

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

Job 35

Elihu Again Twists Job's Words

1 Then Elihu answered:

- 2 "Do you think this to be just:
when you say, 'My right before God.'
3 But you say, 'What will it profit you,'
and, 'What do I gain by not sinning?'

Elihu's Answer—Nothing You Do Obligates God in Any Way

- 4 I will reply to you,
and to your friends with you.
5 Gaze at the heavens and see;
consider the clouds, which are higher than you!
6 If you sin, how does it affect God?
If your transgressions are many,
what does it do to him?
7 If you are righteous, what do you give to God,
or what does he receive from your hand?
8 Your wickedness affects only a person like yourself,
and your righteousness only other people.

Elihu's Answer—God Does Not Hear You Because He Does Not Hear the Wicked

- 9 "People cry out
because of the excess of oppression;
they cry out for help
because of the power of the mighty.
10 But no one says, 'Where is God, my Creator,
who gives songs in the night,
11 who teaches us more than the wild animals of the earth,
and makes us wiser than the birds of the sky?'
12 Then they cry out—but he does not answer—
because of the arrogance of the wicked.
13 Surely it is an empty cry—God does not hear it;
the Almighty does not take notice of it.
14 How much less, then,
when you say that you do not perceive him,
that the case is before him
and you are waiting for him!
15 And further, when you say
that his anger does not punish,
and that he does not know transgression!

Elihu Concludes With a Harsh Judgment against Job

- 16 So Job opens his mouth to no purpose;
without knowledge he multiplies words."

Young Elihu's Fourth and Final Speech (c. 2200 BC)

Job 36–37

Elihu Claims to Have Perfect Knowledge

36:1 Elihu said further:

- 2 "Be patient with me a little longer
and I will instruct you,
for I still have words to speak on God's behalf.

- 3 With my knowledge I will speak comprehensively,
and to my Creator I will ascribe righteousness.
- 4 For in truth, my words are not false;
it is one complete in knowledge
who is with you.

Elihu's Central Message—God Uses Suffering to Turn People from Their Sin

- 5 Indeed, God is mighty; and he does not despise people,
he is mighty, and firm in his intent.
- 6 He does not allow the wicked to live,
but he gives justice to the poor.
- 7 He does not take his eyes off the righteous;
but with kings on the throne
he seats the righteous and exalts them forever.
- 8 But if they are bound in chains,
and held captive by the cords of affliction,
9 then he reveals to them what they have done,
and their transgressions,
that they were behaving proudly.
- 10 And he reveals this for correction,
and says that they must turn from evil.
- 11 If they obey and serve him,
they live out their days in prosperity
and their years in pleasantness.
- 12 But if they refuse to listen,
they pass over the river of death,
and expire without knowledge.
- 13 The godless at heart nourish anger,
they do not cry out even when he binds them.
- 14 They die in their youth,
and their life ends among the male cultic prostitutes.
- 15 He delivers the afflicted by their afflictions,
he reveals himself to them by their suffering.

Elihu Again Urges Job to Repent

- 16 And surely, he drew you from the mouth of distress,
to a wide place, unrestricted,
and to the comfort of your table
filled with rich food.
- 17 But now you are preoccupied with the judgment due the wicked,
judgment and justice take hold of you.
- 18 Be careful that no one entices you with riches;
do not let a large bribe turn you aside.
- 19 Would your wealth sustain you,
so that you would not be in distress,
even all your mighty efforts?
- 20 Do not long for the cover of night
to drag people away from their homes.
- 21 Take heed, do not turn to evil,
for because of this you have been tested by affliction.

Elihu's Description of God's Power—The Thunderstorm

- 22 Indeed, God is exalted in his power;
who is a teacher like him?
- 23 Who has prescribed his ways for him?
Or said to him, 'You have done what is wicked'?
- 24 Remember to extol his work,
which people have praised in song.

- 25 All humanity has seen it;
people gaze on it from afar.
- 26 “Yes, God is great—beyond our knowledge!
The number of his years is unsearchable.
- 27 He draws up drops of water;
they distill the rain into its mist,
- 28 which the clouds pour down
and shower on humankind abundantly.
- 29 Who can understand the spreading of the clouds,
the thunderings of his pavilion?
- 30 See how he scattered his lightning about him;
he has covered the depths of the sea.
- 31 It is by these that he judges the nations
and supplies food in abundance.
- 32 With his hands he covers the lightning,
and directs it against its target.
- 33 His thunder announces the coming storm,
the cattle also, concerning the storm’s approach.

Elihu’s Description of God’s Power—The Icy Blasts of Winter

- 37:1 At this also my heart pounds
and leaps from its place.
- 2 Listen carefully to the thunder of his voice,
to the rumbling that proceeds from his mouth.
- 3 Under the whole heaven he lets it go,
even his lightning to the far corners of the earth.
- 4 After that a voice roars;
he thunders with an exalted voice,
and he does not hold back his lightning bolts
when his voice is heard.
- 5 God thunders with his voice in marvelous ways;
he does great things beyond our understanding.
- 6 For to the snow he says, ‘Fall to earth,’
and to the torrential rains, ‘Pour down.’
- 7 He causes everyone to stop working,
so that all people may know his work.
- 8 The wild animals go to their lairs,
and in their dens they remain.
- 9 A tempest blows out from its chamber,
icy cold from the driving winds.
- 10 The breath of God produces ice,
and the breadth of the waters freeze solid.
- 11 He loads the clouds with moisture;
he scatters his lightning through the clouds.
- 12 The clouds go round in circles,
wheeling about according to his plans,
to carry out all that he commands them
over the face of the whole inhabited world.
- 13 Whether it is for punishment for his land,
or whether it is for mercy,
he causes it to find its mark.

Elihu’s Rebuke—God’s Greatness Precludes Any Attempt by Job to Present His Case

- 14 “Pay attention to this, Job!
Stand still and consider the wonders God works.
- 15 Do you know how God commands them,
how he makes lightning flash in his storm cloud?
- 16 Do you know about the balancing of the clouds,

that wondrous activity of him who is perfect in knowledge?

- 17 You, whose garments are hot
when the earth is still because of the south wind,
18 will you, with him, spread out the clouds,
solid as a mirror of molten metal?
19 Tell us what we should say to him.
We cannot prepare a case because of the darkness.
20 Should he be informed that I want to speak?
If a man speaks, surely he would be swallowed up!

Elihu's Concluding Description of God's Greatness—The Brilliance of the Sun After the Storm

- 21 But now, the sun cannot be looked at—
it is bright in the skies—
after a wind passed and swept the clouds away.
22 From the north he comes in golden splendor;
around God is awesome majesty.
23 As for the Almighty, we cannot attain to him!
He is great in power,
but justice and abundant righteousness he does not oppress.
24 Therefore people fear him,
for he does not regard all the wise in heart."

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