

Job 34:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Who hath given him a charge over the earth? or who hath disposed the whole world?

Analysis

Elihu defends God's justice: "Who hath given him a charge over the earth? or who hath disposed the whole world?" These rhetorical questions expect the answer: no one. The Hebrew *paqad* (רָאַת, "given charge") means to appoint or entrust. The verb *sum* (מִשְׁׁתַּחַת, "disposed") means to set or establish. Elihu argues that God's sovereignty is underived—no higher authority commissioned Him. From a Reformed perspective, this establishes God's aseity (self-existence) and independent sovereignty. God rules by inherent right, not delegated authority. This truth grounds divine justice: God is accountable to no one because no one stands above Him to establish standards He must meet. Yet this creates tension: how can creatures evaluate divine justice? The answer lies in God's self-revelation—He voluntarily discloses His character and ways, making Himself known. Job seeks not to judge God but to understand Him, a legitimate longing God will honor by appearing directly.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern religions depicted gods receiving domains from higher deities (Marduk appointed by Anu, Zeus by Cronus). Biblical monotheism rejects such hierarchies—Yahweh alone is ultimate, accountable to none. This radical theology distinguished Israel from surrounding nations and prevented subjecting God to external standards. Yet God voluntarily enters covenant, binding Himself by promises.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does God's underived authority relate to His trustworthiness and moral character?
2. What is the relationship between God's sovereignty and His self-imposed covenant obligations?
3. How can we question God's ways while acknowledging He's accountable to no higher authority?

Interlinear Text

מִ	נָתַן	עַל	אֶרְצָה	מִ
H4310	Who hath given him a charge	H5921	over the earth	H4310
	H6485		H776	
מִ	שָׁפֵךְ	לְ	כָּלְדָה	
or who hath disposed	the whole world	H3605		
H7760	H8398			

Additional Cross-References

1 Chronicles 29:11 (Parallel theme): Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all.

