

Young Elihu's First Speech (c. 2200 BC)

Job 32–33

Introduction of Elihu

- 32:1 Then these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.
 2 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.
 3 And his anger burned against his three friends because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.
 4 Now Elihu had waited to speak to Job because they were years older than he.
 5 And when Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of the three men his anger burned.

Elihu Explains Why He Remained Silent Until Now

- 6 So Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite spoke out and said,
- “I am young in years and you are old;
 Therefore I was shy and afraid to tell you what I think.
- 7 “I thought age should speak,
 And increased years should teach wisdom.
- 8 “But it is a spirit in man,
 And the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding.
- 9 “The abundant *in years* may not be wise,
 Nor may elders understand justice.

Elihu Rebukes Job's Three Friends

- 10 “So I say, ‘Listen to me,
 I too will tell what I think.’
- 11 “Behold, I waited for your words,
 I listened to your reasonings,
 While you pondered what to say.
- 12 “I even paid close attention to you;
 Indeed, there was no one who refuted Job,
 Not one of you who answered his words.
- 13 “Do not say, ‘We have found wisdom;
 God will rout him, not man.’
- 14 “For he has not arranged *his* words against me,
 Nor will I reply to him with your arguments.
- 15 “They are dismayed, they no longer answer;
 Words have failed them.
- 16 “Shall I wait, because they do not speak,
 Because they stop *and* no longer answer?

Elihu's Compulsion to Speak

- 17 “I too will answer my share,
 I also will tell my opinion.
- 18 “For I am full of words;
 The spirit within me constrains me.
- 19 “Behold, my belly is like unvented wine,
 Like new wineskins it is about to burst.
- 20 “Let me speak that I may get relief;
 Let me open my lips and answer.
- 21 “Let me now be partial to no one,
 Nor flatter *any* man.
- 22 “For I do not know how to flatter,
Else my Maker would soon take me away.

Elihu Tells Job to Listen

- 33:1 “However now, Job, please hear my speech,
 And listen to all my words.
- 2 “Behold now, I open my mouth,

My tongue in my mouth speaks.

- 3 “My words are *from* the uprightness of my heart,
And my lips speak knowledge sincerely.
4 “The Spirit of God has made me,
And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.
5 “Refute me if you can;
Array yourselves before me, take your stand.
6 “Behold, I belong to God like you;
I too have been formed out of the clay.
7 “Behold, no fear of me should terrify you,
Nor should my pressure weigh heavily on you.

Elihu’s Perception of Job’s Statements

- 8 “Surely you have spoken in my hearing,
And I have heard the sound of *your* words:
9 ‘I am pure, without transgression;
I am innocent and there is no guilt in me.
10 ‘Behold, He invents pretexts against me;
He counts me as His enemy.
11 ‘He puts my feet in the stocks;
He watches all my paths.’

Elihu’s Answer—God Disciplines Men in Various Ways

- 12 “Behold, let me tell you, you are not right in this,
For God is greater than man.
13 “Why do you complain against Him
That He does not give an account of all His doings?
14 “Indeed God speaks once,
Or twice, *yet* no one notices it.

God Disciplines Men through Dreams

- 15 “In a dream, a vision of the night,
When sound sleep falls on men,
While they slumber in their beds,
16 Then He opens the ears of men,
And seals their instruction,
17 That He may turn man aside *from his* conduct,
And keep man from pride;
18 He keeps back his soul from the pit,
And his life from passing over into Sheol.

God Disciplines Men through Pain and Illness

- 19 “Man is also chastened with pain on his bed,
And with unceasing complaint in his bones;
20 So that his life loathes bread,
And his soul favorite food.
21 “His flesh wastes away from sight,
And his bones which were not seen stick out.
22 “Then his soul draws near to the pit,
And his life to those who bring death.

Elihu Believes There is a Special Angel (lit. “Messenger”) Who Acts as Mediator for the Sinner

- 23 “If there is an angel *as* mediator for him,
One out of a thousand,
To remind a man what is right for him,
24 Then let him be gracious to him, and say,
‘Deliver him from going down to the pit,
I have found a ransom’;

- 25 Let his flesh become fresher than in youth,
Let him return to the days of his youthful vigor;

God Accepts Those Who Repent of Their Sin

- 26 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.
27 “He will sing to men and say,
‘I have sinned and perverted what is right,
And it is not proper for me.
28 ‘He has redeemed my soul from going to the pit,
And my life shall see the light.’
29 “Behold, God does all these oftentimes with men,
30 To bring back his soul from the pit,
That he may be enlightened with the light of life.

Elihu Tells Job to Speak if He Must or Be Silent and Listen to Wisdom

- 31 “Pay attention, O Job, listen to me;
Keep silent, and let me speak.
32 “*Then* if you have anything to say, answer me;
Speak, for I desire to justify you.
33 “If not, listen to me;
Keep silent, and I will teach you wisdom.”

Young Elihu’s Second Speech (c. 2200 BC)

Job 34

Job Remains Silent and Elihu Continues

- 1 Then Elihu continued and said,
2 “Hear my words, you wise men,
And listen to me, you who know.
3 “For the ear tests words
As the palate tastes food.
4 “Let us choose for ourselves what is right;
Let us know among ourselves what is good.

Elihu Twists Job’s Words

- 5 “For Job has said, ‘I am righteous,
But God has taken away my right;
6 Should I lie concerning my right?
My wound is incurable, *though I am* without transgression.’
7 “What man is like Job,
Who drinks up derision like water,
8 Who goes in company with the workers of iniquity,
And walks with wicked men?
9 “For he has said, ‘It profits a man nothing
When he is pleased with God.’

Elihu’s Premise—God Rules Justly and Repays Men According to Their Deeds

- 10 “Therefore, listen to me, you men of understanding.
Far be it from God to do wickedness,
And from the Almighty to do wrong.
11 “For He pays a man according to his work,
And makes him find it according to his way.
12 “Surely, God will not act wickedly,
And the Almighty will not pervert justice.
13 “Who gave Him authority over the earth?

And who has laid *on Him* the whole world?

- 14 “If He should determine to do so,
If He should gather to Himself His spirit and His breath,
15 All flesh would perish together,
And man would return to dust.

Defense of the Premise

- 16 “But if *you have* understanding, hear this;
Listen to the sound of my words.
17 “Shall one who hates justice rule?
And will you condemn the righteous mighty One,
18 Who says to a king, ‘Worthless one,’
To nobles, ‘Wicked ones’;
19 Who shows no partiality to princes
Nor regards the rich above the poor,
For they all are the work of His hands?
20 “In a moment they die, and at midnight
People are shaken and pass away,
And the mighty are taken away without a hand.
21 “For His eyes are upon the ways of a man,
And He sees all his steps.
22 “There is no darkness or deep shadow
Where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.
23 “For He does not *need to* consider a man further,
That he should go before God in judgment.
24 “He breaks in pieces mighty men without inquiry,
And sets others in their place.
25 “Therefore He knows their works,
And He overthrows *them* in the night,
And they are crushed.
26 “He strikes them like the wicked
In a public place,
27 Because they turned aside from following Him,
And had no regard for any of His ways;
28 So that they caused the cry of the poor to come to Him,
And that He might hear the cry of the afflicted—
29 When He keeps quiet, who then can condemn?
And when He hides His face, who then can behold Him,
That is, in regard to both nation and man?—
30 So that godless men would not rule
Nor be snares of the people.

Elihu Challenges Job to Repent

- 31 “For has anyone said to God,
‘I have borne *chastisement*;
I will not offend *anymore*;
32 Teach me what I do not see;
If I have done iniquity,
I will not do it again’?
33 “Shall He recompense on your terms, because you have rejected *it*?
For you must choose, and not I;
Therefore declare what you know.

Elihu Condemns Job When He Does Not

- 34 “Men of understanding will say to me,
And a wise man who hears me,
35 ‘Job speaks without knowledge,
And his words are without wisdom.

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| 36 | 'Job ought to be tried to the limit,
Because he answers like wicked men. |
| 37 | 'For he adds rebellion to his sin;
He claps his hands among us,
And multiplies his words against God.'" |

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