

JOB

Chapter 10

Job Continues: A Plea to God

“I loathe my life; I will give free utterance to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. 2 I will say to God, Do not condemn me; let me know why you contend against me. 3 Does it seem good to you to oppress, to despise the work of your hands and favor the designs of the wicked? 4 Have you eyes of flesh? Do you see as man sees? 5 Are your days as the days of man, or your years as a man's years, 6 that you seek out my iniquity and search for my sin, 7 although you know that I am not guilty, and there is none to deliver out of your hand? 8 Your hands fashioned and made me, and now you have destroyed me altogether. 9 Remember that you have made me like clay; and will you return me to the dust? 10 Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese? 11 You clothed me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews. 12 You have granted me life and steadfast love, and your care has preserved my spirit. 13 Yet these things you hid in your heart; I know that this was your purpose. 14 If I sin, you watch me and do not acquit me of my iniquity. 15 If I am guilty, woe to me! If I am in the right, I cannot lift up my head, for I am filled with disgrace and look on my affliction. 16 And were my head lifted up, you would hunt me like a lion and again work wonders against me. 17 You renew your witnesses against me and increase your vexation toward me; you bring fresh troops against me. 18 “Why did you bring me out from the womb? Would that I had died before any eye had seen me 19 and were as though I had not been, carried from the womb to the grave. 20 Are not my days few? Then cease, and leave me alone, that I may find a little cheer 21 before I go—and I shall not return—to the land of darkness and deep shadow, 22 the land of gloom like thick darkness, like deep shadow without any order, where light is as thick darkness.”

10:1 *bitterness of my soul.* Because Job is so bitter, his mind has conjured up a false picture of God. (CSB)

While Job complained much, he never directly asked God to cure him from his disease and physical pain. (PBC)

10:3–7 *the work of Your hands.* Job wonders why God would treat him so badly. A mere human might treat another person this way, but God is no mere human. In fact, all creation (including humanity) is the work of God's hands. Job personalizes this truth in vv 8–12. (TLSB)

10:3 Job imagines that God is angry with him, an innocent man (see 9:28 and note), and that he takes delight in the wicked. Such words are a reminder that the sickroom is not the place to argue theology; in times of severe suffering, people may say things that require a response of love and understanding. Job himself will eventually repent, and God will forgive (42:1–6). (CSB)

God was using these troubles to strengthen Job's faith. That is what this book is about. (PBC)

10:4 *eyes of flesh.* Imperfect vision, like that of a man. (CSB)

10:8–17 Job continues to question God as if he were his adversary in court. He wants to know how God, who so wonderfully formed him in the womb, could all the while have planned (see v. 13) to punish him—even though he may be innocent. (CSB)

10:8–11 A poetic description of God making a baby in the womb (see Ps 139:13–16). (CSB)

In its touching sentiment and poetic beauty this is one of the most striking passages in this book. (PBC)

10:8 “God created the body and soul of Adam and Eve before the fall. But He also created our bodies and souls after the fall. Even though they are corrupt, God still acknowledges them as His work” (FC Ep I 4). Cf Ps 139:14. (TLSB)

That verb pictures God as a sculptor who intricately carved him into human form. (PBC)

Psalm 139:13-16, “¹³For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. ¹⁴I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. ¹⁵My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, ¹⁶your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

10:10 Manufacture of cheese requires careful measurement, attention to detail, and patient waiting. If God took such care in creating Job, why would God treat him so harshly? (TLSB)

10:13 *hid in your heart* – It was impertinent of Job to declare that God had created him only to destroy him. (PBC)

10:14 *do not acquit me*. Job pictures God as unwilling to forgive his iniquity for any reason. Guilty or not, God has decided to punish Job as if he was guilty of some heinous sin. Typically, people would offer sacrifices for their sin (cf 1:5; 42:8); however, Job has nothing to sacrifice (1:14–17). (TLSB)

10:15–16 Job says that whether he is guilty or innocent, the all-powerful God will not treat him justly. (CSB)

10:16 *like a lion*. Hosea also pictures God as a lion hunting his prey (Hos 5:14; 11:10). Hosea warned his generation that God will hunt down the guilty, but Job feels that if he were to try to take a stand against God, God would come after him with savage fury and renewed hostility. (TLSB)

10:17 *witnesses against me*. That doesn’t seem likely since we know of only the three witnesses at the time he spoke. These are the words of a desperate man, not a godless, unbelieving man. (PBC)

fresh troops. Shifting his imagery, Job fears that if he should make an effort to defend himself, God would send in reinforcements for even greater attacks on him. (TLSB)

10:20 *find a little cheer*. In his despair, Job can only wish for God to leave him alone in the little time remaining to him. (TLSB)

10:21–22 *land of darkness*. Abandoning any explicit hope, Job paints the darkest picture possible of death and the grave. Only deep blackness awaits him. See p 792. Job’s hope will eventually reappear (as in 19:25–27), but for now, his depression overwhelms him. (TLSB)

10:21 *I shall not return*. From viewpoint of life in this world, that is true. (PBC)

land of darkness and deep shadow.† See 38:17. Ancient Mesopotamian documents refer to the netherworld as the “house of darkness.” Because Job is passing through a time of pessimism and temptation, he sees death only as a place of darkness and gloom. Later (19:25–27) he confesses his faith in a bodily resurrection. (CSB)

Ch 10 God can do with Job as He pleases (v 15), so Job sees his own position as a “lose/lose” situation. If he has sinned, then he has no hope before God, since God is righteous and punishes sinners. If he has not sinned, he still has no hope before God, because God is all-powerful, the Creator and Lord. We must remind ourselves and others that God provides hope for all sinners in Christ Jesus. Luth: “So only the knowledge of Christ preserves me. From this I conclude: The devil and God are two enemies. Therefore, while God loves life, the devil hates life. The knowledge of God can consequently be so pictured as if it is God’s will to be angry, and one may be led to think that our Lord God and the devil are both intent on strangling us. To this one must reply, ‘Life is God’s aim, and so he will not slay you’ ” (AE 54:34). • Father, shine the light of Jesus, even when everything else is deep darkness. Amen. (TLSB)