

Job 33:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters.

Analysis

Why dost thou strive against him? (מדוע אתה ריבותך, maddua elav rivota)—Elihu challenges Job's contention with God. **ריב** (riv, 'strive') means to contend legally, to bring charges or lawsuit—the same term for covenant disputes (Micah 6:1-2). **מדוע** (maddua, 'why?') demands justification for Job's complaints. Job had repeatedly demanded to argue his case before God (13:3, 13:19, 23:3-7, 31:35-37). Elihu exposes the absurdity: creatures cannot successfully prosecute Creator.

For he giveth not account of any of his matters (כי-כל-דבריו לא-יאננה) ki-kol-devarav lo-ya'aneh)—**יאננה** (anah, 'give account/answer') means to respond or explain. God owes no explanations to His creatures. This establishes divine sovereignty and transcendence: God's wisdom infinitely exceeds human understanding. **דבר** (davar, 'matters/words') encompasses God's decrees, actions, and purposes. The phrase doesn't mean God never reveals His purposes (He does through Scripture, providence, and ultimately Christ), but that He's under no obligation to explain every action to finite creatures.

This verse articulates Reformed theology's emphasis on divine sovereignty and incomprehensibility. God is not accountable to human courts—we are accountable to His. Job's demand for explanation reflected proper theology (covenant relationship allows bold prayer) but improper attitude (demanding God justify Himself). Elihu corrects the imbalance without dismissing Job's pain.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern kings were absolute monarchs who answered to no one. Unlike pagan deities who were subject to fate or cosmic forces, YHWH is sovereign over all creation, bound only by His own character and promises. The book of Job addresses theodicy—how can a just, omnipotent God permit innocent suffering? Elihu's answer: God's purposes transcend human understanding; trust His character even when His ways are mysterious (anticipating Romans 11:33-36).

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. When have you demanded God explain His actions—what was the result?
2. How do we balance bold prayer (bringing complaints to God) with humble submission to His sovereignty?
3. What does it mean that God doesn't 'give account'—does this make Him arbitrary or transcendent?

Interlinear Text

ל א ד ב כ י ר י ב ו ת א ל י י מ ד י ע

H4069

H413

Why dost thou strive

H7378

H3588

H3605

of any of his matters

H1697

H3808

וְעַתָּה:

against him for he giveth not account

H6030

Additional Cross-References

Job 40:2 (Parallel theme): Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.

Isaiah 45:9 (Parallel theme): Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?

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