**Elihu’s Accusations**

**Point 1:**Elihu claimed, “Surely you have spoken in my ears, and I have heard *the* voice of your words, ‘I *am* pure (*zak*) without rebellion (*pâsha`*). I am clean (*chaph*-hapax). Neither is iniquity (*`âvôn*) in me. Behold, He finds opposition in me. He considers me His enemy. He puts my feet in the stocks. He watches all my paths.’ Behold, in this you are not righteous. I answer (*`ânâh*) you, that Eloah is greater than man.”(33:8-12)

**Analysis:**It was Zophar who claimed Job had said, “My teaching is pure (*zak*), and I am clean (*bar*) in your eyes.” (11:4), but Job made no such statement. What Job had said was hypothetical, “If I wash myself in snow waters, and cleanse (*zâkak*) my hands with soap (*bôr,* lit. "cleanness", see *bar* - clean), yet You would plunge me in a pit and my own clothes would abhor me. For (He is) not a man as I, that I answer (*`ânâh*) Him *and* we come together in judgment (*mishpâţ*). There is not between us one adjudging (*yâkach*); he might lay his hand on us both.” (9:30-33). Job afterward said “My prayer is pure (*zak*)” (16:17). As for the word “clean” (*chaph*-hapax), no one else spoke that exact word anywhere in the Bible – much less Job! But even if Elihu were only paraphrasing clean (*bar*), again that was Zophar's distortion.

Concerning Elihu’s testimony that Job claimed to be without rebellion and iniquity, here’s what Job really said about it, “What *is* man that You magnify him, and that You set your heart toward him, and that You examine him every morning, test him every moment? How long will You not depart from me, nor let me alone until I swallow my spittle? Have I sinned? What do I to You, Watcher on men? Why have You set me as a target for You, and I have become a burden to You? Then why do You not pardon my rebellion (*pesha`*) and take away my iniquity (*`âvôn*)?”(7:17-21). So Job had asked God for pardon, not acquittal! Furthermore, Job had said that God sealed up his rebellion (*pesha`*) in a bag and covered over his iniquity (*`âvôn*) (14:16-17). Is that the same as a claim to sinless perfection?

Concerning Elihu’s testimony that Job claimed God found him oppositional and an enemy, this is partly true but Elihu expanded the “opposition” part. What Job said was, “How many are my iniquities (*`âvôn*) and sins? Make me know my rebellion (*pâsha`*) and my sin. Why do You hide Your face and count me for an enemy to You?”(13:23-24). Here Job asked that he might be informed what his iniquity and rebellion were – not exactly that he was without them, as Elihu charged.

Elihu did testify correctly that Job said God put his feet in the stocks and marked all his paths (13:27).

Concerning Elihu’s statement that “Eloah is greater than man”, all those present agreed. Job had said, “Truly I know that it is so, but how is a man righteous with El? If one wishes to dispute (*rîyb*) with Him, he could not answer (*`ânâh*) one out of a thousand. Wise in heart and mighty in strength – who has hardened against Him and prospered? He Who removes mountains and they know not how, when He overturns them in anger, Who shakes earth out of its place and its pillars tremble, Who speaks to the sun and it rises not, and sets a seal about *the* stars, Who alone stretches out heavens and walks on *the* waves of *the* sea, Who makes *the* Bear, Orion and Pleiades and chambers of *the* South, Who does great things until unsearchable and wondrous things until innumerable. Behold, He passes by me and I do not see, and He passes on but I do not perceive Him. Behold, He takes away. Who restrains Him? Who says to Him, ‘What are You doing?’ Eloah turns not back His anger. *The* helpers of Rahab stoop under Him. How then will I answer (*`ânâh*) Him – choose my words with Him? Whom, though righteous, I would not answer (*`ânâh*) – I would plead(*chânan*) to my Judge (*shâphaţ*). If I called and He answered (*`ânâh*) me, I would not believe that He heard my voice. He Who breaks me with a tempest and multiplies my wounds for nought, He does not allow me to get my breath but fills me with bitterness. If as to power, behold, *He is* strong! If as to judgment (*mishpâţ*), who appoints me a time? If I justify myself, my mouth condemns (*râsha`*) me – if perfect (*tâm*), He declares me perverse.” (9:1-20). Job had also said, “Will any teach El knowledge, since He judges (*shâphaţ*) *the* exalted?”(21:22). And he said further, "But He is unique, and who turns Him back? And (whatever) His soul desires, He even does." (23:13)

I find it interesting that Elihu tried to claim the high ground by saying, "My words *are the* uprightness (*yôsher*) of my heart, and my lips speak knowledge cleanly (*bârar*)" (33:3). He was making claims similar to Job's!

**Conclusion:**Elihu misrepresented Zophar’s inaccurate quote as Job’s own words, and he twisted what Job said about his rebellion and iniquity.

**Point 2:**Elihu added, “Why do you contend (*rîyb*) against Him? He does not answer (*`ânâh*) for any of His matters”(33:13).

**Analysis:**Job had said, “If one wishes to dispute (*rîyb*) with Him, he could not answer (*`ânâh*) one out of a thousand.” (9:2). He also said, “How then will I answer (*`ânâh*) Him – choose my words with Him? Whom, though righteous, I would not answer (*`ânâh*) – I would plead (*chânan*) to my Judge (*shâphaţ*). If I called and He answered (*`ânâh*) me, I would not believe that He heard my voice.” (9:14-16). He also said, “I say to Eloah, ‘Condemn (*râsha`*) me not. Teach me upon what (ground) You contend (*rîyb*) with me? (Is it) good to You that **You oppress**, that You reject the toil of Your palms and have shined upon *the* counsel of *the* wicked?’” (10:2-3) and “Behold my mark – may Shaddai answer (*`ânâh*) me. And let the Man of my contention (*rîyb*)write *me* a bill (of indictment).”(31:35). So Job acknowledged that disputing God would be impossible, but asked why God disputed with him. Yet Job used a plaintive, accusatory argument here and elsewhere in his speeches, so Elihu’s criticism seems justified. As for God not answering for Himself - not giving account - Job had agreed with this, saying, “Who restrains Him? Who says to Him, ‘What are You doing?’” (9:12). Also take note that Yahweh's direct response to Job did not include any explanation of why He had brought such afflictions upon Job. Indirectly, he left His explanation in His written word, through the Book of Job. Although the end of the Book of Job had to have been written after his death, the rest of it might have been written in Job's lifetime and shared with him for his edification. How poorly understood Gen.3:15 must have been in ancient times! Although Satan was the provoker of Job’s grief, he was neither named nor alluded to in the human dialogue.

**Conclusion:**In his bitterness, Job was conflicted. He knew it impossible to call God to account, yet he questioned God’s actions concerning him, a righteous man. We need to keep in mind that a covenant righteousness was obtainable – as Paul declared of his former life, “according to the righteousness which is in Law, having become blameless (*amemptos*)” (Phi.3:6). This very Greek word in the LXX was used of Job's walk in the opening chapters, translating perfect (*tâm*) (1:1, 8; 2:3).

Did Job go too far in questioning God? Yes, I think so. Else why did God finally answer him thus, “Then Yahweh answered (*`ânâh*) Job and said, ‘Will a chastiser (*yişşôr*) contending (*rîyb*) with Shaddai be reproving (*yâkach*) Eloah? Let him answer (*`ânâh*) Him.’‘Do you truly annul My judgment (*mishpâţ*)? Do you condemn (*râsha`*) Me, so that you may be justified?’” (40:1-2, 8).

**Point 3:**Elihu also put these words in Job’s mouth, " For Job said, 'I am righteous, but El took away my judgment (*mishpâţ*). Do I lie about my judgment (*mishpâţ*)? My wound is incurable (and is) apart from rebellion (*pâsha`*).'” (34:5-6)

**Analysis:**What Job actually said was hypothetical, "Whom, if I were righteous, I would not answer (*`ânâh*) – I would plead (*chânan*) to my Judge (*shâphaţ*)." " If I justify myself my mouth condemns (*râsha`*) me – if perfect (*tâm*), He declares me perverse." (9:15, 20) As for El taking away his judgment, Job did say that (27:2).

Did Job say, "Do I lie about my judgment?"? No. The only time he spoke of lying he said, "And be content - turn toward me; would I lie toward your faces? Turn back, I pray, let there not come injustice (*`avlâh*); return yet again my righteousness upon me." (6:28-29) Again Job had spoken hypothetically, but Elihu turned it into a declarative statement. Job did not say, "My wound (*chêts*) is incurable", but that "Shaddai's arrows (*chêts*) are within me" (6:4). As for declaring himself to be without rebellion, I have dealt with that already under Point 1.

**Point 4:**Job had said that dreams and visions were a terror to him, "Then You scare me with dreams and terrify me from visions, and my soul chooses strangling - death rather than my bones" (7:14-15). Elihu explained these very things were for man's reproving and his salvation, "For El speaks once, even twice, though man perceives it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls upon men, asleep in bed, then He opens the ears of men and seals their instruction, that He may draw man from his purpose and hide from man *his* back. He holds back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword. And he is reproved (*yâkach*) with pain upon his bed, and even great disturbance (dispute - *rîyb*) of his enduring bones, so that his life hates bread and his soul delicacies. His flesh is consumed so that it cannot be seen, and his bones that were unseen stick out. Yea, his soul draws near to the grave and his life to the destroyers." (33:14-22) Elihu, although speaking generally, was addressing Job's case. His explanation was that Job's suffering was for his instruction and reproving. This was generally true. It is difficult to say if Elihu meant that Job in particular needed such lessons. Such an opinion of Job would have been contradicted by Yahweh’s commendation, that “there is none like him on earth.”

**Point 5:**Elihu twice accused Job of saying that serving God would not profit him. "For he said it benefits not a man in his being accepted with Elohim." (34:9) "For you say 'What does it benefit you, what do I gain more than my sin?’ I shall answer your words and your friends with you." (35:3).

**Analysis:**But Job was speaking of the wicked when he said, "And they said to El, 'Turn away from us', and 'We have not desired knowledge of Your ways. Who is Shaddai that we serve Him? And what do we gain that we should encounter upon Him?' (21:14-15). The sentiment of the wicked expressed here is explained by the prior context, “Why do the wicked live, grow old, also *are* mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses *are* safe from fear, and the rod of Eloah *is* not upon them. His ox mates and does not fail. His cow calves and does not miscarry. They send out their little ones as a flock, and their children dance. They sing to the timbrel and lyre and rejoice at the sound of the flute. They spend their days in prosperity, and in a moment go down to Sheol.” (21:7-13). Here Job was merely expressing an age-old consternation at the wicked going unpunished.

But elsewhere Job expressed a very definite opinion about the disposition of the wicked, “And what is Eloah’s portion from above, or the legacy of Shaddai from on high? Is not disaster for the evildoer, and calamity for the workers of iniquity?” (31:2-3). The rest of chapter 31 goes on in the same vein, with Job proposing that if he committed certain sins then certain punishments ought to befall him.

**Conclusion:**Job hardly commended sin, but he questioned why the wicked were permitted to prosper.

**Point 6:**In his summary statement Elihu said, “Upon Eloah is awesome majesty. Shaddai – we do not find Him – exalted in power and judgment and great inrighteousness. He does not afflict.” (37:23) Job had earlier said, “I say to Eloah, ‘Condemn me not. Teach me upon what (ground) You contend with me. (Is it) good to You that You oppress (or "defraud"), that You reject the toil of Your palms and have shined upon the counsel of the wicked?’” (10:3), and “Then know that Eloah has wronged me and closed His net upon me.” (19:6). It seems Elihu was flatly contradicting two prior statements of Job as to Eloah oppressing and wronging him. In this Elihu was correct. As for Job’s contention that He shined upon the counsel of the wicked, this may not have been a general claim of Job’s, but a particular one that the counsel of his three friends seemed justified because of Job’s circumstances. However, when Yahweh made His first address to Job, He described the dawn as functioning to “take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it.” (38:12-13). If Yahweh was shining upon the wicked, it was to thwart their purposes – the opposite of what Job claimed.