

## Righteousness in Job: Concepts of Vindication and Justification

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A brief note in McCabe's article regarding Elihu's use of צַדִּיק acted as the catalyst for this study.<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew root צַדִּיק's 35 occurrences in the Book of Job provide a basis for examining the concepts of vindication and justification in the thinking of Job and his friends. The speakers in Job employ this root word both in regard to God (35:2) and man (15:14). What do Eliphaz (4:17), Job (9:2), and Bildad (25:4) mean by being "just before God"? Then there is the mention of being clothed with righteousness (29:14), which appears to approximate New Testament (NT) phraseology. How does the Book of Job's view of righteousness, vindication, and justification compare with the rest of the Old Testament (OT)? How do NT writers represent the Book of Job's concepts of righteousness, vindication, and justification, if at all? What might a study of the Book of Job contribute to the current discussion of justification?

For the purpose of this study, the writer assumes a patriarchal dating for the events (including the conversations).<sup>2</sup> Evaluating the contribution of the narrator to the topic at hand needs to allow for a date of composition subsequent to the actual events, but nothing later than the time of Solomon. An early date for the book of Job significantly limits the application of Hays' first criterion for scriptural echoes: availability—"Was the proposed source of the echo available to the author and/or original readers?"<sup>3</sup> Only by dating the book sometime after 1400 B.C. can the exegete honestly find echoes from the Pentateuch, for example. Pyeon accepts a very late dating (between the 5th and 3rd centuries B.C.) for the book of Job in order to allow the identification of echoes from the prophets of Israel.<sup>4</sup> I would suggest that the intertextuality runs the reverse direction—the prophets and sages echo scriptures from the book of Job.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Robert V. McCabe, "Elihu's Contribution to the Thought of the Book of Job," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 2 (Fall 1997): 58 (esp. fn. 49).

<sup>2</sup> Bruce K. Waltke with Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 927 fn. 1, summarizes the support for a patriarchal setting for Job: (1) Job's age (140), (2) the קִשְׁטָה as a measure of exchange or value, (3) personal wealth figured in livestock, slaves, and precious metals, (4) simple, non-cultic, religious practices, (5) legendary stature of Job's reputation, and (6) use of יְהוָה as the divine name. See, also, Daniel J. Estes, *Handbook of the Wisdom Books and Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 22–23.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 29.

<sup>4</sup> Yohan Pyeon, *You Have Not Spoken What Is Right About Me: Intertextuality and the Book of Job*, *Studies in Biblical Literature* 45 (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), 48.

<sup>5</sup> I would, however, subscribe to Pyeon's first level of intertextuality in which the speakers within the book employ each other's concepts and wording in the course of their debates. If the original historical setting of the events in Job falls in the pre-Mosaic era, intertextual references would imply that the writer or composer of the book falsified the dialogues. As House declares concerning Job's speeches (which might equally apply to the speeches of his four friends), "Job's historical setting is before Moses' time, so none of the great canonical accounts could help

The literature involved in the debate over the concept of צדק in both Hebrew and its ancient near eastern environment comprises a vast collection. Rather than entering that arena of discussion, I recommend the summary of the issue that Koch presents in his *THAT/TLOT* entry.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Focus of the Book of Job**

Readers approaching the Book of Job too often come with the preconceived idea that it is a book of suffering. Because that is the theme with which most readers are familiar (they've heard it constantly in nearly every circle of their existence—modern media to commentators and preachers), they read the book through glasses already tinted with that theme. However skewed one's view has become, the question of the text might still be worded as “Why do the righteous suffer?” or “How can a righteous and just God allow, or worse, bring to pass human suffering, especially when it seems that such suffering is for no just cause or good reason?”<sup>7</sup> After identifying these questions, Merrill states that “Job has to do with the vindication of God in light of life's imponderable mysteries.”<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the Book of Job deals more with God's vindication than with Job's. That is the major contribution of the book. Waltke affirms this direction in his description of Job's trajectory “toward the hope that he will be vindicated—that is, that God in the end will prove to be good and righteous.”<sup>9</sup> As Fohrer states in his conclusion to a study of Job's righteousness in Job 31, “Ultimately, then, the issue at stake is not the righteousness of Job, but whether God or man is right.”<sup>10</sup> According to Klassen, Satan's purpose is to “test the character of God's *zedeq*.”<sup>11</sup> Interestingly, consideration of divine righteousness and justice occurs “rarely outside poetic passages.”<sup>12</sup> Therefore, the Book of Job plays a significant role in the body of OT material on the topics of righteousness, justice, and justification.

But, having settled on this focus for the Book of Job, what impact might that have on an overall view of righteousness and even of justification throughout the remainder of Scripture, including the NT?

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him”; Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 435. Clines' argument that the author's skill at placing his narrative in the patriarchal period succeeds in avoiding any clue to his contemporary period seems like special pleading; David J. A. Clines, *Job 1–20*, Word Biblical Commentary 17 (Dallas: Word . Books, Publisher, 1989), lvii. Why not accept the historical consistency of the book as evidence of composition closer to the time of the patriarchs?

<sup>6</sup> K. Koch, “צדק *sdq*,” in *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 3 vols., ed. by Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, trans. by Mark E. Biddle, 2:1046–62 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 1051–53.

<sup>7</sup> Eugene H. Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion: A Theology of the Old Testament* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2006), 605.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 605. See also, *ibid.*, 61.

<sup>9</sup> Waltke with Yu, *Old Testament Theology*, 935.

<sup>10</sup> Georg Fohrer, “The Righteous Man in Job 31,” in *Essays in Old Testament Ethics* (J. Philip Hyatt, *In Memoriam*), ed. by James L. Crenshaw and John T. Willis, 1–21 (New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1974), 20.

<sup>11</sup> Randy Klassen, “Job's Thirst for Righteousness: A Parable of Post Modernism,” *Direction* 25, no. 2 (Fall 1996): 45.

<sup>12</sup> Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion*, 60.

**Occurrences of צדק in Job<sup>13</sup>**

| Speaker                | Verbs (17x)                           |             |                    | Nouns (11x)                         |                        | Adjectives (7x)       |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
|                        | Qal (14x)                             | Hiphil (1x) | Piel (2x)          | Masculine (7x)                      | Feminine (4x)          |                       |
| Eliphaz                | 4:17<br>15:14<br>22:3                 |             |                    |                                     |                        | 22:19                 |
| Job                    | 9:2<br>9:15<br>9:20<br>10:15<br>13:18 | 27:5        |                    | 6:29<br>29:14<br>31:6 <sup>14</sup> | 27:6                   | 12:4<br>17:9<br>27:17 |
| Bildad                 | 25:4                                  |             |                    | 8:3<br>8:6                          |                        |                       |
| Zophar                 | 11:2                                  |             |                    |                                     |                        |                       |
| Elihu <sup>15</sup>    | 33:12<br>34:5<br>35:7                 |             | 33:32              | 35:2<br>36:3                        | 33:26<br>35:8<br>37:23 | 34:17<br>36:7         |
| God                    | 40:8                                  |             |                    |                                     |                        |                       |
| Narrator <sup>16</sup> |                                       |             | 32:2 <sup>17</sup> |                                     |                        | 32:1                  |

Both the narrative prologue and narrative epilogue are conspicuous by their absence from the list of צדק's occurrences in the Book of Job.<sup>18</sup> Eliphaz employs the root first (4:17), choosing the Qal verb stem (יִצְדֵּק). As an (intentional?) inclusio, God's use of the Qal verb stem (40:8, הִצְדֵּק) stands as the final usage in the order of the literary product. God's rhetorical question to Job in 40:8 reveals a significant text in the discussion of righteousness and justification:

הֲאֵף תִּפְרֹּם מִשְׁפָּטִי לְמַעַן תִּצְדֵּק:

*Would you really impugn My justice? Will you condemn Me so that you might be justified?*

<sup>13</sup> Statistical table available in Koch, "צדק *sdq*," 1048–49.

<sup>14</sup> Job's first and last uses of צדק are both the masculine noun—another (intentional?) inclusio? Cp. 4:17 and 40:8 (Qal verbs) for the work as a whole.

<sup>15</sup> It is noteworthy that Job and Elihu utilize צדק more frequently than any other participant. This sets them up as the two major human speakers and demonstrates that Elihu provides the most complete response on the issue of righteousness/vindication that is so central to Job's speeches. Of course, that is exactly what the narrator sets up by his transition in 32:1–2. In a previous ETS paper, "Messianic Implications in Elihu's 'Mediator Speech' (Job 33:23–28)" (ETS Annual Meeting, Atlanta, 2003), 1–6, I presented a defense of the dependability and accuracy of Elihu's speech(es). Reimer recognizes that Elihu's speech(es) "seem especially concerned with *sdq*"; David J. Reimer, "צדק," in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 5 vols., ed. by Willem A. VanGemeren, 3:744–69 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), 756. See, also, Klassen, "Job's Thirst for Righteousness," 47, "Elihu uses the *z.d.q* word family frequently and prominently."

<sup>16</sup> The chart arranges the speakers chronologically. Since the narrator is the writer or final composer of the book, he probably inserted his words after the completion of the dialogues.

<sup>17</sup> The fact that only Elihu and the narrator employ the Piel of צדק, might be one potential piece of evidence to identify Elihu as the author of the book.

<sup>18</sup> Noted also by Reimer, "צדק," 754.

### Definition of Righteousness

Before tackling an analysis of the Joban occurrences of צַדִּיק, the definition of righteousness requires specification. Two major viewpoints find expression in the various studies on the concept of righteousness in the OT: (1) Viewing צַדִּיק as a legal term that makes righteousness the conforming to a standard or norm and (2) taking the term as “virtually synonymous with deliverance and salvation, describing it as a relation with God Himself rather than as related to a norm established by God.”<sup>19</sup>

According to Merrill, “The basic idea of the root *šdq* is that of a standard to which one must aspire if he is to be considered in conformity with agreed upon moral and ethical conventions.”<sup>20</sup> The distinction between divine and human righteousness rests in the fact of God’s absolute perfection. He achieves “perfect compliance to his own impeccable standards.”<sup>21</sup> Hartley identifies the same foundation involving moral standards and recognizes God Himself as “the absolute standard of justice and moral purity.”<sup>22</sup> Parallel terms in poetry tend to classify the category of meaning for צַדִּיק in any particular occurrence. Ethical and moral issues often pair צַדִּיק with טָהָר, while legal issues utilize נָקִי as the parallel.<sup>23</sup>

How does divine justice compare with divine righteousness? Merrill answers that “Justice is the application of righteousness, especially in situations of legal disposition.”<sup>24</sup> von Rad stresses that צַדִּיק involves gift rather than punishment.<sup>25</sup> At Qumran, “salvific *š<sup>e</sup>dāqā* is a gift of God.”<sup>26</sup> This concept of divine gift arises in Braulik’s study of the concept of justification in Deuteronomy. He asserts that righteous deeds do not “obtain righteousness before Yahweh. Righteousness has already been given beforehand by God.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> B. Johnson, “צַדִּיק,” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, 16 vols., ed. by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, 12:239–64, trans. by Douglas W. Stott (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003), 243.

<sup>20</sup> Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion*, 58. Other scholars in agreement with the definition involving behavior in accord with some standard include Reimer, “צַדִּיק,” 746, 750, 751, 756; Norman H. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament* (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), 73, 77. The second view might represent where Davidson would have landed; A. B. Davidson, *The Theology of the Old Testament*, International Theological Library (1904; reprint, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1961), 130, “It was not conformity to a standard that made things right, but conformity to a right standard. The idea of a standard is secondary—the idea of right precedes it.”

<sup>21</sup> Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion*, 58.

<sup>22</sup> John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 113.

<sup>23</sup> Johnson, “צַדִּיק,” 249.

<sup>24</sup> Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion*, 60.

<sup>25</sup> Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2 vols., trans. by D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1962), 1:377: “Israel celebrated Jahweh as the one who bestowed on his people the all-embracing gift of his righteousness.”

<sup>26</sup> Johnson, “צַדִּיק,” 263.

<sup>27</sup> Georg Braulik, “Law as Gospel: Justification and Pardon According to the Deuteronomic Torah,” *Interpretation* 38, no. 1 (1984): 8.

### Examining the Texts in Job

Analyzing the contexts of the Joban texts requires an orderly treatment following the flow of the dialogues. A contextual treatment provides the best environment for evaluating the statements about righteousness. Every use of צַדִּיק finds its meaning in relation to the speaker's response to the situation and to his fellow protagonists' words.

#### Eliphaz's Response to Job's First Speech—4:17

Can mankind be **just** before God?  
 Can a man be pure before his Maker? (NASU)  
 הַאֲנוּשׁ מֵאֱלֹהִים יִצְדֵּק אִם מְעֻשָׂהוּ יִטְהַר-גִּבּוֹרִי

NJPS employs “acquitted,” ESV uses “be in the right,” and NET translates צַדִּיק as “righteous.”<sup>28</sup> These three versions understand the use of the preposition בְּ as “before.”<sup>29</sup> However, HCSB and NIV go with the comparative, “more righteous than God.” In the opinion of Driver and Gray, comparative בְּ is grammatically possible but contextually unsuitable, primarily because of verse 18, which describes the imperfection of even the angels.<sup>30</sup> Habel also finds it preferable to utilize “before” rather than “more just than God,” because the comparative is “inappropriate to Eliphaz' argument at this stage.”<sup>31</sup> The word order of both adverbial prepositional phrases in the verse makes them emphatic.<sup>32</sup>

Eliphaz's statement can be understood to indicate the impossibility of a person being righteous before God (cf. Ps 143:2; Isa 43:9, 26). Johnson concludes that “In relation to God, a person can be righteous only in or through God (Isa 45:25).”<sup>33</sup> In his response to Job's lament in chapter 3, Eliphaz first identifies his friend's piety (4:3–4). Twice he notes Job's lack of patience(!) in verses 2 and 5, but quickly recalls Job's confidence and hope founded upon his fear of God and his way of living (v. 6). Next, he tells Job that the innocent do not perish (vv. 7–11). By means of revelation brought to him by a spirit, Eliphaz announces its content, starting with verse 17.

Why does Eliphaz think that the statement of verse 17 applies to Job? Clines looks at Job's state of mind and decides that “What Job wants is not to *be* righteous, since he is—for a human, at any rate—righteous enough already, but to be *declared* righteous by God (see 9:2, ‘How can a man be declared righteous by God?’) by being delivered from suffering and restored

<sup>28</sup> The LXX translates the verse as follows: τί γάρ μὴ καθαρός ἐστὶ βροτὸς ἐναντίον κυρίου ἢ ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ ἄμεμπτος ἀνὴρ. The translator allowed the parallel with טָהַר to determine the meaning of צַדִּיק. It represents one of only three variations from forms of δικαι- in the translation of the forms of צַדִּיק in the LXX of Job (4:17, καθαρός; 17:9, πιστός; 22:3, ἄμεμπτος).

<sup>29</sup> E. Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, trans. by Harold Knight (1967; reprint, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984), 52.

<sup>30</sup> Samuel Rolles Driver and George Buchanan Gray, *The Book of Job*, International Critical Commentary (1921; reprint, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1971), 1/46.

<sup>31</sup> Norman C. Habel, *The Book of Job: A Commentary*, Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), 116. He thinks that the text's ambiguity “is probably deliberate”; *ibid.*, 129.

<sup>32</sup> Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1/46.

<sup>33</sup> Johnson, “צַדִּיק,” 250.

to prosperity.”<sup>34</sup> If this comprises an accurate assessment of Job’s thinking, he and Eliphaz are not on the same wavelength. As Clines notes later in his commentary, “while Eliphaz spoke of the impossibility of anyone’s being perfectly righteous, Job speaks of the impossibility (as it seems) of anyone’s gaining vindication from God.”<sup>35</sup> Job feels hedged in by God (3:23) and is overwhelmed by the circumstances in which he finds himself.

Hartley discerns that Job’s despair relates to what he reveals through his later speeches. Job desires to dispute what he perceives as God’s unjust treatment of His servant. But, how can Job win such a dispute? “Since *the Maker* is far superior to the creature, a human being has no grounds on which he may dispute with God the rightness of his fate. Should he argue that his case is just, he would definitely lose, for God is the absolute standard of justice and moral purity. That is, God, being just and pure by nature, wins every dispute, and each person, no matter how upright on earth, is found guilty by comparison.”<sup>36</sup>

### Job’s Response to Eliphaz—6:29

Desist now, let there be no injustice;  
Even desist, my **righteousness** is yet in it. (NASU, NKJV, NET)  
שְׁבוּ נָא אֶל־תְּהִי עוֹלָה (וְשׁוּבוּ) עוֹד צְדִקְי־בְהִי:

HCSB translates with “righteousness”;<sup>38</sup> NJPS, with “in the right”; ESV, with “vindication”; and, NIV uses “integrity.”

In other words, Job states that he has not yet been convicted of unrighteous behavior.<sup>39</sup> Eliphaz’s words draw a relatively mild protest of innocence.

### Bildad’s Response to Job’s Second Speech—8:3, 6

“Does God pervert justice?  
Or does the Almighty pervert what is **right**?  
(8:3—NASU, CSB, NET, NIV)  
הֲאֵל יַעֲוֶה מוֹשֵׁפֵט וְאִם־שָׁדִי יַעֲוֶה־צְדָק:

ESV reads with a slight difference from the four versions above: “pervert **the right**.” NKJV and NJPS translate צְדָק as “justice.”<sup>40</sup>

Hartley distinguishes the two parallel nouns in this verse as follows: “*justice (mišpāt)* is strict adherence to a standard, and *the right (šedeq)* is correct behavior.”<sup>41</sup> At first blush, it appears that Johnson thinks the two terms indicate that they are either synonymous or expressing

<sup>34</sup> David J. A. Clines, *Job 1–20*, Word Biblical Commentary 17 (Dallas: Word . Books, Publisher, 1989), 133.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 227.

<sup>36</sup> Hartley, *Job*, 113.

<sup>37</sup> “The use of the imperfect *I have become* (*‘ehyeh*) underscores the change that has taken place in Job’s situation”; *ibid.*, 207.

<sup>38</sup> The LXX employs its normal Greek term for צְדָק this time: καθίστατε δὴ καὶ μὴ εἶη ἄδικον καὶ πάλιν τῷ δικαίῳ συνέρχεσθε.

<sup>39</sup> Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1/67.

<sup>40</sup> LXX: μὴ ὁ κύριος ἀδικήσῃ κρινῶν ἢ ὁ τὰ πάντα ποιήσας ταραξεί τὸ δίκαιον.

<sup>41</sup> Hartley, *Job*, 156.

intensification.<sup>42</sup> Later in his dictionary entry, however, he concludes that they are not synonymous: “The semantic field of ‘decision, judgment, law’ attaches to *mišpāṭ*, while *šdq* focuses on the principle of ‘what is right, correct.’”<sup>43</sup>

If you are pure and upright,  
Surely<sup>44</sup> now He would rouse Himself for you  
And restore your **righteous estate**. (8:6—NASU)  
אִם-טָזַךְ וַיִּשֶׁר אַתָּה כִּי-עָתָה יַעֲרִיר עָלֶיךָ וְשָׁלֵם נֹת צְדָקָךְ:

NKJV has “rightful dwelling place” (cp. ESV’s “rightful habitation” and NIV’s “rightful place”), while NJPS employs “righteous home” (cp. NET’s “righteous abode”).<sup>45</sup> HCSB uses an expanded paraphrase, “the home where your righteousness dwells.”

A number of commentators interpret the phrase in question as the way the extensive holdings testify to Job’s righteous character.<sup>46</sup> In other words, God rewards those who behave in a right fashion—He blesses them with abundance. Clines points out that Bildad presents “an unbending doctrine of retribution” that “makes the sinner the victim of his own guilt” and “chains God also, and compels him to respond with favor to any human merit.”<sup>47</sup> Such an approach as Bildad’s leaves no room for divine grace and results in the same kind of theology as idolatry by which gods are manipulated by the deeds of men.

Bildad appears to respond to the way Job addresses God in 7:20–21,

Have I sinned? What have I done to You,  
O watcher of men?  
Why have You set me as Your target,  
So that I am a burden to myself?  
Why then do You not pardon my transgression  
And take away my iniquity?  
For now I will lie down in the dust;  
And You will seek me, but I will not be.

Thus, his second use of the masculine noun (צְדָקָה) in verse 6 differs from the early use in verse 3. Verse 6 contains a greater ethical content relating to Job’s manner of living. The earlier usage does not apply to Job, but to God and His character and actions.

### **Job’s Response to Bildad—9:2, 15, 20; 10:15**

In truth I know that this is so;  
But how can a man be **in the right** before God?  
(9:2—NASU, ESV)  
אֲמַנָם יָדַעְתִּי כִּי-כֵן וּמִה-יִצְדָק אָנוּשׁ עִם-אֱלֹהִים:

<sup>42</sup> Johnson, “צְדָקָה,” 247.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 248.

<sup>44</sup> Emphatic כִּי; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 198.

<sup>45</sup> LXX has εἰ καθαρὸς εἶ καὶ ἀληθινὸς δεήσεως ἐπακούσεται σου ἀποκαταστήσει δέ σοι **δίκαιον δικαιοσύνης**.

<sup>46</sup> Hartley, *Job*, 157. Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1/77, also take the prosperity of Job’s holdings as “evidence of the righteousness of its possessor.”

<sup>47</sup> Clines, *Job 1–20*, 204.

NKJV and NIV use “righteous before God”; HCSB has “be justified before God” and NET, “be just before God.”<sup>48</sup> However, NJPS translates as “win a suit against God.”

Driver and Gray identify the introductory adverb, אֲנִי־נִצָּחַתִּי, as employing irony (as in 12:2).<sup>49</sup> They also point out the switch from Eliphaz’s מִן (4:17) to אֵלַי, in order to produce a double meaning: “in the estimation of,” as well as “in a contest with.”<sup>50</sup> The Qal verb here acts like a Hophal, meaning “justified.”<sup>51</sup> The passive indicates an agency outside of Job himself. Clines decides that אֵלַי (“with”) refers to how God regards and treats Job.<sup>52</sup> Eliphaz had focused on morality, but Job turns to the forensic: “He ponders how a person can be acquitted when it is God who is his accuser. . . . Yet his conviction that God does not pervert justice prods him to contemplate the impossible, i.e., of pursuing litigation against God.”<sup>53</sup> Job aims to defend his innocence by proving his claim. Bildad’s words in 8:3–7 and 20 evidently stung Job into this response.

Johnson delves into the source of such righteousness. He claims that “similar texts emphasize that the righteous do not possess righteousness before God solely from within themselves (Job 9:2ff.; Ps. 143:1–2).”<sup>54</sup> From a human perspective, without additional revelation to clarify the situation (such as, e.g., Job 1), it certainly looks as though Job might be justified in accusing God of being unjust. As Reimer observes, “It is an example, then, of cognitive dissonance, and it is no wonder that Job is pushed, *in extremis*, into asserting his own innocence against God’s apparent injustice.”<sup>55</sup>

Coming to this text, Wilson focuses on what Job means. He desires to “‘be *declared* righteous’ or ‘(publicly) vindicated.’”<sup>56</sup> In other words, “to be *publicly declared and recognized* as having fulfilled the demands of the circumstance under consideration.”<sup>57</sup> Could Job’s statement here be “a delayed reaction to Eliphaz’s words in 4:17,”<sup>58</sup> as Clines suggests? After all, as far as Job is concerned, only a full public restoration counts as true vindication.<sup>59</sup> Clines and Wilson both agree that God’s righteousness is not the central issue, but Job’s vindication, “though the two are not entirely distinct.”<sup>60</sup>

For though I were **right**, I could not answer;  
I would have to implore the mercy of my judge. (9:15—NASU)  
אֲשֶׁר אִם־צָדִיקָתִי לֹא אֵעִנֶה לְמִשְׁפָּטֵי אֱתָנָן:

<sup>48</sup> LXX: ἐπ’ ἀληθείας οἶδα ὅτι οὕτως ἐστὶν πῶς γὰρ ἔσται δίκαιος βροτὸς παρὰ κυρίῳ.

<sup>49</sup> Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1/84.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Clines, *Job 1–20*, 227.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Hartley, *Job*, 166.

<sup>54</sup> Johnson, “צָדִיק,” 262.

<sup>55</sup> Reimer, “צָדִיק,” 755.

<sup>56</sup> Gerald H. Wilson, *Job*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 83.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>58</sup> Clines, *Job 1–20*, 226.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.



NJPS, ESV, and HCSB use “I were in the right,” while NKJV employs “I were righteous.”<sup>61</sup> NET and NIV, on the other hand, translates with “I am innocent.” All use the concessive clause to show a contrary-to-fact situation.

Clines guards against mistaking what Job means: “Job does not doubt that he is ‘in the right,’ ‘innocent’ (צַדִּיק), even though he uses the hypothetical form.”<sup>62</sup> Behind the phraseology is the concept that an ancient near eastern judge’s “decision and judgment took the form *’attâ šaddîq, hû’ rāsā’*, ‘you are right, he is an evildoer.’”<sup>63</sup> The existence of an “opponent-at-law” (the equivalent of NASU’s “my judge”; cp. “my accuser” in ESV and NRSV) is something that Driver and Gray conclude from the text and its context.<sup>64</sup>

Johnson prefers to understand the situation as one involving the covenant and its community. He explains that “The innocent are ‘justified’ (*hišdîq*) insofar as either the judge or the king thwarts all attempts to harm them. Hence those who stand within this community are *šaddîq* as long as their lives and demeanor do not violate that community.”<sup>65</sup> By this, he means that individuals separated from God are עָשָׂה and God is צַדִּיק. Their only remedy is to confess their own sin and testify to God’s righteousness.<sup>66</sup> Knight points out that “for God to be righteous meant that he brought about a new condition for Israel. That must then be true also for the individual Israelite. If the individual Israelite were indeed a righteous man, then it meant that it was God who had put him right (Job 9.15, 20, etc.). . . . righteousness is rather the response in gratitude of the man who has been ‘put right.’”<sup>67</sup> In other words, God makes a person righteous and that person responds by living a righteous life as testimony of that change in his or her status.

In the 17th century, Joseph Caryl explains the concept Job expresses by distinguishing between “a righteoufneffe of the perfon, and righteoufneffe of the caufe, . . . *Job* doth not forfake the righteoufneffe of his caufe, he only difclaimeth the righteoufneffe of his perfon. I acknowledge I am not righteous in my felf, and I will not yield that my afflictions and fufferings argue me unrighteous.”<sup>68</sup>

Though I am **righteous**, my mouth will condemn me;  
Though I am guiltless, He will declare me guilty. (9:20—NASU, NKJV)

אִם-אֲצַדִּיק פִּי יִרְשָׁעֵנִי חֵם-אֲנִי וַיַּעֲקֹבֵנִי:

NJPS, NET, and NIV read “I were innocent”; ESV and HCSB have “I am in the right.”<sup>69</sup>

<sup>61</sup> LXX: ἐάν τε γὰρ ὦ δίκαιος οὐκ εἰσακούσεται μου τοῦ κρίματος αὐτοῦ δεηθήσομαι.

<sup>62</sup> Clines, *Job 1–20*, 234.

<sup>63</sup> Johnson, “צַדִּיק,” 260. A recent book performs a comparative analysis of the book of Job in the light of Neo-Babylonian trial law: F. Rachel Magdalene, *On the Scales of Righteousness: Neo-Babylonian Trial Law and the Book of Job*, Brown Judaic Studies 348 (Providence, RI: Brown University, 2007).

<sup>64</sup> Driver and Gray, *Job*, 2/57.

<sup>65</sup> Johnson, “צַדִּיק,” 260.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> George A. F. Knight, *A Christian Theology of the Old Testament*, Biblical and Theological Classics Library (1969; reprint, London: Paternoster Press, 1998), 249–50.

<sup>68</sup> Joseph Caryl, *An Exposition with Practical Observations upon Chapters . . . of the Book of Job*, 12 vols. (1644–1666; reprint, Berkeley, MI: Dust & Ashes Publications, 2001), 3:262. I have retained the “s” forms and spellings of the facsimile text.

<sup>69</sup> LXX: ἐάν γὰρ ὦ δίκαιος τὸ στόμα μου ἀσεβήσει ἐάν τε ὦ ἄμemptos σκολιδὸς ἀποβήσομαι.

The Hiphil **יְרַשֵׁעֵנִי** expresses the declarative (“declare or pronounce wrong” or “declare or pronounce unrighteous”) in direct antithesis to the Qal **אֲצַדֵּק**.<sup>70</sup> The Qal could take the same Hophal force as in 9:2, meaning “justified.” In the very next verse Job declares “I am guiltless” (v. 21, **תָּם־אֲנִי**). In verse 28 he says, “I know that You will not acquit me” (**יָדַעְתִּי כִּי־לֹא תִנְקֶנִי**). The Piel of **נָקָה** acts as a factitive to mean “bring into a state of innocence.” Job then describes exactly what he means: “I am accounted wicked” (v. 29, **אֲנֹכִי אֶרְשָׁע**). He uses an illustration of being irreversibly unclean (vv. 30–31). He compares himself with God Who is supremely righteous and holy and before Whom all are unclean by comparison.

If I am wicked, woe to me!  
And if I am **righteous**, I dare not lift up my head.  
*I am sated with disgrace and conscious of my misery.*  
(10:15—NASU, NKJV, CSB)

אִם־רָשַׁעְתִּי אֶלְלִי לִי וְצַדִּיקְתִּי לֹא־אֶשְׂנֵא רֹאשִׁי שְׁבַע קָלוֹן וּרְיָאָה עֵינָי:

NJPS has “even when innocent,” while NET and NIV use “if I am innocent.” ESV, however, translates as “If I am in the right.”<sup>71</sup>

**רָשַׁעְתִּי** at the start of this verse stands as a stronger term than **הִטָּאתִי** in verse 14.<sup>72</sup> The thought repeats what Job had already said in 9:29. Job’s current circumstances, in which he has suffered such loss and humiliation, destroy his former confidence in his own righteousness (or innocence). As Hartley explains, “A raised head is a gesture of confident self-worth, while a lowered head expresses shame and humiliation.”<sup>73</sup> Job’s world has been brutally shaken. Even if he were to revert to his former confidence, he believes that God would hunt him down and bring even more calamity down on him (vv. 16–17). Job falls back into a lament over the lack of any light at the end of his tunnel of torment (vv. 18–22; cp. chapt. 3).

### Zophar’s Response to Job—11:2

Shall a multitude of words go unanswered,  
And a talkative man **be acquitted**? (NASU, HCSB)  
הֲרַב דְּבָרִים לֹא יַעֲנֶה וְאִם־אִישׁ שֹׁפְתִים יִצְדֵּק:

NKJV, NET, and NIV utilize “be vindicated”; NJPS has “be right”; and, ESV uses “be judged right.”<sup>74</sup>

Zophar speaks more aggressively in his attack on Job, because he perceives no change as the result of either Eliphaz’s or Bildad’s speeches.<sup>75</sup> Clines observes that court language dominates the exchanges between Job and his two friends, even though they are not in a court of

<sup>70</sup> Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1/91.

<sup>71</sup> LXX: *ἐάν τε γὰρ ἀσεβῆς ὦ οἴμμοι ἐάν τε ὦ δίκαιος οὐ δύναμαι ἀνακύψαι πλήρης γὰρ ἀτιμίας εἰμί.*

<sup>72</sup> Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1/101.

<sup>73</sup> Hartley, *Job*, 189.

<sup>74</sup> LXX: *ὁ τὰ πολλὰ λέγων καὶ ἀντακούσεται ἢ καὶ ὁ εὐλαλὸς οἴεται εἶναι δίκαιος εὐλογημένος γεννητὸς γυναικὸς ὀλιγόβιος.*

<sup>75</sup> Clines, *Job 1–20*, 259.

law. Job himself views his situation before God as essentially a legal one anyway.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, the use of צָדִיק in such a setting would tend to be forensic rather than ethical in nature.

### Job's Response to Zophar—12:4; 13:18

I am a joke to my friends,  
The one who called on God and He answered him;  
The **just** and blameless man is a joke. (12:4—NASU, NKJV, ESV)  
שָׂחֵק לְרַעְיָהוּ אֱהִיָּה קְרָא לְאֱלֹהִים וַיַּעֲנֵהוּ שְׂחֹק צְדִיק תָּמִים:

HCSB, NET, and NIV use “the righteous”;<sup>77</sup> NJPS has “innocent.” As with the following (13:18), the contextual meaning approximates “innocent” most closely.

Behold now, I have prepared my case;  
I know that I **will be vindicated**. (13:18—NASU, NKJV, NIV)  
הִנֵּה־נָא עָרַכְתִּי מִשְׁפָּט יָדַעְתִּי כִּי־אֲנִי אֶצְדֵּק:

NJPS translates with “I will win it”; ESV employs “I shall be in the right,” while HCSB and NET use “I am right.”<sup>78</sup>

Although the translations are not very clear with their choice of words, Clines insists that, “Although the verb צָדִיק in a legal context can mean ‘be justified, be acquitted’ (so 9:2; 11:2; 40:8), the context makes it clear that Job is expressing, not a hope of acquittal (cf. v 15b), but his conviction of innocence (v 15a).”<sup>79</sup>

### Eliphaz's Second Response to Job—15:14

What is man, that he should be pure,  
Or he who is born of a woman, that he should be **righteous**?  
(NASU, CSB, NET)  
מַה־אָנוֹשׁ כִּי־יִזְכֶּה וְכִי־יִצְדֵּק יִלְוֵד אִשָּׁה:

NKJV and NIV have “could be righteous” and ESV reads “can be righteous”; NJPS uses “be in the right.”<sup>80</sup>

This verse is a variation of 4:17 and 9:2. Cp. 25:4–5.

### Job's Response to Eliphaz—17:9

“Nevertheless the **righteous** will hold to his way,  
And he who has clean hands will grow stronger and stronger.  
(NASU, NKJV, TNK, ESV, CSB, NET, NIV)<sup>81</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> LXX: δίκαιος γὰρ ἀνὴρ καὶ ἄμεμπτος ἐγενήθη εἰς χλεύασμα.

<sup>78</sup> LXX: ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἐγγύς εἰμι τοῦ κρίματός μου οἶδα ἐγὼ ὅτι δίκαιος ἀναφανοῦμαι.

<sup>79</sup> Clines, *Job 1–20*, 315.

<sup>80</sup> LXX: τίς γὰρ ὦν βροτός ὅτι ἔσται ἄμεμπτος ἢ ὡς ἐσόμενος δίκαιος γεννητὸς γυναικός.

<sup>81</sup> LXX: σχολίη δὲ πιστός τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ὁδὸν καθαρὸς δὲ χεῖρας ἀναλάβοι θάρσος.

וַיֵּאחֶזְבֵּת צְדִיק דְרָכָו וַטְהַר יָדָיו יִסֹּף אֱמִין:

Dhorme notes that צְדִיקִים “the righteous” replaces ישרים in verse 8 as a parallel term to נָקִי in 22:19 and צְדִיק “the righteous man” complements נָקִי in 27:17. He defines the צְדִיק as “that righteous man so often mentioned in the Psalms as the very type of the rigorous observer of the law. He corresponds to the טְהוֹרֵי יָדָיו ‘pure as to the hands’, i.e. ‘the man with pure hands’, for the hands are the instruments of action.”<sup>82</sup>

**Eliphaz’s Third Response to Job—22:3, 19**

Is there any pleasure to the Almighty if you are **righteous**?

Or profit if you make your ways perfect?

(22:3—NASU, NKJV, TNK, CSB, NET, NIV)

הֲתַפְּיץ לַשָּׁדַי כִּי תַצְדִּיק וְאִם-תִּצְעַע כִּי-תִתֵּם דְרָכֶיךָ:

ESV translates “are in the right.”<sup>83</sup>

Perhaps because of Job blatantly accusing his three friends of falsehood (21:34, מַעַל = “deceit” or “fraud”), Eliphaz elevates his rhetoric and strengthens his accusation against Job in his final speech. Only in this third speech does he accuse Job directly regarding “specific sins against men.”<sup>84</sup> According to Hartley, Eliphaz’s message is that “No human being can live a life holy enough to demand anything from God.”<sup>85</sup>

The **righteous** see and are glad,

And the innocent mock them,

(22:19—NASU, NKJV, TNK, ESV, CSB, NET, NIV)<sup>86</sup>

יֵרֵאוּ צְדִיקִים וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ וְנָקִי יִלְעַג-לְמוֹ:

Driver and Gray prefer taking the two imperfects (יֵרֵאוּ . . . וַיִּשְׂמְחוּ) as past, since they believe that verse 16 refers to a specific event. But, if verse 16 makes merely a general reference to calamity, they would take these verbs as frequentatives.<sup>87</sup>

Note the parallelism between צְדִיקִים and נָקִי, which is close to the parallelism between נָקִי and ישרים in 4:7 and 17:8.<sup>88</sup>

**Bildad’s Third Response to Job—25:4**

How then can a man **be just** with God?

Or how can he be clean who is born of woman?

(NASU, NASB, JPS, ASV)

<sup>82</sup> Dhorme, *Job*, 249–50.

<sup>83</sup> LXX: τί γὰρ μέλει τῷ κυρίῳ ἐὰν σὺ ἦσθα τοῖς ἔργοις ἄμემτος ἢ ὠφέλεια ὅτι ἀπλώσης τὴν ὁδόν σου.

<sup>84</sup> Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1/192.

<sup>85</sup> Hartley, *Job*, 325.

<sup>86</sup> LXX: ἰδόντες δίκαιοι ἐγάλασαν ἄμემτος δὲ ἐμυκτήρισεν.

<sup>87</sup> Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1/197.

<sup>88</sup> Dhorme, *Job*, 335.

וּמַה־יִצְדַק אֲנוֹשׁ עִם־אֱלֹהִים וּמַה־יִּזְכֶּה יְלֹדֵי אִשָּׁה:

NRSV, RSV, NKJV, NET, and NIV all read “be righteous”; NJPS and ESV translate as “in the right”; KJV and HCSB have “be justified”; and, NLT “be innocent.” NJB takes the translation a different direction with “God regards him as virtuous.”

Bildad here repeats Eliphaz’s argument (4:17; 15:14–16). Job has already admitted to the same concept (9:2; 14:4). Pope associates the sentiment with “ancient Mesopotamian wrestlings with the problem of theodicy: ‘Was ever sinless mortal born?’”<sup>89</sup>

### Job’s Concluding Speech(es)—27:5, 6, 17; 29:14; 31:6

Far be it from me that I should declare you **right**;  
Till I die I will not put away my integrity from me.

(27:5—NASU, NKJV, TNK, ESV, CSB)

חֲלִילָה לִי אִם־אֶצְדֵּיק אֶתְכֶם עַד־אָגוּעַ לֹא־אֶסִּיר תְּמֹתַי מִמֶּנִּי:

NET and NIV translate with “are in the right.”<sup>90</sup>

As Habel points out, “The expression ‘far be it from me’ (*hālilā lī*, v. 5a) is a formula for introducing a serious declaration that carries with it a self-imprecation.”<sup>91</sup> In a forensic context, the Qal of צדק can mean “be in the right/acquitted” (9:20; 13:8) or “win a suit” (9:2). This comprises the only use of the Hiphil declarative for צדק in Job.<sup>92</sup> Its antonym רשע (as in 9:20 and 10:2), means “to declare (or, prove) guilty.”<sup>93</sup>

Johnson classifies this usage with those in which “The subject is generally a judge or persons who by virtue of their office are able to confirm that someone is in the right or can help such a person establish that right”<sup>94</sup> (cf. Exod 23:7; Deut 25:1; 2 Sam 15:4; 1 Kgs 8:32; Prov 17:15; Isa 5:23). In other words, Job says that he will not admit that Bildad’s charges against him are true.<sup>95</sup>

I hold fast my **righteousness** and will not let it go.

My heart does not reproach any of my days.

(27:6—NASU, NKJV, TNK, ESV, CSB, NET, NIV)<sup>96</sup>

בְּצַדִּיקוֹתַי הִחַזְקוֹתַי וְלֹא אֶרְפֶּה לֹא־יִחַרְרַף לְבָבִי מִיָּמַי:

צדקה makes its first appearance in Job’s final speech or set of speeches that appear to be addressed to all three friends (chapt. 26 comprises his final response to Bildad). The feminine noun, according to Johnson, “often goes a step further than *sedeq* in concretizing the underlying

<sup>89</sup> Marvin H. Pope, *Job: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, Anchor Bible 15 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1973), 182.

<sup>90</sup> LXX: μή μοι εἴη δίκαιους ὑμᾶς ἀποφῆναι ἕως ἂν ἀποθάνω οὐ γὰρ ἀπαλλάξω μου τὴν ἀκακίαν.

<sup>91</sup> Habel, *Job*, 380.

<sup>92</sup> David J. A. Clines, *Job 21–37*, Word Biblical Commentary 18A (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), 642.

<sup>93</sup> Habel, *Job*, 380.

<sup>94</sup> Johnson, “צדק,” 250.

<sup>95</sup> Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1/226.

<sup>96</sup> LXX: δικαιοσύνη δὲ προσέχων οὐ μὴ προῶμαι οὐ γὰρ σύννοια ἐμαυτῷ ἄτοπα πράξας.

notion, possibly a result of its use, unlike *šedeq*, in the plural . . . in reference to actions actually manifesting righteousness.”<sup>97</sup> Thus the masculine noun tends to evoke “the notion of correctness and order” while the feminine noun “emphasizes action and activity rather than condition.”<sup>98</sup> Klassen also notes the distinction, identifying צַדִּיק with “righteous from above, directly worked by God,” while צַדִּיקָה “denotes a righteousness from below, one worked out in human relationship.”<sup>99</sup> A fascinating contrast arises in the feminine noun’s metaphorical usage, according to Johnson. Metaphorical biblical references appear to associate צַדִּיקָה with heavenly blessings (e.g., rain) but associate צַדִּיק with the fertility of the earth.<sup>100</sup> Koch, however, remains skeptical of any distinction between the two nouns.<sup>101</sup> Snaith likewise denies any difference in meaning, saying that “The choice is independent of date, and is a matter of style or caprice.”<sup>102</sup>

He may prepare *it*, but the **just** will wear *it*  
And the innocent will divide the silver. (27:17—NASU, NKJV)  
יְכִין וְצַדִּיק יִלְבַּשׁ וְזָכַר נָקִי יַחֲלֶק:

NJPS, ESV, HCSB, NET, and NIV all translate the word as “the righteous.”<sup>103</sup>

“He” here is the wicked man. Compare Proverbs 13:22 concerning the sinner’s wealth stored up for the righteous and Ecclesiastes 2:26 that specifies that such a transfer of wealth goes to the one who is good.

I put on **righteousness**, and it clothed me;  
My justice was like a robe and a turban.  
(29:14—NASU, NKJV, TNK. ESV, CSB, NET, NIV)<sup>104</sup>  
צַדִּיק לְבַשְׁתִּי וַיִּלְבַּשְׁנִי כְמוֹעֵיל וְצִנִּיף מִשְׁפָּטִי:

Job clothed himself with righteousness and it, in turn, clothed him. Hartley understands that that which clothed Job was righteous activity,<sup>105</sup> a reasonable conclusion based upon the context of chapters 27–31. Driver and Gray, however, interpret the second verb as “it filled or possessed me.”<sup>106</sup> Reimer indicts the NIV’s shortening of the statement by changing the second verb into the noun “my clothing” (viz., “I put on righteousness as my clothing; justice was my robe and my turban”). The NIV translators miss the grammatical implications of וַיִּלְבַּשְׁנִי and obscure the reciprocal relationship stated by the Hebrew.<sup>107</sup> With the exception of Job’s wisdom discourse in chapter 28, chapters 27–31 represent Job’s final defense. A high density of first person singulars characterize Job’s defense (chapt. 27, 19x; chapt. 29, 46x; chapt. 30, 54x; and

<sup>97</sup> Johnson, “צַדִּיק,” 253, 256.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 256.

<sup>99</sup> Klassen, “Job’s Thirst for Righteousness,” 47.

<sup>100</sup> Johnson, “צַדִּיק,” 253, 256, 257.

<sup>101</sup> Koch, “צַדִּיק *šdq*,” 1046–47.

<sup>102</sup> Snaith, *Distinctive Ideas*, 72.

<sup>103</sup> LXX: ταῦτα πάντα δίκαιοι περιποιήσονται τὰ δὲ χρήματα αὐτοῦ ἀληθινοὶ καθέξουσιν.

<sup>104</sup> LXX: δικαιοσύνην δὲ ἐνεδεδύκειν ἡμφιασάμην δὲ κρίμα ἴσα διπλοῖδι.

<sup>105</sup> Hartley, *Job*, 391. Cp. 8:22; 40:10; Isa 59:17; Ps 132:9, 16, 18; cf. Isa 11:5.

<sup>106</sup> Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1/249.

<sup>107</sup> Reimer, “צַדִּיק,” 756.

chapt. 31, 77x). With such a flurry of “I . . . I . . . I” and “my . . . my . . . my,” Elihu probably was not alone in his anger (32:2–3). When he recites Job’s words back at him in 33:9–11, the first person appears seven times.

Let Him weigh me with **accurate** scales,  
And let God know my integrity. (31:6—NASU, HCSB)  
יִשְׁקַלְנִי בְּמֵאזְנֵי צֶדֶק וַיִּדַע אֱלֹהִים תְּמִתִּי:

NJPS uses “righteousness”;<sup>108</sup> ESV, “just”; and, NKJV, NET, and NIV employ “honest.” Job’s final use of צֶדֶק is paronomastic or idiomatic, rather than a straightforward forensic meaning. In essence, Job asks God to judge him on the basis of the long list of righteous deeds recorded in chapters 27–31.

### Elihu’s Speeches—33:12, 26, 32; 34:5, 17; 35:2, 7, 8; 36:3, 7; 37:23

Behold, let me tell you, you are not **right** in this,  
For God is greater than man.  
(33:12—NASU, NIV, ESV, NJPS, NET)  
הֲיִזְאֵת לֹא־צֶדֶקְתָּ אֲנִי כִּי־יִרְבֶּה אֱלֹהִים מֵאֲנוֹשׁ:

NKJV uses “righteous”<sup>109</sup> and HCSB translates the phrase as “you are wrong.” According to Reimer, “you are not right” could refer to Job (1) not being correct, (2) not out of line (justified), or (3) not clearing his name (vindication).<sup>110</sup>

Then he will pray to God, and He will accept him,  
That he may see His face with joy,  
And He may restore His **righteousness** to man.  
(33:26—NASU, NKJV, TNK, ESV, CSB, NET)  
יֵעֲתֶר אֶל־אֱלֹהִים וַיִּרְצֶהוּ וַיִּירָא פָּנָיו בְּתִרְוַעָה וַיָּשָׁב לְאֲנוֹשׁ צֶדֶקְתּוֹ:

NIV translates as “his righteous state.”<sup>111</sup>

In his discussion of 33:26, Hartley concludes that it means that “God accepts him as an upright and blameless person.”<sup>112</sup> After stating that in the OT forgiveness never completes the process, Payne argues that Elihu refers to justification:

But God did, as it were, “on credit” restore to men their righteousness (Job 33:26): that is, the Old Testament, as surely the New, proclaims the blessing of justification, that follows upon a man’s commitment to God in saving faith. Even in the earliest period of revelation, Scripture thus comments on God’s grace toward Noah (Gen. 6:8) and then records the latter as a “righteous” individual (v. 9). . . . The force of

<sup>108</sup> LXX: ἰσταίη με ἄρα ἐν ζυγῷ **δικαίω** οἶδεν δὲ ὁ κύριος τὴν ἀκακίαν μου.

<sup>109</sup> LXX: πῶς γὰρ λέγεις **δικαίως** εἶμι καὶ οὐκ ἐπακήκοέν μου αἰώνιος γὰρ ἔστιν ὁ ἐπάνω βρωτῶν. Note that the Greek restructures the first half of the verse (lit., “For how can you say, ‘I am righteous?’”).

<sup>110</sup> Reimer, “צֶדֶק,” 756.

<sup>111</sup> LXX: εὐξάμενος δὲ πρὸς κύριον καὶ δεκτὰ αὐτῷ ἔσται εἰσελεύσεται δὲ προσώπῳ καθαρῷ σὺν ἐξηγορίᾳ ἀποδώσει δὲ ἀνθρώποις **δικαιοσύνην**.

<sup>112</sup> Hartley, *Job*, 447.

justification is rather this: that as he yielded his life to God he was *declared* to be righteous in the eyes of Yahweh, the heavenly Judge. . . . But it is axiomatic that God in His righteousness can only declare to be righteous those who possess a legitimate claim to righteousness (cf. I Kings 8:32); He will never justify the wicked (Ex. 23:7). The saved sinner can therefore be “justified” only on the grounds of the substituted righteousness of Jesus Christ, the sinless suffering servant (Isa. 53:11).<sup>113</sup>

Isaiah 53:11 (יִשְׁבַּע בְּדַעְתּוֹ יִצְדִּיק צְדִיק עַבְדֵי לְרַבִּים וְעוֹנֹתָם הוּא יִסְבֵּל):  
 “As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see *it and* be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities,” NASU) provides the clearest OT example of salvific righteousness accomplished (or, declared) by Yahweh’s Righteous Servant. It is not that the OT does not teach about soteriological justification, but that the reader possesses no grounds to automatically attribute the identical concept to usages of the verb elsewhere in other periods of time.

Knight points out that the Hiphil form of צָדַק expresses the concept of putting man right and that the noun “consequently embraces the idea of ‘putting right’, or of ‘putting in the right’ one who in the first place is in the wrong, or else who is suffering, who is in need, or who in any other respect requires to be ‘saved’ and helped (cf. Isa. 45.8, where ‘salvation’ and ‘righteousness’ (AV) are equated).”<sup>114</sup> Isaiah 45:25 (בִּיהוָה יִצְדָּקוּ וְיִתְהַלְּלוּ כָּל־זֶרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל):  
 “In the LORD all the offspring of Israel Will be justified and will glory,” NASU) provides yet another example of what the exegete and theologian might understand as soteriological justification.

Here in Job 33:26 there is no Hiphil—the term is the feminine noun. However, the context is one that has soteriological, if not Messianic, implications.<sup>115</sup> Therefore, this text should be considered a potential reference to soteriological justification.

*Then if you have anything to say, answer me;  
 Speak, for I desire to **justify** you.  
 (33:32—NASU, NKJV, ESV, CSB, NET)<sup>116</sup>  
 אִם־יֹשֶׁמְלִין הִשִּׁיבֵנִי דְבַר כִּי־חִפְצָתִי צְדִיקָה:*

NJPS uses “vindicate” and NIV has “be cleared.”

No evidence exists contextually for denying the concept of vindication in this statement by Elihu.

For Job has said, 'I am **righteous**,  
 But God has taken away my right; (34:5—NASU, NKJV, CSB)<sup>117</sup>  
 כִּי־אָמַר אֵינִי צְדִיקָתִי וְאֵל הַסִּיר מִשְׁפָּטִי:

<sup>113</sup> J. Barton Payne, *The Theology of the Older Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962), 415. Payne traces a nine-stage development of the meaning of צָדַק in the OT; *ibid.*, 155–61.

<sup>114</sup> Knight, *Christian Theology*, 241.

<sup>115</sup> See William D. Barrick, “Messianic Implications in Elihu’s ‘Mediator Speech’ (Job 33:23–28)” (ETS Annual Meeting, Atlanta, 2003), 7–15.

<sup>116</sup> LXX: εἰ εἰσὶν λόγοι ἀποκρίθητί μοι λάλησον θέλω γὰρ δικαιωθῆναι σε.

<sup>117</sup> LXX: ὅτι εἶρηκεν Ἰωβ δίκαιός εἰμι ὁ κύριος ἀπήλλαξέν μου τὸ κρίμα.



NJPS uses “I am right,” while ESV has “I am in the right.” However, NET and NIV read “I am innocent.”

There is no real distinction to be made over the imperfect in 13:18 and the perfect here.<sup>118</sup> It seems natural enough for Elihu to convert Job’s original imperfect into a perfect when he cites his prior declaration, since is merely making a simple statement of fact. Elihu censured Job for saying, “I am in the right, and God has taken away my right” (34:5; see 9:15, 20; 27:2). As Payne explains, the first part of Job’s statement is correct, but the second part is not.<sup>119</sup> Elihu goes on to make his point: “far be it from God, that he should do wickedness, and from the Almighty, that he should do wrong” (v. 10). Elihu’s assessment is correct, for Job was indeed “wrong, temporarily, in his antagonistic attitude against his heavenly sovereign (32:2; 33:13; 35:2).”<sup>120</sup>

Davidson concludes that Job’s claim does not include sinlessness (cp. 13:26). Instead, “The righteousness of Old Testament saints is no more than what the New Testament calls a true heart, even when estimated at its highest.”<sup>121</sup>

Shall one who hates justice rule?  
And will you condemn the **righteous** mighty One, (34:17—NASU)  
הֲאֵף שׁוֹנֵא מִשְׁפָּט יִחְבֹּשׁ וְאִם-צְדִיק כְּבִיר תִּרְשִׁיעַ:

NKJV translates with “just,” while NJPS has “the Just” (cp. NIV, “just . . . One”); ESV reads “righteous,” while HCSB translates as “Righteous One” (cp. NET, “righteous One”).<sup>122</sup>

Do you think this is according to justice?  
Do you say, ‘My **righteousness** is more than God’s’?  
(35:2—NASU, NKJV)<sup>123</sup>  
הֲזֹאת חֲשֵׁבַת לְמִשְׁפָּט אֲמַרְתָּ צְדִיקי מֵאֵל:

NJPS reads “I am right against God,” while ESV and NET have “It is my right before God.” HCSB translates “I am righteous before God” and NIV, “I will be cleared by God.”

Hartley observes that “Elihu hears Job saying in these avowals, *I am more righteous than God*. While Job has not uttered these exact words, he has so fervently defended his innocence and so vigorously accused God of treating him unjustly that he seems to have claimed for himself a righteousness that surpasses God’s.”<sup>124</sup>

If you are **righteous**, what do you give to Him,  
Or what does He receive from your hand?  
(35:7—NASU, NKJV, TNK, ESV, CSB, NET, NIV)<sup>125</sup>

<sup>118</sup> Clines, *Job 21–37*, 769.

<sup>119</sup> J. Barton Payne, “Inspiration in the Words of Job,” in *The Law and the Prophets: Old Testament Studies Prepared in Honor of Oswald Thompson Allis*, ed. by John H. Skilton (n.p.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1974), 323.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Davidson, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 275.

<sup>122</sup> LXX: ἰδὲ σὺ τὸν μισοῦντα ἄνομα καὶ τὸν ὀλλύντα τοὺς ποιητοὺς ὄντα αἰώνιον δίκαιον.

<sup>123</sup> LXX: τί τοῦτο ἠγγήσω ἐν κρίσει σὺ τίς εἶ ὅτι εἶπας δίκαιός εἰμι ἔναντι κυρίου.

<sup>124</sup> Hartley, *Job*, 463.

<sup>125</sup> LXX: ἐπεὶ δὲ οὖν δίκαιος εἶ τί δώσεις αὐτῷ ἢ τί ἐκ χειρός σου λήψεται.

אַם־צְדָקָתָּ מִהַתְתִּין־לִי אוֹ מִה־מִיָּדָךְ יִקָּח:

The inference of Elihu’s hypothetical statement approximates that of 22:3 (see its treatment above).

Your wickedness is for a man like yourself,  
 And your **righteousness** is for a son of man.  
 (35:8—NASU, NKJV, TNK, ESV, CSB, NET, NIV)<sup>126</sup>  
 לְאִישׁ־כְּמוֹךָ רָשָׁעַךְ וּלְבֶן־אָדָם צְדָקָתְךָ:

Elihu seems to be speaking of righteous deeds establishing an ethical or moral character. The text does not display factors to be associated with vindication or justification (soteriological or otherwise).

I will fetch my knowledge from afar,  
 And I will ascribe **righteousness** to my Maker.  
 (36:3—NASU, NKJV, ESV, CSB, NET)<sup>127</sup>  
 אֲשָׂא דַעַי לְמִרְחֹק וְלִפְעֻלֵי אֶתֶן־צְדָקָה:

NJPS translates with “I will justify,” while NIV uses “I will ascribe justice.”

According to Clines, צָדַק נָתַן has same meaning as the Hiphil, “justify, declare in the right.”<sup>128</sup> Given the object of this justification, it obviously does not refer to soteriological justification. This reference is purely forensic.

He does not withdraw His eyes from the **righteous**;  
 But with kings on the throne He has seated them forever, and they are exalted.  
 (36:7—NASU, NKJV, TNK, ESV, CSB, NET, NIV)<sup>129</sup>  
 לֹא־יִנְרַע מִצְדִּיק עֵינָיו וְאֶת־מְלָכִים לְכַסֵּא וַיִּשְׁיבֵם לְנֹצֵחַ וַיִּנְבְּהוּ:

The employment of the adjective here has the same meaning contextually as 17:9 (viz., the moral meaning; see discussion above).

The Almighty—we cannot find Him;  
 He is exalted in power  
 And He will not do violence to justice and abundant **righteousness**.  
 (37:23—NASU, NJPS, ESV, HCSB, NET, NIV)<sup>130</sup>  
 שִׁדְי לֹא־מִצְאָנָהוּ שִׁנְי־אֶכֶח וּמִשְׁפָּט וְרֵב־צְדָקָה לֹא יַעֲנֶה:

<sup>126</sup> LXX: ἀνδρὶ τῷ ὁμοίῳ σου ἢ ἀσέβειά σου καὶ υἱῷ ἀνθρώπου ἢ δικαιοσύνη σου.

<sup>127</sup> LXX: ἀναλαβὼν τὴν ἐπιστήμην μου μακρὰν ἔργοις δέ μου δίκαια ἐρῶ.

<sup>128</sup> Clines, *Job 21–37*, 809.

<sup>129</sup> LXX: οὐκ ἀφελεῖ ἀπὸ δικαίου ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ καὶ μετὰ βασιλέων εἰς θρόνον καὶ καθιεῖ αὐτοὺς εἰς νεῖκος καὶ ὑψωθήσονται.

<sup>130</sup> LXX: καὶ οὐχ εὐρίσκομεν ἄλλον ὅμοιον τῇ ἰσχύϊ αὐτοῦ ὃ τὰ δίκαια κρίνων οὐκ οἶει ἐπακούειν αὐτόν.

NKJV uses “justice.” The translations diverge on the relationship of the final phrase (לֹא יַעֲנֶה). NASU makes it the main verb in the final clause, whereby “justice and abundant righteousness” become the objects (likewise, ESV, NET). NRSV takes only the latter as the object (“and abundant righteousness he will not violate”). Others, like NKJV (similarly, NJPS), take the final clause as a totally separate statement (“*He is excellent in power, In judgment and abundant justice; He does not oppress*”). HCSB and NIV take the accusatives as adverbial (“In His justice and righteousness, He will not oppress”). NLT makes the clause concessive (“but even though he is just and righteous, he does not destroy us”).

A variety of approaches characterize the treatment of the phrase וְרַב-צְדָקָה. Dhorme emends the vowels to produce וְרַב (“a master of justice”), creating a title for God.<sup>131</sup> Gordis translates it, “The man abounding in goodness, He does not torment.”<sup>132</sup> The parallel with שְׁנִיָּא, however, would argue for “great.”<sup>133</sup>

The feminine noun refers to righteous deeds (ethical and moral) against which God takes no judgmental action.

### God’s Speech(es)—40:8

Will you really annul My judgment?

Will you condemn Me that you may be **justified**? (NASU, NKJV)<sup>134</sup>

הֲאֵךְ תִּפְרֹּם מִשְׁפָּטִי תִרְשִׁיעֵנִי לְמַעַן תִּצְדִּיק:

NJPS and NET have “you may be right,” while ESV translates as “you may be in the right.” HCSB and NIV use “to justify yourself.”

Hartley sees in this text the exposure of Job’s error. He defends his innocence while “lashing out so vehemently at God because of his suffering.”<sup>135</sup> In other words, Job did not suffer because he had sinned, he ended up sinning because he was suffering. Job impugns “God’s just governance of the world.”<sup>136</sup> תִּפְרֹּם in this situation means to “disallow” or to “make void.”<sup>137</sup>

The ultimate witness to confirm Elihu’s accusation is God Himself. In 40:8 God exposes Job to a stinging interrogation: “Will you even put me in the wrong? Will you condemn me that you may be in the right?” Apparently, Job had turned a corner somewhere along the way. He is no longer maintaining the high moral and spiritual ground that he had occupied at the beginning of his suffering. Job’s words are proof of his wrong thinking. His attitude had degenerated through his interminable suffering. Job did not suffer because he had sinned, he ended up sinning because of his suffering.<sup>138</sup> In essence, Job “charged God with acting unjustly. For a mortal to

<sup>131</sup> Dhorme, *Job*, 573.

<sup>132</sup> Robert Gordis, *The Book of Job: Commentary, New Translation, and Special Studies* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1978), 410. In the notes he translates it as “one abounding in righteousness”; *ibid.*, 434.

<sup>133</sup> Hartley, *Job*, 482 fn. 2.

<sup>134</sup> LXX: μὴ ἀποποιού μου τὸ κρίμα οἷε δέ με ἄλλως σοι κεχρηματικένας ἢ ἵνα ἀναφανῆς δίκαιος.

<sup>135</sup> Hartley, *Job*, 519.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1/349.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. Pope, *Job*, 318: “Job had indeed denied divine justice in his own case and even in the world at large; cf., e.g., ix 22. His outbursts were considered blasphemous by the rabbis, but excusable under the circumstances ... (TB, Baba Bathra 16b).”

presume himself guiltless and to *impugn* God's just governance of the world approaches the sin of presumptuous pride."<sup>139</sup> According to Payne, when Job said, "I retract' (42:6). By this he meant, fundamentally, the faulty evaluations he had made of God (vs. 5). . . . Job had gotten carried away by his own rhetoric."<sup>140</sup> In 8:3 Bildad asks Job, "Does God pervert [יַעֲרֹת] justice? Or does the Almighty pervert [יַעֲרֹת] the right?" Job utilizes the same verb in 19:6 to accuse God of injustice: "know then that God has put me in the wrong [יַעֲרֹתֵנִי] and closed his net about me." Elihu chooses the same verb in 34:12 to declare, "Of a truth, God will not do wickedly, and the Almighty will not pervert [לֹא-יַעֲרֹת] justice." The use of the same Hebrew verb in these three texts is a subtle, but powerful, confirmation of Job's charge against God.<sup>141</sup>

Wilson believes that God's question to Job merely point out the incompleteness and inconsistency of traditional retributive theology. "The justice of God fails only if one accepts retributive theology as defining the nature of the world. Job's own situation strongly establishes that this is *not* the case."<sup>142</sup> Oehler disagrees with an absence of retributive theology in Job. He points out that it is "expressly confirmed by the issue, viz. the abundant compensation of the hero of the book for his sufferings."<sup>143</sup> He does admit, nonetheless, that sin does not cause all suffering.<sup>144</sup>

Crenshaw also understands 40:8 to be a ringing rebuke of Job's arrogance. "God rebukes Job for justifying himself at God's expense, inasmuch as Job's vindication could only come as the result of God's pleading 'Guilty' to the charge of perverting justice. In self-defense God challenges Job to conquer pride within those who thought too highly of themselves and to overthrow the wicked."<sup>145</sup> Indeed, "By the nature of the case, God supplied the definitive word, which crushed Job's Titanism like a caterpillar under the wheels of a steamroller."<sup>146</sup>

Some commentators, like Whedbee, approach the text from a different perspective, viewing it as some sort of divine comedy:

On still another level I would argue that the irony and incongruity of the Yahweh speeches are best interpreted as elements in a comic vision. As interpreters have often noted, Yahweh's answer to Job is NO answer—at least it is not an unambiguous answer. Incongruity is involved, however one chooses finally to deal with that incongruity. Professor Good seems to be correct in his contention that Yahweh decisively shifts the issue from the question of justice—Job's question—to the question of order (Good, 1973:480). That order involves justice is clearly a part of the Hebraic heritage, but it is an order that transcends narrow human views of justice and comprehends all creation. The issue is pinpointed in Job 40:8, which I believe has been correctly translated by Good: "Would you even annul my order (*mišpat*), treat

<sup>139</sup> Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 519.

<sup>140</sup> Payne, "Inspiration in the Words of Job," 325–26. Thus, Job withdrew "his avowal of innocence" (Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 537).

<sup>141</sup> Payne, "Inspiration in the Words of Job," 326.

<sup>142</sup> Wilson, *Job*, 453.

<sup>143</sup> Gustav Friedrich Oehler, *Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. by George E. Day (1873; reprint, Klock & Klock Christian Publishers, 1978), 561. Clines contends that God's own speeches remain silent about retribution, indicating that it ought not be the major argument in the situation. However, that silence also would imply that the retributive principle "is not entirely wrong, either"; Clines, *Job 1–20*, xlv.

<sup>144</sup> Oehler, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 561.

<sup>145</sup> James L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 111.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

me as wicked so you can be innocent?” (1973:479). Is it the case, Good asks, that either Job or God must be wicked and the other innocent? The answer in Good’s opinion is “no!” (1973:480). “What God demonstrates,” argues Good, “is that moral presumptions are not the way the world is handled, that the question of order is another one entirely from the one Job put” (1973:481). Thus if one examines carefully Job’s speeches the trial metaphor involving guilt and innocence becomes dominant; but the Yahweh speeches move more dominantly in the mythological metaphors of creation.<sup>147</sup>

Klassen expresses his opinion that God’s rhetorical question in 40:8 displays grace and gentleness.<sup>148</sup> That makes a fitting reminder with which to close the discussion of this significant text.

### The Narrator—32:1, 2

Then these three men ceased answering Job, because he was **righteous** in his own eyes.

(32:1—NASU, NKJV, ESV, CSB, NET, NIV)<sup>149</sup>

וַיִּשְׁבְּתוּ שְׁלֹשֶׁת הָאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה מֵעֲנֹת אֶת־אִיּוֹב כִּי הוּא צַדִּיק בְּעֵינָיו: פ

NJPS translates it as “he considered himself right.”

But the anger of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram burned; against Job his anger burned because he **justified** himself before God.

(32:2—NASU, NKJV, ESV, CSB, NET, NIV)<sup>150</sup>

וַיִּחַר אֵף אֱלִיהוּ בֶן־בְּרַכְאֵל הַבּוּזִי מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת רָם בְּאִיּוֹב חָרָה אַפּוֹ עַל־צַדִּיקוֹ נִפְשׁוּ מֵאֱלֹהִים:

NJPS uses “he thought himself right against God.”

According to Clines, the Piel possesses the same declarative force as the Hiphil (cp. 33:32; Jer 3:11; Ezek 16:51–52).<sup>151</sup> Wilson takes the *min* as a comparative<sup>152</sup> and Clines translates, “rather than.”<sup>153</sup> See the discussion of 4:17, above.

Hartley takes the narrator’s words as provision of additional insight regarding the character and thinking of Elihu. “Elihu claims divine inspiration as the source of his wisdom (32:18–22). Enlightened by God’s Spirit, he offers special insight into the way God instructs people. Thus he functions as God’s forerunner both by his position between Job’s avowal of innocence and Yahweh’s answer and by the content of his speeches.”<sup>154</sup>

According to Reimer, in the narrator’s and Elihu’s use of צַדִּיק the meaning appears to be “generally that of vindicate, justify, or prove to be right.”<sup>155</sup> Dhorme, also sees a forensic value

<sup>147</sup> William Whedbee, “The Comedy of Job,” in *Studies in the Book of Job*, ed. by David A. Robertson and Robert Polzin, Semeia 7 (Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1977), 24.

<sup>148</sup> Klassen, “Job’s Thirst for Righteousness,” 49.

<sup>149</sup> LXX: ἡσύχασαν δὲ καὶ οἱ τρεῖς φίλοι αὐτοῦ ἔτι ἀντειπεῖν Ἰωβ ἦν γὰρ Ἰωβ δίκαιος ἐναντίον αὐτῶν.

<sup>150</sup> LXX: ὠργίσθη δὲ Ἐλιούς ὁ τοῦ Βαραχίηλ ὁ Βουζίτης ἐκ τῆς συγγενείας Ραμ τῆς Αυσίτιδος χώρας ὠργίσθη δὲ τῷ Ἰωβ σφόδρα διότι ἀπέφηεν ἑαυτὸν δίκαιον ἐναντίον κυρίου.

<sup>151</sup> Clines, *Job 21–37*, 683.

<sup>152</sup> Wilson, *Job*, 361.

<sup>153</sup> Clines, *Job 21–37*, 683.

<sup>154</sup> Hartley, *Job*, 427.

<sup>155</sup> Reimer, “צַדִּיק,” 756.

to the use of the term in this context (as in other texts): “The connotation ‘justify’ will be assigned to the *pi’el* in 33:32 (cf. the *hiph’il* in 27:5). Of course in this context it is a question of justifying one’s self by one’s arguments as an accused person would do before his judge.”<sup>156</sup> The narrator represents Elihu as refusing to tolerate any denigration of God’s righteousness.<sup>157</sup> Johnson classifies the reference here and in 33:32 with what he terms “situational justification or righteousness.”<sup>158</sup>

The use of the comparative **יָ** following **צַדִּיק** presents a situation in which the obvious superiority of God will defeat any hope a man has of surpassing Him in righteousness. Johnson observes that “If Job is serious about winning this competition, he must also be prepared to maintain and renew all of creation.”<sup>159</sup> He also identifies a potential parallel in Luke 18:11–14. In this NT text, the despised tax collector beat his breast in humility and pled for mercy. He returned to his home more justified than the Pharisee who said he was not like sinners and identified his righteous works (fasting and tithing, specifically).<sup>160</sup>

### Conclusion

The examination of the usages of **צַדִּיק** in the Book of Job resulted in the following identifications of meaning:

- Forensic (“vindication” or “innocent”): 8:3; 9:2, 15, 20; 10:15; 11:2; 12:4; 13:18; 22:19; 27:5, 17; 32:1, 2; 33:12, 32; 34:5; 35:2(?); 36:3; 40:8
- Moral/Ethical (“righteous,” “right”; or “pure”): 4:17; 6:29; 8:6; 15:14; 17:9; 22:3; 25:4; 27:6; 29:14; 31:6; 34:17; 35:2(?), 7, 8; 36:7; 37:23
- Soteriological (“justification”): 33:26<sup>161</sup>

The forensic sense occurs in 18 (possibly 19) texts, the moral/ethical in 15 (possibly 16) texts, and the soteriological in but one.<sup>162</sup> The use of the masculine noun in 35:2 is difficult and could swing either way. As far as any soteriological meaning is concerned, the only text with any such potential is 33:26, in Elihu’s discourse about a possible Messianic person. Although the tone of the book as a whole is definitely forensic (a legal context or debate), the moral and ethical factors intrude constantly as the basis for a declaration of innocence. Those two aspects of **צַדִּיק** harmonize well in the book.

A separate study will be necessary to examine the impact of these concepts on the NT writers. It seems reasonable, however, to make the following testable assumptions:

- NT writers from the very start were aware of the righteous character of Job (cf. Jas 5:11).
- NT writers could cite from the Book of Job (cf. 1 Cor 3:19 and Job 5:13).

<sup>156</sup> Dhorme, *Job*, 473.

<sup>157</sup> Hartley, *Job*, 430.

<sup>158</sup> Johnson, “**צַדִּיק**,” 250.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 259.

<sup>160</sup> Compare Job’s list of righteous deeds as discussed under 29:14 above.

<sup>161</sup> How involved is the concept of gift in the soteriological meaning of **צַדִּיק**? The fact that Job depends on what God says or does seems to demonstrate the presence of the concept of gift. God has the authority to grant to Job what Job cannot accomplish for himself.

<sup>162</sup> Cp. Ralph Rogers Hawthorne, “Jobine Theology: Part 4,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 101, no. 404 (Oct 1944): 429, who divides the references as follows: God’s righteousness (33:23, 26; 35:2, 7; 36:3, 7; 40:8) and man’s righteousness (4:17; 6:29; 8:6; 9:15; 10:15; 15:14; 17:9; 22:3, 19; 23:7; 27:6; 29:14; 32:1; 34:5).

- The OT informed NT writers on the nature of righteousness and how it could be obtained.
- The Book of Job presented NT writers with a detailed comparison of righteous deeds (ethical and moral actions) with the righteousness of God.
- The Book of Job offered NT writers an example of forensic justification and the standards of evidence demanded by a supremely righteous God.
- The Book of Job presents at least one passage saturated with terminology and concepts utilized by NT writers (33:23–28), including a possibility of soteriological justification.
- In addition, the Book of Job argues the necessity of an intermediary (mediator) to intercede with God.<sup>163</sup>

Intertextual examination of this topic possesses the potential of demonstrating references back to Job in both OT and NT texts. Hopefully, others will take up the challenge and pursue such examinations to provide us with a theological analysis of the doctrine of justification.

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<sup>163</sup> Cf. John E. Hartley, “Job: Theology of,” in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 5 vols., ed. by Willem A. VanGemeren, 4:780–96 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), 786.