - D. Elihu Asks Job to Remember How Great God is Job 36:22–25
 - E. Elihu Describes God's Activity in the Storm Job 36:26–37:13
 - F. Elihu Challenges Job to Reflect on God's Greatness in Nature Job 37:14–22
 - G. Elihu Reminds Job That God Ignores Those Who Think They Are Wise Job 37:23–24

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

- III. Elihu's Fourth Speech (36:1–37:24)
 - A. Elihu Declares God's Goodness and Power (36:1–37:18)
 - 1. Introduction of a New Tack (36:1–4)
 - 2. God's Retribution to the Good and the Bad (36:5–15)
 - 3. God's Discipline to Job (36:16–21)
 - 4. Introduction to the Anticipated Theophany (36:22–26)
 - 5. Anticipated Theophany (36:27–37:13)
 - 6. Application to Job (37:14–18)
 - B. His Inconclusive Conclusion (37:19–24)

Be Patient: Job (Warren W. Wiersbe)

- IV. God is Great (Job 36–37)
 - A. God's merciful purpose for man (Job 36:1–25)
 - 1. Explanation (vv. 5–15)

- 2. Application (vv. 16–25)
 - a. Autumn (36:27–37:5).
 - b. Winter (vv. 6–10)
 - c. Spring (vv. 11–13)
 - d. Summer (vv. 14–18)
- B. INTERLUDE (37:14–18)

Job (Charles Swindoll)

- I. Observing Elihu’s Approach
- II. Analyzing Elihu’s Mistakes
 - A. He Took Too Long to Get Started
 - B. He Comes Across as Pompous
 - C. He States What Job Knows
 - D. He Never Acknowledges that He Doesn’t Know for Sure
- III. Analyzing Elihu’s Speeches
 - A. His First Speech
 - B. His Second Speech
 - C. His Third Speech
 - D. His Fourth Speech

Job: The Wisdom of the Cross (Christopher Ash)

- IV. Elihu’s Fourth Speech: Cosmic Grandeur and Cosmic Justice (36-37)
 - A. Introduction: A God-Given Defense of God’s Justice (36:1-4)
 - B. God Acts Powerfully and Justly On People (36:5-25)
 - 1. The Mighty Justice of God (36:5-7)
 - 2. The Just Discipline of God (36:8-10)
 - 3. The Two Responses to God (36:11-15)
 - 4. The Appeal to Job (36:16-25)
 - C. God Acts Powerfully On The World (36:26-37:20)
 - 1. God Acts in Power for Blessing and for Judgment (36:26-37:13)
 - 2. The Appeal to Job (37:14-20)
 - D. Conclusion: God is Overwhelmingly Glorious (37:21-24)

BASIC OUTLINE:

SEE TALBERT PAGE 177 FOR ALL FOUR SPEECHES

PASSAGE OUTLINE:

- IV. Elihu's Fourth Speech: God is Great and Good (36-37)
 - A. Introduction: A Prophetic Voice (36:1-4)
 - B. God Is Good (36:5-25)
 - 1. His Goodness in Justice (36:5-7)
 - a. The wicked and the righteous (36:5-7)
 - 2. His Goodness in Discipline (36:8-10)
 - 3. Two Responses to His Just Discipline (36:11-15)
 - 4. Appeal to Job (36:16-25)
 - a. God's sovereignty in the autumn storm (36:27-33)
 - b. God's sovereignty in the winter (37:1-13)
 - c. God's sovereignty in the summer (37:14-18)
 - d. Job's inability to understand God's ways (37:19-24)
 - C. God Is Great (36:26-37:20)
 - 1. God Acts in Power for Blessing and for Judgment (36:26-37:13)
 - 2. Appeal to Job (37:14-20)
 - D. Conclusion: God is to be Feared (37:21-24)

SERMON OUTLINE:

- IV. Elihu's Fourth Speech: God is Great and Good (36-37)
 - A. Introduction: A Prophetic Voice (36:1-4)
 - B. God Is Good (36:5-25)
 - 1. His Goodness in Justice (36:5-7)
 - 2. His Goodness in Discipline (36:8-10)
 - 3. An Appeal to Job (36:16-25)
 - C. God Is Great (36:26-37:23)
 - 1. God's greatness in nature (seasons)
 - a. God's sovereign glory in the autumn storm (36:26-33)
 - b. God's sovereign glory in the winter (37:1-13)
 - c. God's sovereign glory in the summer (37:14-18)
 - 2. Job's inability to understand God's ways (37:19-23)
 - D. Conclusion: God is to be Feared (37:24)

PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what is the passage talking about): God is Great and God is Good

PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what is the passage saying about what it's talking about): and he leads the believer to repentance

PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text): God is great and good

CENTRAL PROPOSITION (OR IDEA) OF THE SERMON: God's Greatness and Goodness lead the Believer to Repentance

SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE: The Fourth Speech of Elihu: God is Great and Good

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

Overview of Elihu's Speeches

Job's Complaint

1. God is silent; He does not respond to me (33:13; cf. 33:13).

Elihu's Answer

1a. First speech: God does speak—through dreams and pain (chap. 33).

Job's Complaint

2. God is unjust; He does not relieve me of my suffering (19:6–7, 27:2; cf. 34:5–6).

Elihu's Answer

2a. Second speech: God is just (chap. 34).

Job's Complaint

3. God is unconcerned; He does not reward me for my innocence (10:7; cf. 35:3).

Elihu's Answer

3a. Third Speech: God is sovereign (chap. 35).

Elihu's Quotations of Job

In Elihu's First Speech

33:9a "I am pure" (cf. 6:10; 9:21; 10:7; 12:4; 16:17; 31:6).

33:9b "Without sin" (cf. 13:23; 23:11).

33:9c "I am clean and free from guilt" (cf. 9:20–21; 10:7; 27:6).

33:10a "God has found fault with me" (cf. 10:6).

33:10b "He considers me His enemy" (cf. 13:24; 19:11).

33:11a "He fastens my feet in shackles" (cf. 13:27).

33:11b "He keeps close watch on all my paths" (cf. 7:17–20; 10:14; 13:27).

In Elihu's Second Speech

34:5a "I am innocent [righteous]" (cf. 9:15, 20; 27:6).

34:5b "God denies me justice" (cf. 19:6–7; 27:2).

34:6a "I am right" (cf. 27:5–6).

34:6b "I am guiltless" (cf. 10:7; chap. 31).

34:6d "His arrow inflicts an incurable wound" (cf. 6:4; 16:13).

34:9 "It profits a man nothing when he tries to please God" (cf. 21:15).

In Elihu's Third Speech

35:2 "I will be cleared by God" (cf. 13:18; 23:7).

35:3 "What profit is it to me, and what do I gain by not sinning?" (cf. 21:15).

In Elihu's Fourth Speech

36:23 "You [God] have done wrong" (cf. 19:6–7).

Chapters 36 and 37 make up the fourth and final speech of Elihu. The theme of this final speech is a continuation of Elihu's defense of God. In 36:2–4 Elihu claims to speak on God's behalf. In verses 5–15 he testifies to God's character and explains to Job the purpose of suffering. In 16–21, a series of textually uncertain verses, Elihu accuses Job of allowing his prosperity to corrupt him and causing him to suffer. In 22–25 Elihu again reminds Job of the ways of God. Elihu then describes God's work in nature in 36:26–37:13. Finally, in verses 14–22 of chapter 37, Elihu asks Job to answer impossible questions about God in nature. Elihu concludes his speech in 37:23–24 with a testimony to God's power and justice. [William David Reayburn, *A Handbook on the Book of Job*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 655]

This is the longest of the 4 speeches. Elihu may be prone to hyperbole and idealism.

Some key themes:

1. God watches over his people
2. God disciplines his people when they go astray
3. God blesses his people when they correct their course

We see God's transcendence as contrasted with his immanence in chapter 38.

Reflections on Elihu . . .

Visualize clipping out Elihu altogether from the book of Job. Imagine jumping directly from Job's final, lengthy self-defense into God's dramatic and corrective confrontation with Job. What would we lose? Absolutely nothing, some would have us believe. Is it reasonable that God would waste 165 verses on the hackneyed banalities of an unoriginal blowhard? That's five-and-a-half pages of my wide-margin, straight-text Bible. Elihu's speech occupies the amount of space given to Joel or Micah, Galatians or both Thessalonian Epistles.

Even if Elihu's contributions are minimal, that seems an excessive amount of scriptural real estate to surrender. Nor is it sensible to argue that the narrator was bound to record these "blustering speeches" just "because they happened." [as one author contends] The biblical authors were necessarily selective under the direction of the Holy Spirit about what they recorded. What, then, do we gain from the arguments of Elihu? What purpose do they serve? What is their function?

When Job finishes his defense and "ends his words" (31:40), we sense that things are not quite right with Job. But no one has been able to put his finger on Job's problem. The three friends are not even addressing Job's problem; they are fabricating a non-issue. Stuck in their retributionist rut, they will not engage his words and evaluate his arguments.

Elihu shatters the impasse. Job's problem is not what he did before he suffered but what he has been saying since. Elihu's preliminary diagnosis prepares the way for God's

infallible diagnosis of Job's disorder and its treatment. Elihu transitions us from the false accusations and flawed arguments of Job's friends to the final word from God. He might, like the others, also incorrectly assume that Job is suffering the consequences of his sin (34:11, 37-37). But unlike the others, he concentrates on Job's reaction to what has happened, not on what Job did to deserve it. [Talbert, 191]

Agreement Between Elihu and God on Job (often in identical Hebrew terms)

Elihu	God
33:13	40:2
34:17	40:8
34:35, 35:16	38:2, 42:3
35:2	40:8

*Taken from Talbert, 192.

VERSES 36:1-4

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

1 Then Elihu continued and said, 2 “Wait for me a little, and I will show you That there is yet more to be said in God’s behalf. 3 “I will fetch my knowledge from afar, And I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker. 4 “For truly my words are not false; One who is perfect in knowledge is with you.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

1 And Elihu continued, and said: 2 “Bear with me a little, and I will show you, for I have yet something to say on God’s behalf. 3 I will get my knowledge from afar and ascribe righteousness to my Maker. 4 For truly my words are not false; one who is perfect in knowledge is with you.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

1 Then Elihu continued, saying: 2 Be patient with me a little longer, and I will inform you, for there is still more to be said on God’s behalf. 3 I will get my knowledge from a distant place and ascribe justice to my Maker. 4 For my arguments are without flaw; one who has perfect knowledge is with you.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

1 Elihu continued: 2 “Bear with me a little longer and I will show you that there is more to be said in God’s behalf. 3 I get my knowledge from afar; I will ascribe justice to my Maker. 4 Be assured that my words are not false; one who has perfect knowledge is with you.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

1 Then Elihu continued and said, 2 “Wait for me a little, and I will show you That there is yet more to be said in God’s behalf.

For I have yet something to say on God’s behalf is literally “for there are still words for God.” [UBS Handbook, 656]

[Elihu] . . . was so full of ideas to share (32:18–20) that he asked Job not to become impatient (Bear with me). He still had more to say in defense of God. In self-confidence Elihu said his knowledge (cf. 36:4) was from afar, that is, he had a wide range of insights, in contrast with Job who, Elihu twice said, was “without knowledge” (34:35; 35:16). [Roy B. Zuck, “Job,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 762]

3 **“I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.**

“Knowledge from afar” may mean that Elihu was well-educated, but more likely that he speaks prophetically. This phrase is repeated in 36:25 forming an inclusio.

And ascribe righteousness to my Maker is a phrase which has the same meaning as “to justify” or “to show someone to be just or fair.” My Maker renders the Hebrew literally and adequately. It is commonly translated “my Creator” by TEV and others. The word translated my Maker is not the usual verbal noun used in this sense, but its meaning as “my Creator” is not in doubt. This line may be translated, for example, “I will prove that my Creator is in the right,” or “I will show you that my Maker is fair.” [UBS Handbook]

He says he will bear his knowledge from afar and ascribe justice to God, his meaning being that he will deploy his knowledge in order to declare God just. This is an important signal that the depiction of the fates of the righteous and the wicked in vv 5–15, the address to Job in vv 16–21, and the poem describing the workings of God in nature in 36:26–37:24 are all essentially about God’s justice. Elihu is still concerned to refute Job’s criticism of God’s justice. [David J. A. Clines]

4 **“For truly my words are not false; one who is perfect in knowledge is with you.**

Many see arrogance here:

This sentence gives many commentators, often naively pre-critical in their representations of the other, yet another welcome opportunity to sneer at Elihu as a “stranger to modesty” who “frequently finds it necessary to certify his own genius” (Rowley), or even “in attempting to vindicate God, falls into the trap of playing God” (Habel). By his braggadocio, it is said, he spoils his vision of a divinely ordered universe (Good), or even, it is claimed, his “presumption reached an apex with this verse” (Alden). His claim is extravagant, presumptuous, and absurd (Strahan). It is “extravagant self-praise, even for an Oriental, the more pitiful that the speeches themselves give the lie to his claim” (Peake), though “as an Oriental speaker he is allowed a certain licence which would never be conceded in the West” (Strahan). “It is impossible to acquit Elihu of overweening arrogance” (Gibson). It is a “stupendous claim . . . not only ludicrous, underlining Elihu’s egregious self-conceit, but also close to blasphemy” (Whybray). “Elihu is giving himself such a certificate of genius, as if the brash young man is all unaware of its presumption” (Andersen). [David J. A. Clines]

Not arrogance or an affront to God’s omniscience. May be that Elihu is referencing God (cf. Talbert, 187).

Some insist on charging Elihu with being arrogant and somewhat pompous when he claims, ‘my words are not false; One perfect in knowledge is with you’ (4). But that assessment of Elihu depends on attributing Elihu’s words to himself and is therefore a

misinterpretation of the text as I see it. Instead, however, Elihu is speaking only of God as the ‘One perfect in knowledge’ and not of himself at all, as a glance forward in 37:16 informs us. [Kaiser, 201]

[Elihu] . . . is not being as self-important as it may seem. Some versions try to soften the tone by translating “you have a man of sound learning here” (NJB), “a man of sound opinions is before you” (NJPS), “before you stands one whose conclusions are sound” (NEB), “here stands a man whose insight is unerring” (Moffatt). More correctly, תמים means morally upright, sincere (Gordis), as Job describes himself in 12:4; the same is true of the similar word חן at 1:1 (q.v.), 8; 2:3; 8:20; 9:20–22. Newsom also recognizes that the term is “merely a claim to ‘sound,’ ‘wholesome’ knowledge.” . . . It is worth recalling as well that the Hebrew term ידע “know” includes also what we would call “think” or “have an opinion,” so Elihu may not be more self-regarding than any of our contemporaries who says, I believe my opinions are sincere. [David J. A. Clines]

Perfect in knowledge is used in 37:16, where it refers to God. Perfect translates a word meaning “complete” and is used in 1:1, and also in 1:8 and 2:3, where God uses the word to characterize Job. There it is translated “blameless” (RSV) and “faithful” (TEV). Used in relation to knowledge the meaning has to do with the degree of knowledge Elihu claims. [UBS Handbook]

However, the words “one perfect in knowledge” may refer to God, as they certainly do in 37:16. This view is supported by the recently discovered Ebla tablets (Mitchell Dahood, “Are the Ebla Tablets Relevant to Biblical Research?” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 6. September–October 1980:58). [Roy B. Zuck, “Job,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*]

Unlike all Elihu’s previous speeches, this one contains no quotation of Job’s words (contrast 33:8–11; 34:5–6; 35:2–3), no doubt an indication that Elihu is now attempting a summary statement of his own position rather than a refutation of Job. [David J. A. Clines, *Job 21–37*, vol. 18a, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), 854]

Elihu cannot say enough about God. His boast was in God’s Goodness and Greatness

VERSES 36:5-7

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

5 “Behold, God is mighty but does not despise any; He is mighty in strength of understanding. 6 “He does not keep the wicked alive, but gives justice to the afflicted. 7 “He does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous; but with kings on the throne He has seated them forever, and they are exalted.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

5 “Behold, God is mighty, and does not despise any; he is mighty in strength of understanding. 6 He does not keep the wicked alive, but gives the afflicted their right. 7 He does not withdraw his eyes from the righteous, but with kings on the throne he sets them forever, and they are exalted.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

5 Yes, God is mighty, but He despises no one; He understands all things. 6 He does not keep the wicked alive, but He gives justice to the afflicted. 7 He does not remove His gaze from the righteous, but He seats them forever with enthroned kings, and they are exalted.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

5 “God is mighty, but despises no one; he is mighty, and firm in his purpose. 6 He does not keep the wicked alive but gives the afflicted their rights. 7 He does not take his eyes off the righteous; he enthrones them with kings and exalts them forever.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

A number of commentators do not recognize that the righteous who go wrong are the principal theme of this section . . . All in all, it is much better to see the contrast in vv 5–16 as between the truly righteous who fall into sin and may or may not escape, and the truly wicked who come to an early grave. [David J. A. Clines]

In the next 11 vv. Elihu uses 15 descriptors of God’s activity and nature.

5 “Behold, God is mighty but does not despise any; He is mighty in strength of understanding. 6 “He does not keep the wicked alive, but gives justice to the afflicted.

Hebrew word for “Behold” introduces four statements by Elihu about God’s power (vv. 5, 22, 26, 30).

Verse 6 — metaphorical (cf. v. 7)? Ultimate justice? Clearly, this is not absolute in this sinful world. See 6a in the context of the judgment of 6b. These may be the wicked to persecute the afflicted.

The two aspects of God's just dealings are mentioned: he slays the wicked, he gives justice to the afflicted. This is headline stuff, for Elihu himself knows that reality is much more complicated. On the one side, the wicked are obviously very much in evidence (cf. 34:7, 18, 22, 26–28), and clearly not all have been instantly put to death. And on the other side, just now Elihu has been explaining how there is more than one kind of afflicted person: there are the deserving and the undeserving (35:9–13). So it is not true, as a blanket statement, that the “afflicted” (hebrew) get “justice,” in the sense of deliverance, for some at least of the afflicted do not deserve to be heard. Maybe not being delivered is justice of a sort, but a disregarded cry (35:13) is not what Elihu means by “justice” (hebrew) here. [David J. A. Clines]

7 “He does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous; but with kings on the throne He has seated them forever, and they are exalted.

It can hardly be literally meant that the righteous are enthroned as kings, for that does not often happen. Rather, God's justice for the righteous ensures that they rise to positions of importance, or, at least, that they find their own kind of success in life. [David J. A. Clines]

Again Elihu sided with the three worn-out debaters by maintaining that God does not allow the wicked to live (cf. v. 14; 15:27–35; 20:5–29) in contrast with Job's insistence that many sinners do live on in prosperity to a ripe old age (21:7, 27–33). Elihu affirmed, on the other hand, that God restores afflicted righteous people, giving them deserved blessings, watching over them in care (though Job felt this was no longer true of him, 29:2; 10:12), and even honoring them with kings and exalting them. This sounds much like the arguments of the three, that God always rewards people in this life in accord with their conduct. Job, as seen in 27:13–23, did not question God's general practice of justice. But Job did challenge the views that God always metes out justice before death and that God was being just with him. [Roy B. Zuck, “Job,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*]

VERSES 36:8-10

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

8 “And if they are bound in fetters, and are caught in the cords of affliction, 9 Then He declares to them their work and their transgressions, that they have magnified themselves. 10 “He opens their ear to instruction, and commands that they return from evil.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

8 And if they are bound in chains and caught in the cords of affliction, 9 then he declares to them their work and their transgressions, that they are behaving arrogantly. 10 He opens their ears to instruction and commands that they return from iniquity.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

8 If people are bound with chains and trapped by the cords of affliction, 9 God tells them what they have done and how arrogantly they have transgressed. 10 He opens their ears to correction and insists they repent from iniquity.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

8 But if people are bound in chains, held fast by cords of affliction, 9 he tells them what they have done— that they have sinned arrogantly. 10 He makes them listen to correction and commands them to repent of their evil.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

8 “And if they are bound in fetters, and are caught in the cords of affliction, 9 then He declares to them their work and their transgressions, that they have magnified themselves. 10 “He opens their ear to instruction, and commands that they return from evil.

Elihu affirms that the righteous do suffer.

God’s work of disciplining the righteous (v. 7) so that they repent (v. 10). Cf. 5:17 and Elihu earlier in 33:16-22. V. 10 repeats Elihu in 33:16: “Then He opens the ears of men, And seals their instruction,”

Sometimes righteous people (men is lit., “they” and probably refers to the righteous mentioned in v. 7) undergo trials (are bound in chains) and are subjected to affliction (such as being chained, held fast by cords, to a bed of pain). “Affliction” (‘ānî, “being weak or poor”) is also used in verse 21. “Affliction” in verse 15 translates a different Hebrew word (see comments there). When God afflicts the godly, He does not forsake them. By it, He calls to their attention their wrong conduct (what they have done), their transgression (have sinned means “have transgressed”), and their arrogance (arrogantly is lit., “they show themselves to be strong,” a form of the verb *gābar*, “to be strong”). For a

person to show himself strong before God means he vaunts himself against God (this form of the verb is rendered “vaunts himself” in 15:25). Removal of pride, as Elihu had said before (33:17), is one of God’s purposes in afflicting His own. By pain God gets people’s attention and teaches them (makes them listen is lit., “opens their ears,” as in 33:16 and 36:15). [Roy B. Zuck, “Job,” in The Bible Knowledge Commentary]

Elihu is recognizing Job as a righteous man who is being disciplined for going astray in his attitudes.

The question is: in what way / extent does this apply to Job? He was not brought into his suffering because of sin (clear in the early chapters). However, he did go astray in attributing injustice to God, esp. in t/latter chapters. Also note the fact that discipline is not to be equated with punishment, as we commonly assume (Hebrews 12:5-11 and the context of those who suffered in chapter 11). However, Elihu seems to be implying that the righteous here have gone astray. This may be true, but again how does this apply to Job? Elihu may be overstating his case. The fact that we take a better picture of Elihu than some commentators do does not mean that everything he says is completely accurate.

VERSES 36:11-15

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

11 “If they hear and serve Him, they will end their days in prosperity and their years in pleasures. 12 “But if they do not hear, they shall perish by the sword and they will die without knowledge. 13 “But the godless in heart lay up anger; they do not cry for help when He binds them. 14 “They die in youth, and their life perishes among the cult prostitutes. 15 “He delivers the afflicted in their affliction, and opens their ear in time of oppression.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

11 If they listen and serve him, they complete their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasantness. 12 But if they do not listen, they perish by the sword and die without knowledge. 13 “The godless in heart cherish anger; they do not cry for help when he binds them. 14 They die in youth, and their life ends among the cult prostitutes. 15 He delivers the afflicted by their affliction and opens their ear by adversity.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

11 If they serve Him obediently, they will end their days in prosperity and their years in happiness. 12 But if they do not obey, they will cross the river of death and die without knowledge. 13 Those who have a godless heart harbor anger; even when God binds them, they do not cry for help. 14 They die in their youth; their life ends among male cult prostitutes. 15 God rescues the afflicted by their affliction; He instructs them by their torment.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

11 If they obey and serve him, they will spend the rest of their days in prosperity and their years in contentment. 12 But if they do not listen, they will perish by the sword and die without knowledge. 13 “The godless in heart harbor resentment; even when he fetters them, they do not cry for help. 14 They die in their youth, among male prostitutes of the shrines. 15 But those who suffer he delivers in their suffering; he speaks to them in their affliction.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

11 “If they hear and serve Him, they will end their days in prosperity and their years in pleasures. 12 “But if they do not hear, they shall perish by the sword and they will die without knowledge.

A godly sufferer, Elihu suggested, who will listen to God and will once again obey and serve Him will then prosper and enjoy contentment. Learning from suffering and turning from pride was Elihu’s point earlier (33:23–28). This sounds like the theology of the three, but they stressed that Job was guilty of sinful actions whereas Elihu was concerned more with Job’s sinful attitude of pride. . . . Job should not think of his calamities as proof that he was essentially ungodly (the view of the three agitators) or as evidence that

God had forsaken him (as Job maintained). Instead he should see his afflictions as a means of helping him become humble before God. [Roy B. Zuck, "Job," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*]

13 "But the godless in heart lay up anger; they do not cry for help when He binds them.

These people do not cry for help; that is, "they do not ask God to help them." When he binds them describes the extent of the conditions God imposes on them, and still they do not ask for his help. [UBS Handbook]

True sinners, the godless (*ḥānēp*, "irreligious"; cf. 8:13) in heart resent problems by which God may bind them (cf. 36:8). They refuse to cry for help or if they do, it is not in sincere repentance (27:8–9). As a result they die at a young age, as Zophar had asserted (20:5, 11), and are treated in judgment like hardened sinners, male prostitutes in pagan shrines. ("Male prostitutes of the shrines" translates one Heb. word *qedēšîm*, which is lit., "consecrated ones," i.e., individuals [males or females] given over to depraved rites, probably in idolatrous worship; cf. Deut. 23:18; 1 Kings 15:12). [Roy B. Zuck, "Job," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*]

14 "They die in youth, and their life perishes among the cult prostitutes.

The practice of religious prostitution, which was frequently condemned in the book of Kings, was part of the fertility rituals of the Canaanites. Some have sought a parallel between dying in youth in line a and the supposed short lives of temple prostitutes, but according to Pope there is no evidence to support this view. [UBS Handbook]

It is characteristic of retributionist theology in the Hebrew Bible that the wicked are said to die prematurely: Zophar, for example, says that "the triumph cry of the wicked has been of the briefest, the rejoicing of the godless has lasted but a moment" (20:5), and Eliphaz that evildoers are "shriveled up before their time" (22:16). But nowhere in Job is it suggested that evildoers are cut off "in their youth" (*נער*), as Elihu here alleges. It does not seem a very plausible position to hold, to tell the truth, for even a hardened retributionist must know of middle-aged or even elderly wrongdoers who have plainly not "died in youth." [David J. A. Clines]

Some have thought that there is a closer connection between the two cola of the verse: if in the first colon the wicked die "in their youth," in the second colon dying "among the prostitutes" should perhaps also refer to an early death. "[T]hese male devotees to unchastity," say Driver-Gray, "... must, worn out by their excesses, have died, as a rule, at an early age, so that they became proverbial as victims of an untimely death" (similarly Peake). "[I]t is likely that sexually transmitted diseases claimed the lives of many, then as now" (Alden). [David J. A. Clines]

15 **“He delivers the afflicted in their affliction, and opens their ear in time of oppression.**

Proverbial?

These are generalities based on Elihu’s limited observation. This would later become a truism for the people of Israel (note their cries for help in Egypt heard by God). Cf. Psalm 73 referenced in an earlier message of mine.

Verse 15 may also be rendered “God uses suffering to save people who suffer; he uses pain to make them understand” or “God teaches people by allowing them to suffer, and he makes them listen to him by letting them have troubles.” [UBS Handbook]

Nahum 1:3, 7 3 The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, And the LORD will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. In whirlwind and storm is His way, And clouds are the dust beneath His feet. 7 The LORD is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble, And He knows those who take refuge in Him.

Job begins and ends with storms.

God is transcendent. He is magnificent. He is mighty. He alone is awesome! He is all around us, above us, and within us. Without Him there is no righteousness. Without Him there is no holiness. Without Him there is no promise of forgiveness, no source of absolute truth, no reason to endure, no hope beyond the grave.” [Swindoll, 260-61]

1 O worship the King all-glorious above,
O gratefully sing his power and his love:
our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days,
pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise.

2 O tell of his might and sing of his grace,
whose robe is the light, whose canopy space.
His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form,
and dark is his path on the wings of the storm.

3 Your bountiful care, what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light;
it streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,
and sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.

4 Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,
in you do we trust, nor find you to fail.
Your mercies, how tender, how firm to the end,
our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend!

5 O measureless Might, unchangeable Love,
whom angels delight to worship above!

Your ransomed creation, with glory ablaze,
in true adoration shall sing to your praise!

VERSES (36:16-25)

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

16 “Then indeed, He enticed you from the mouth of distress, instead of it, a broad place with no constraint; and that which was set on your table was full of fatness. 17 “But you were full of judgment on the wicked; judgment and justice take hold of you. 18 “Beware that wrath does not entice you to scoffing; and do not let the greatness of the ransom turn you aside. 19 “Will your riches keep you from distress, or all the forces of your strength? 20 “Do not long for the night, when people vanish in their place. 21 “Be careful, do not turn to evil, for you have preferred this to affliction. 22 “Behold, God is exalted in His power; who is a teacher like Him? 23 “Who has appointed Him His way, and who has said, ‘You have done wrong’? 24 “Remember that you should exalt His work, of which men have sung. 25 “All men have seen it; man beholds from afar.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

16 He also allured you out of distress into a broad place where there was no cramping, and what was set on your table was full of fatness. 17 “But you are full of the judgment on the wicked; judgment and justice seize you. 18 Beware lest wrath entice you into scoffing, and let not the greatness of the ransom turn you aside. 19 Will your cry for help avail to keep you from distress, or all the force of your strength? 20 Do not long for the night, when peoples vanish in their place. 21 Take care; do not turn to iniquity, for this you have chosen rather than affliction. 22 Behold, God is exalted in his power; who is a teacher like him? 23 Who has prescribed for him his way, or who can say, ‘You have done wrong’? 24 “Remember to extol his work, of which men have sung. 25 All mankind has looked on it; man beholds it from afar.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

16 Indeed, He lured you from the jaws of distress to a spacious and unconfined place. Your table was spread with choice food. 17 Yet now you are obsessed with the judgment due the wicked; judgment and justice have seized you. 18 Be careful that no one lures you with riches; do not let a large ransom lead you astray. 19 Can your wealth or all your physical exertion keep you from distress? 20 Do not long for the night when nations will disappear from their places. 21 Be careful that you do not turn to iniquity, for that is why you have been tested by affliction. 22 Look, God shows Himself exalted by His power. Who is a teacher like Him? 23 Who has appointed His way for Him, and who has declared, “You have done wrong”? 24 Remember that you should praise His work, which people have sung about. 25 All mankind has seen it; people have looked at it from a distance.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

16 “He is wooing you from the jaws of distress to a spacious place free from restriction, to the comfort of your table laden with choice food. 17 But now you are laden with the judgment due the wicked; judgment and justice have taken hold of you. 18 Be careful that no one entices you by riches; do not let a large bribe turn you aside. 19 Would your wealth or even all your mighty

efforts sustain you so you would not be in distress? 20 Do not long for the night, to drag people away from their homes. 21 Beware of turning to evil, which you seem to prefer to affliction. 22 “God is exalted in his power. Who is a teacher like him? 23 Who has prescribed his ways for him, or said to him, ‘You have done wrong’? 24 Remember to extol his work, which people have praised in song. 25 All humanity has seen it; mortals gaze on it from afar.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Here Elihu takes what he has said and applies it to Job.

Verses 16–21 are extremely difficult to interpret and, as Rowley says, “scarcely any two interpreters are agreed as to their meaning.” [UBS Handbook]

Some of the translation is so uncertain that the NAB completely skipped vv. 16–20. The NIV footnote indicates that vv. 18–20 are uncertain. [Robert L. Alden, Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 352]

Cf. HCSB:

16 Indeed, He lured you from the jaws of distress to a spacious and unconfined place. Your table was spread with choice food. 17 Yet now you are obsessed with the judgment due the wicked; judgment and justice have seized you. 18 Be careful that no one lures you with riches; do not let a large ransom lead you astray. 19 Can your wealth or all your physical exertion keep you from distress? 20 Do not long for the night when nations will disappear from their places. 21 Be careful that you do not turn to iniquity, for that is why you have been tested by affliction. 22 Look, God shows Himself exalted by His power. Who is a teacher like Him? 23 Who has appointed His way for Him, and who has declared, “You have done wrong”? 24 Remember that you should praise His work, which people have sung about. 25 All mankind has seen it; people have looked at it from a distance.

16 “Then indeed, He enticed you from the mouth of distress, instead of it, a broad place with no constraint; and that which was set on your table was full of fatness.

NIV: “He is wooing you from the jaws of distress to a spacious place free from restriction, to the comfort of your table laden with choice food.

TEV has “Your table was piled high...” Fatness in this context refers to rich food, as in Isaiah 55:2, where TEV translates “the best food of all.” Although TEV is recommended as a suitable model for translating verse 16, Rowley offers a different one in which wealth is the subject in line a: “Wealth hath enticed thee, unlimited abundance behind thee, thy table loaded with rich food.” Another possibility is “God took away your misfortune; in its place he gave you all you could want, and even your table was loaded with the richest foods.” [UBS Handbook]

God was seeking to free Job from distress (šar, “straits, a cramped situation”; also used in v. 19), and take him into a spacious place (cf. Pss. 18:19; 31:8), a picture of prosperity with no obstructions, and give him rich and abundant food. [Roy B. Zuck, “Job,” in The Bible Knowledge Commentary]

Hypothetically, had Job reacted with less complaining as the trial continued, God would have restored him more quickly.

Suffering as a constraint, like a straight jacket. Freedom from trials like an open meadow.

17 “But you were full of judgment on the wicked; judgment and justice take hold of you.

[The] RSV suggests that Elihu is accusing Job of judging the wicked. But Job has done the contrary; he has argued that there is no one judging the wicked, and so they not only escape punishment, they thrive. Therefore it seems more probable that Elihu is condemning Job because he did not act justly when he had the power to do so, and therefore Job has brought his suffering on himself. [UBS Handbook]

Therefore Job should not be preoccupied with God’s seeming failure to exercise justice. He was full (mālē’, laden) with that problem (Job 36:17), whereas he could have his table full of (mālē’, laden with) delightful edibles (v. 16). [Roy B. Zuck, “Job,” in The Bible Knowledge Commentary]

18 “Beware that wrath does not entice you to scoffing; and do not let the greatness of the ransom turn you aside. 19 “Will your riches keep you from distress, or all the forces of your strength?”

“Entice” = same Hebrew word as in v. 16.

“Ransom” = perhaps the repentance that will release him from the suffering Job endures.

Job was guilty of complaining. Note the fine line between lament and complaint.

Preemptive by Elihu?

Elihu’s advice, then, to Job was that he be sure his longing for his former condition of prosperity did not turn him aside (cf. v. 21) from God’s path. (Bribe may be rendered “ransom or recompense,” as in 33:24. Perhaps it means here “the large price Job is paying by his suffering.”) As many people have learned, money and accomplishments cannot buy a person out of distress (šar, “straits, a cramped situation”; cf. 36:16) or sustain him with peace in distress. [Roy B. Zuck, “Job,” in The Bible Knowledge Commentary]

It is like the picture of the rich ruler who found himself having to choose between Christ and money (Luke 18:18–23). Elihu’s admonition does not apply to Job. Though Job had been a very rich man, the text nowhere indicates that he thought that somehow wealth, his

own or someone else's, was the solution to his problem. . . . All versions must rearrange the seven Hebrew words and add English ones to produce a translation that makes sense. Word for word it reads, "Will he arrange your wealth (or cry)¹¹² not in distress¹¹³ and all the powers of strength?" By adding "you" twice and "your" once and moving the clauses around, the NIV has produced a creditable translation.¹¹⁴ The upshot of the verse then is the simple reminder to Job that he could not save himself, certainly not by riches and strength. [Robert L. Alden]

NIV: 18 Be careful that no one entices you by riches; do not let a large bribe turn you aside. 19 Would your wealth or even all your mighty efforts sustain you so you would not be in distress?

The Wall Street Journal said it best: "Money is an article which may be used as a universal passport to everywhere except heaven, and as a universal provider for everything except happiness." [Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Patient*, "Be" Commentary Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 138]

20 "Do not long for the night, when people vanish in their place. 21 "Be careful, do not turn to evil, for you have preferred this to affliction.

Verse 20: Do not long for the night: Elihu appears to be telling Job that it will do him no good to curse the night in which he was conceived (3:3–8). It is also possible that night is used by Elihu to refer to death. Job asked in 3:16 why he was not hidden (died at birth) as an infant that never sees the light. [UBS Handbook]

Cf. 7:21; 10:18-22; 17:13-16.

Nor should Job be so concerned about the night when people are involved in sin (cf. 24:13–17). Elihu's words in 36:20 are difficult in the Hebrew. Another possible meaning is that Job should not long for the night of death (KJV; cf. 3:20–23), that is, he should not anticipate death as a release from his suffering (3:13, 17). Instead he should repent of his pride. [Roy B. Zuck, "Job," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*]

Would Job prefer godlessness to suffering? A good question for all.

22 "Behold, God is exalted in His power; who is a teacher like Him? 23 "Who has appointed Him His way, and who has said, 'You have done wrong'?"

36:23 Cf. "You [God] have done wrong" (cf. 19:6–7).

God is the best teacher (Heb. *moreh*, cf. Joel 2:23).

Psalm 25:8–12 8 Good and upright is the LORD; Therefore He instructs sinners in the way. 9 He leads the humble in justice, And He teaches the humble His way. 10 All the paths of the LORD are lovingkindness and truth To those who keep His covenant and His

testimonies. 11 For Your name's sake, O LORD, Pardon my iniquity, for it is great. 12 Who is the man who fears the LORD? He will instruct him in the way he should choose.

24 "Remember that you should exalt His work, of which men have sung. 25 "All men have seen it; man beholds from afar.

The Handbook heading may be reworded to say, for example, "Job, you should praise God," "Remember how great and good God is," or "Elihu reminds Job how great God is." [UBS Handbook]

The implication for Job is that he should not criticize God for causing him to suffer, but instead he should try to understand what God is seeking to teach him. [UBS Handbook]

"Sung" cf. Psalms written later. Cf. 35:10 "But no one says, 'Where is God my Maker, Who gives songs in the night,

Elihu then turned Job's attention to God and spoke of His power (cf. v. 5; 37:23), instructional ability (cf. 36:9–10), independence (no one can tell God what to do by prescribing His ways), justice (no one can prove, as Job had tried to do, that God has ever done wrong; cf. 19:6–7), incomprehensible greatness (36:26), and eternity (v. 26). God's years are innumerable and unending in contrast with man's few years (9:25; 14:1–2, 5; 16:22). So in view of God's perfections, Job ought to refrain from the sin of reproving God and ought to praise His great work, as other godly people have done, even in song. [Roy B. Zuck, "Job," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*]

Elihu seems to be implying another principle for Job to digest: when mortals adore God as rightfully the majestic, powerful, sovereign Teacher, they have fewer occasions for indulging in self-pity and for complaining about how God has not answered them. [Kaiser, 203-04]

VERSES 36:26-37:13

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

36:26-33 26 “Behold, God is exalted, and we do not know Him; The number of His years is unsearchable. 27 “For He draws up the drops of water, They distill rain from the mist, 28 Which the clouds pour down, They drip upon man abundantly. 29 “Can anyone understand the spreading of the clouds, The thundering of His pavilion? 30 “Behold, He spreads His lightning about Him, And He covers the depths of the sea. 31 “For by these He judges peoples; He gives food in abundance. 32 “He covers His hands with the lightning, And commands it to strike the mark. 33 “Its noise declares His presence; The cattle also, concerning what is coming up.

37:1-13 1 “At this also my heart trembles, And leaps from its place. 2 “Listen closely to the thunder of His voice, And the rumbling that goes out from His mouth. 3 “Under the whole heaven He lets it loose, And His lightning to the ends of the earth. 4 “After it, a voice roars; He thunders with His majestic voice, And He does not restrain the lightnings when His voice is heard. 5 “God thunders with His voice wondrously, Doing great things which we cannot comprehend. 6 “For to the snow He says, ‘Fall on the earth,’ And to the downpour and the rain, ‘Be strong.’ 7 “He seals the hand of every man, That all men may know His work. 8 “Then the beast goes into its lair And remains in its den. 9 “Out of the south comes the storm, And out of the north the cold. 10 “From the breath of God ice is made, And the expanse of the waters is frozen. 11 “Also with moisture He loads the thick cloud; He disperses the cloud of His lightning. 12 “It changes direction, turning around by His guidance, That it may do whatever He commands it On the face of the inhabited earth. 13 “Whether for correction, or for His world, Or for lovingkindness, He causes it to happen.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

36:26-33 26 Behold, God is great, and we know him not; the number of his years is unsearchable. 27 For he draws up the drops of water; they distill his mist in rain, 28 which the skies pour down and drop on mankind abundantly. 29 Can anyone understand the spreading of the clouds, the thunders of his pavilion? 30 Behold, he scatters his lightning about him and covers the roots of the sea. 31 For by these he judges peoples; he gives food in abundance. 32 He covers his hands with the lightning and commands it to strike the mark. 33 Its crashing declares his presence; the cattle also declare that he rises.

37:1-13 1 “At this also my heart trembles and leaps out of its place. 2 Keep listening to the thunder of his voice and the rumbling that comes from his mouth. 3 Under the whole heaven he lets it go, and his lightning to the corners of the earth. 4 After it his voice roars; he thunders with his majestic voice, and he does not restrain the lightnings when his voice is heard. 5 God thunders wondrously with his voice; he does great things that we cannot comprehend. 6 For to the snow he says, ‘Fall on the earth,’ likewise to the downpour, his mighty downpour. 7 He seals up the hand of every man, that all men whom he made may know it. 8 Then the beasts go into their lairs, and remain in their dens. 9 From its chamber comes the whirlwind, and cold from the scattering winds. 10 By the breath of God ice is given, and the broad waters are frozen fast. 11 He loads the thick cloud with moisture; the clouds scatter his lightning. 12 They turn around and

around by his guidance, to accomplish all that he commands them on the face of the habitable world. 13 Whether for correction or for his land or for love, he causes it to happen.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

36:26-33 26 Yes, God is exalted beyond our knowledge; the number of His years cannot be counted. 27 For He makes waterdrops evaporate; they distill the rain into its mist, 28 which the clouds pour out and shower abundantly on mankind. 29 Can anyone understand how the clouds spread out or how the thunder roars from God's pavilion? 30 See how He spreads His lightning around Him and covers the depths of the sea. 31 For He judges the nations with these; He gives food in abundance. 32 He covers His hands with lightning and commands it to hit its mark. 33 The thunder declares His presence; the cattle also, the approaching storm.

37:1-13 1 My heart pounds at this and leaps from my chest. 2 Just listen to His thunderous voice and the rumbling that comes from His mouth. 3 He lets it loose beneath the entire sky; His lightning to the ends of the earth. 4 Then there comes a roaring sound; God thunders with His majestic voice. He does not restrain the lightning when His rumbling voice is heard. 5 God thunders marvelously with His voice; He does great things that we cannot comprehend. 6 For He says to the snow, "Fall to the earth," and the torrential rains, His mighty torrential rains, 7 serve as His sign to all mankind, so that all men may know His work. 8 The wild animals enter their lairs and stay in their dens. 9 The windstorm comes from its chamber, and the cold from the driving north winds. 10 Ice is formed by the breath of God, and watery expanses are frozen. 11 He saturates clouds with moisture; He scatters His lightning through them. 12 They swirl about, turning round and round at His direction, accomplishing everything He commands them over the surface of the inhabited world. 13 He causes this to happen for punishment, for His land, or for His faithful love.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

36:26-33 1 How great is God—beyond our understanding! The number of his years is past finding out. 27 "He draws up the drops of water, which distill as rain to the streams; 28 the clouds pour down their moisture and abundant showers fall on mankind. 29 Who can understand how he spreads out the clouds, how he thunders from his pavilion? 30 See how he scatters his lightning about him, bathing the depths of the sea. 31 This is the way he governs the nations and provides food in abundance. 32 He fills his hands with lightning and commands it to strike its mark. 33 His thunder announces the coming storm; even the cattle make known its approach.

37:1-13 1 "At this my heart pounds and leaps from its place. 2 Listen! Listen to the roar of his voice, to the rumbling that comes from his mouth. 3 He unleashes his lightning beneath the whole heaven and sends it to the ends of the earth. 4 After that comes the sound of his roar; he thunders with his majestic voice. When his voice resounds, he holds nothing back. 5 God's voice thunders in marvelous ways; he does great things beyond our understanding. 6 He says to the snow, 'Fall on the earth,' and to the rain shower, 'Be a mighty downpour.' 7 So that everyone he has made may know his work, he stops all people from their labor. 8 The animals take cover; they remain in their dens. 9 The tempest comes out from its chamber, the cold from the driving winds. 10 The breath of God produces ice, and the broad waters become frozen. 11 He loads the

clouds with moisture; he scatters his lightning through them. 12 At his direction they swirl around over the face of the whole earth to do whatever he commands them. 13 He brings the clouds to punish people, or to water his earth and show his love.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Having referred to God's "ways" and "work" (36:23–24), which man sees (36:25), Elihu then elaborated on God's doings in nature in the autumn storm (36:27–33), the winter (37:1–13), and the summer (37:14–18). In his third speech (chap. 35) Elihu had spoken of God's sovereignty. Now he returned to that subject but with an added emphasis that God's control over nature involves His benevolence toward the earth, animals, and people. [Roy B. Zuck, "Job," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*]

Beginning in verse 26 and continuing through chapter 37 verse 13 Elihu describes to Job the greatness of God as seen in nature, and verse 26 is the introduction to this section. [UBS Handbook]

36:26 "Behold, God is exalted, and we do not know Him; the number of His years is unsearchable.

Introductory statement. Psalm 102:27b, "and Your years have no end."

36:27-28 27 "For He draws up the drops of water, they distill rain from the mist, 28 which the clouds pour down, they drip upon man abundantly.

Of the last 34 vv. of this speech, 24 are preoccupied with the weather (wind, rain, clouds, lightning, sky thunder).

God manages various aspects of nature: evaporation (v. 27a), rain (vv. 27b–28), clouds (v. 29a), thunder (v. 29b; cf. v. 33; His pavilion is a picturesque description of the sky), lightning (vv. 30, 32), and the ocean. Bathing the depths of the sea (v. 30) should not be understood as describing the lightning; it should be translated "and covers the depths of the ocean," meaning that God so floods the bottom of the oceans with water that people on land cannot see it. [Roy B. Zuck, "Job," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*]

Note "draws up" as going beyond that which is observable.

This is not a scientific treatise on meteorology, but it is interesting that Elihu began at the beginning of the cycle—water is drawn up. [Robert L. Alden]

5:10 [Eliphaz' 1st speech] "He gives rain on the earth And sends water on the fields,

36:29-33 29 "Can anyone understand the spreading of the clouds, the thundering of His pavilion? 30 "Behold, He spreads His lightning about Him, and He covers the depths of the sea.

At that time, no one knew how the weather worked.

31 “For by these He judges peoples; He gives food in abundance. 32 “He covers His hands with the lightning, and commands it to strike the mark. 33 “Its noise declares His presence; the cattle also, concerning what is coming up.

Judges, as in RSV, translates the usual meaning of the Hebrew word, but this gives a poor parallel with the second line. Therefore many translators change this word to one meaning “he feeds or nourishes,” as the TEV footnote shows. [UBS Handbook]

Who is jealous with anger against iniquity represents a form that is changed from the literal text “cattle also concerning what rises.” RSV follows a change from “cattle” to get “one who incites passion,” and another change from “concerning what rises” to a word meaning “evil.” In this way RSV accepts two changes proposed by Pope. Here again HOTTTP suggests the Hebrew text can yield an appropriate sense: “the cattle too (announce) the rising (storm). In other words “and the cattle also show that a storm is coming” or “and the cattle too know a storm is blowing up.” This agrees with TEV “and the cattle know it is coming.” [UBS Handbook]

By controlling the weather God exercises his dominion over the world and its inhabitants. From the flood of Noah to the cataclysmic events of Revelation, God manipulates the rain or the heat to accomplish his purposes. To this day there is a certain mystery about the weather that makes people fear. Add to this the totally unannounced occurrences of earthquakes, and people realize that there are dimensions of this world quite removed from their control. [Robert L. Alden]

Storm gods of the ANE were commonly portrayed as having lightening emitting from their hands. Elihu author uses this imagery much like we would use Lady Liberty.

Isaac Watts agreed with Elihu when he wrote:

1 We sing the mighty power of God
that made the mountains rise,
that spread the flowing seas abroad
and built the lofty skies.
We sing the wisdom that ordained
the sun to rule the day;
the moon shines full at his command,
and all the stars obey.
2 We sing the goodness of the Lord
that filled the earth with food;
he formed the creatures with his word
and then pronounced them good.
Lord, how your wonders are displayed,

where'er we turn our eyes,
if we survey the ground we tread
or gaze upon the skies.
3 There's not a plant or flower below
but makes your glories known,
and clouds arise and tempests blow
by order from your throne;
while all that borrows life from you
is ever in your care,
and everywhere that we can be,
you, God, are present there.

* Isaac Watts (17 July 1674 – 25 November 1748) was an English pastor-theologian in the tradition of the Puritans. He was a prolific and popular hymn writer and is credited with some 750 hymns.

37:1-5 1 “At this also my heart trembles, and leaps from its place. 2 “Listen closely to the thunder of His voice, and the rumbling that goes out from His mouth. 3 “Under the whole heaven He lets it loose, and His lightning to the ends of the earth. 4 “After it, a voice roars; He thunders with His majestic voice, and He does not restrain the lightnings when His voice is heard. 5 “God thunders with His voice wondrously, doing great things which we cannot comprehend.

Thunder as the voice of God.

Job in 26:14 “Behold, these are the fringes of His ways; And how faint a word we hear of Him! But His mighty thunder, who can understand?”

Thunder is often referred to as God’s mighty voice (37:2, 4–5). Five times Elihu mentioned the lightning (36:30, 32; 37:3, 11, 15), which is sent by God. How God accomplishes these awesome things is beyond human comprehension (v. 5; cf. 36:26, 29), a truth that Eliphaz had affirmed once (5:9) and that Job had spoken of twice (9:10; 26:14). [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

Psalm 29 A Psalm of David. 1 Ascribe to the LORD, O sons of the mighty, Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. 2 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the LORD in holy array. 3 The voice of the LORD is upon the waters; The God of glory thunders, The LORD is over many waters. 4 The voice of the LORD is powerful, The voice of the LORD is majestic. 5 The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; Yes, the LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon. 6 He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, And Sirion like a young wild ox. 7 The voice of the LORD hews out flames of fire. 8 The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; The LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. 9 The voice of the LORD makes the deer to calve And strips the forests bare; And in His temple everything says, “Glory!” 10 The LORD sat as King at the flood; Yes, the LORD sits as King forever. 11 The LORD will give strength to His people; The LORD will bless His people with peace.

Nothing so petrified the young Jonathan Edwards as a thunderstorm. After his conversion to Christ, however, he could write “that scarce any thing, among all the works of nature, was so sweet to me as thunder and lightning; formerly nothing had been so terrible to me. Before, I used to be uncommonly terrified with thunder, and to be struck with terror when I saw a thunderstorm rising; but now, on the contrary, it rejoiced me. I felt God, so to speak, at the first appearance of a thunderstorm; and used to take the opportunity at such times to fix myself in order to view the clouds, and see the lightnings play, and hear the majestic and awful voice of God's thunder, which oftentimes was exceedingly entertaining, leading me to sweet contemplations of my great and glorious God. [cited in Talbert, 193]

As I was working on this section of Job I heard the loud rumble of thunder outside. Diff. perspective.

37:6 “For to the snow He says, ‘Fall on the earth,’ and to the downpour and the rain, ‘Be strong.’

Secondary causation. God of the gaps vs. science of the gaps.

37:7 “He seals the hand of every man, that all men may know His work.

He seals up the hand of every man: verse 7 is interpreted and translated in various ways. RSV gives a literal translation whose probable meaning is that God prevents people from working, by causing it to rain and snow. Agricultural work in the fields is interrupted by the weather. TEV makes this clear by avoiding the figurative language. NEB has “He shuts every man fast indoors.” This involves making a change in the Hebrew word for hand, and taking the word translated seals up to mean “close up,” as it is used in Jeremiah 32:11 and Daniel 12:4. [UBS Handbook]

Elihu also points in verses 6-7 to how a heavy snowfall, or a downpour of rain, coming as well at the command of God, can ‘stop every man from his labor.’ Mortals are familiar with such impediments, for many have often been driven from their labor in the fields by a heavy rainstorm and others have seen how a heavy snowfall or a blizzard will snarl traffic or sequester folk in their homes for days at a time. Even the animals take cover in their dens during such weather patterns as well (8) when ‘the breath of God produces ice’ or frost (9-10), Indeed, the very clouds of the sky along with the storms in the natural world are controlled by God (11-12). No human being could control or regulate the weather or such storms; only God is in charge of these elements which He has stored up often in great quantities in His heavenly reservoirs. [Kaiser, 205]

37:8 “Then the beast goes into its lair and remains in its den.

I.e. due to the storms.

37:9-12 9 “Out of the south comes the storm, and out of the north the cold. 10 “From the breath of God ice is made, and the expanse of the waters is frozen. 11 “Also with moisture

He loads the thick cloud; He disperses the cloud of His lightning. 12 “It changes direction, turning around by His guidance, that it may do whatever He commands it on the face of the inhabited earth.

37:13 “Whether for correction, or for His world, or for lovingkindness, He causes it to happen.

Following God’s commands, they bring judgment on some people by ruining their crops, flooding their possessions, and drowning them . . . [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

At the end of this section Elihu brought the hearer around to his main points, that is, the greatness and justice of God (cf. 33:12; 34:12, 26; 36:5–7).¹⁴⁷ Weather can be a curse or a blessing. Out-of-season or very intense rain or hail have been God’s vehicle to punish the wicked (Gen 6:17; Exod 9:18; Josh 10:11; 1 Sam 12:17). Likewise, he manipulates the weather to show his “love,” *hesed*. Rain is a token of God’s blessing (1 Kgs 8:36; 18:38, 45; Jer 5:24; Hos 6:3; Zech 10:1; Acts 14:17). [Robert L. Alden]

VERSES 37:14-20

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

14 “Listen to this, O Job, Stand and consider the wonders of God. 15 “Do you know how God establishes them, And makes the lightning of His cloud to shine? 16 “Do you know about the layers of the thick clouds, The wonders of one perfect in knowledge, 17 You whose garments are hot, When the land is still because of the south wind? 18 “Can you, with Him, spread out the skies, Strong as a molten mirror? 19 “Teach us what we shall say to Him; We cannot arrange our case because of darkness. 20 “Shall it be told Him that I would speak? Or should a man say that he would be swallowed up?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

14 “Hear this, O Job; stop and consider the wondrous works of God. 15 Do you know how God lays his command upon them and causes the lightning of his cloud to shine? 16 Do you know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him who is perfect in knowledge, 17 you whose garments are hot when the earth is still because of the south wind? 18 Can you, like him, spread out the skies, hard as a cast metal mirror? 19 Teach us what we shall say to him; we cannot draw up our case because of darkness. 20 Shall it be told him that I would speak? Did a man ever wish that he would be swallowed up?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

14 Listen to this, Job. Stop and consider God’s wonders. 15 Do you know how God directs His clouds or makes their lightning flash? 16 Do you understand how the clouds float, those wonderful works of Him who has perfect knowledge? 17 You whose clothes get hot when the south wind brings calm to the land, 18 can you help God spread out the skies as hard as a cast metal mirror? 19 Teach us what we should say to Him; we cannot prepare our case because of our darkness. 20 Should He be told that I want to speak? Can a man speak when he is confused?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

14 “Listen to this, Job; stop and consider God’s wonders. 15 Do you know how God controls the clouds and makes his lightning flash? 16 Do you know how the clouds hang poised, those wonders of him who has perfect knowledge? 17 You who swelter in your clothes when the land lies hushed under the south wind, 18 can you join him in spreading out the skies, hard as a mirror of cast bronze? 19 “Tell us what we should say to him; we cannot draw up our case because of our darkness. 20 Should he be told that I want to speak? Would anyone ask to be swallowed up?

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

After having addressed any who were listening from verse 2, Elihu now speaks directly to Job, as he did in 33:1. [UBS Handbook]

37:14-18 14 **“Listen to this, O Job, Stand and consider the wonders of God.**

Does Job stand in wonder at the wonders of God?

Elihu’s central point. The following words sound much like God’s speech in the next chapter. Rhetorical questions.

The second line of v. 14 is perhaps the most important statement that Elihu made and the one thing that Job was forced eventually to do. It was ultimately the solution to his problem and the cure for his ills, physical, emotional, and attitudinal. By heeding this advice people, even today, are converted, but most will not “stop,” and even fewer “consider God’s wonders.” [Robert L. Alden]

15 **“Do you know how God establishes them, and makes the lightning of His cloud to shine?**

While modern scientists can explain much about lightning, there remains a certain unpredictability about it, which shows that God has ultimate control. [Robert L. Alden]

16 **“Do you know about the layers of the thick clouds, the wonders of one perfect in knowledge, 17 You whose garments are hot, when the land is still because of the south wind? 18 “Can you, with Him, spread out the skies, strong as a molten mirror?**

We cannot control the weather.

37:19-20 19 **“Teach us what we shall say to Him; we cannot arrange our case because of darkness. 20 “Shall it be told Him that I would speak? Or should a man say that he would be swallowed up?**

Job cannot demand that God attend his presumptive court case against Him.

Teach us what we shall say to him is to be taken as Elihu’s sarcasm. Teach us translates the Hebrew “make us know.” Us refers to Elihu and others, probably the friends, but excludes Job, the person spoken to. Him refers to God. Dhorme changes this to “Tell me what we shall say to Him.” [UBS Handbook]

HCSB: 19 Teach us what we should say to Him; we cannot prepare our case because of our darkness. 20 Should He be told that I want to speak? Can a man speak when he is confused?

VERSES 37:21-24

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

21 “Now men do not see the light which is bright in the skies; but the wind has passed and cleared them. 22 “Out of the north comes golden splendor; around God is awesome majesty. 23 “The Almighty—we cannot find Him; He is exalted in power and He will not do violence to justice and abundant righteousness. 24 “Therefore men fear Him; He does not regard any who are wise of heart.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

21 “And now no one looks on the light when it is bright in the skies, when the wind has passed and cleared them. 22 Out of the north comes golden splendor; God is clothed with awesome majesty. 23 The Almighty—we cannot find him; he is great in power; justice and abundant righteousness he will not violate. 24 Therefore men fear him; he does not regard any who are wise in their own conceit.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

21 Now men cannot even look at the sun when it is in the skies, after a wind has swept through and cleared them away. 22 Yet out of the north He comes, shrouded in a golden glow; awesome majesty surrounds Him. 23 The Almighty—we cannot reach Him— He is exalted in power! He will not oppress justice and abundant righteousness, 24 Therefore, men fear Him. He does not look favorably on any who are wise in heart.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

21 Now no one can look at the sun, bright as it is in the skies after the wind has swept them clean. 22 Out of the north he comes in golden splendor; God comes in awesome majesty. 23 The Almighty is beyond our reach and exalted in power; in his justice and great righteousness, he does not oppress. 24 Therefore, people revere him, for does he not have regard for all the wise in heart?”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

37:21 “Now men do not see the light which is bright in the skies; but the wind has passed and cleared them.

Verse 21 appears to have little relevance to the rest of the context. However, Elihu has just rejected the idea of confronting God. The conclusion is that, if men cannot look at the bright glare of the sun, how much less can they look on the brightness of God. [UBS Handbook]

NIV: 21 Now no one can look at the sun, bright as it is in the skies after the wind has swept them clean.

37:22 “Out of the north comes golden splendor; around God is awesome majesty.

Out of the north comes golden splendor is literally “Out of the north comes gold.” To speak of the precious metal gold is irrelevant to the context. Therefore RSV is no doubt correct in understanding “gold” as a description of a quality of God, and so translates golden splendor. Dhorme defends this and translates “rays of gold.” TEV is similar with “golden glow.” NIV is more explicit in reference to God: “Out of the north he comes in golden splendor.” [UBS Handbook]

37:23-24 23 “The Almighty—we cannot find Him; He is exalted in power and He will not do violence to justice and abundant righteousness. 24 “Therefore men fear Him; He does not regard any who are wise of heart.”

God is majestically transcendent in his righteousness.

Almighty translates shaDDai. The word translated find is used in 23:3, where Job desires to find God.

‘Just a few verses later God will appear “in golden splendor” and “in awesome majesty”¹⁵⁷ and will humble Job and all humanity who cannot adorn themselves as God does “with glory and splendor, ... honor and majesty” (40:10). [Robert L. Alden]

But Elihu was doing much more than delivering a poetical, scientific lecture on the four seasons. He wanted Job to consider the greatness of God and the wonders of nature and realize how little Job really knew about God and His working in this world. Elihu asked Job three rhetorical questions—about the clouds, the lightning, the wind, and the rainless skies. “Can you explain these things?” he asked. “Can you control them?”

This led to Elihu’s final thrust: “If you can’t explain to us the everyday things of nature, then how will you ever prepare a court case to defend yourself before God?” He then warned Job that to challenge God might lead to Job’s being swallowed up by God’s judgment (v. 20). Verses 21–22 describe the “clear shining after rain” (2 Sam. 23:4), the blue sky, the bright sun, the “golden splendor” and “awesome majesty” of God (NIV). “You can’t even look at the sun,” says Elihu, “and yet you want to meet God face to face!” [Warren W. Wiersbe]

Verse 24 — see the end of Eccl.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.