

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

Job 32–33

Introduction of Elihu

32:1 So these three men refused to answer Job further, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

2 Then Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, became very angry. He was angry with Job for justifying himself rather than God.

3 With Job's three friends he was also angry, because they could not find an answer, and so declared Job guilty.

4 Now Elihu had waited before speaking to Job, because the others were older than he was.

5 But when Elihu saw that the three men had no further reply, he became very angry.

Elihu Explains Why He Remained Silent Until Now

6 So Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite spoke up:

“I am young, but you are elderly;
that is why I was fearful,
and afraid to explain to you what I know.

7 I said to myself, ‘Age should speak,
and length of years should make wisdom known.’

8 But it is a spirit in people,
the breath of the Almighty,
that makes them understand.

9 It is not the aged who are wise,
nor old men who understand what is right.

Elihu Rebukes Job's Three Friends

10 Therefore I say, ‘Listen to me.
I, even I, will explain what I know.’

11 Look, I waited for you to speak;
I listened closely to your wise thoughts, while you were searching for words.

12 Now I was paying you close attention,
yet there was no one proving Job wrong,
not one of you was answering his statements!

13 So do not say, ‘We have found wisdom!
God will refute him, not man!’

14 Job has not directed his words to me,
and so I will not reply to him with your arguments.

15 “They are dismayed and cannot answer any more;
they have nothing left to say.

16 And I have waited. But because they do not speak,
because they stand there and answer no more,

Elihu's Compulsion to Speak

17 I too will answer my part,
I too will explain what I know.

18 For I am full of words,
and the spirit within me constrains me.

19 Inside I am like wine which has no outlet,
like new wineskins ready to burst!

20 I will speak, so that I may find relief;
I will open my lips, so that I may answer.

21 I will not show partiality to anyone,
nor will I confer a title on any man.

22 for I do not know how to give honorary titles,
if I did, my Creator would quickly do away with me.

Elihu Tells Job to Listen

33:1 “But now, O Job, listen to my words,
and hear everything I have to say!

- 2 See now, I have opened my mouth;
my tongue in my mouth has spoken.
- 3 My words come from the uprightness of my heart,
and my lips will utter knowledge sincerely.
- 4 The Spirit of God has made me,
and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.
- 5 Reply to me, if you can;
set your arguments in order before me
and take your stand!
- 6 Look, I am just like you in relation to God;
I too have been molded from clay.
- 7 Therefore no fear of me should terrify you,
nor should my pressure be heavy on you.

Elihu's Perception of Job's Statements

- 8 "Indeed, you have said in my hearing
(I heard the sound of the words!):
- 9 'I am pure, without transgression;
I am clean and have no iniquity.
- 10 Yet God finds occasions with me;
he regards me as his enemy!
- 11 He puts my feet in shackles;
he watches closely all my paths.'

Elihu's Answer—God Disciplines Men in Various Ways

- 12 Now in this, you are not right—I answer you,
for God is greater than a human being.
- 13 Why do you contend against him,
that he does not answer all a person's words?
- 14 "For God speaks, the first time in one way,
the second time in another,
though a person does not perceive it.

God Disciplines Men through Dreams

- 15 In a dream, a night vision,
when deep sleep falls on people
as they sleep in their beds.
- 16 Then he gives a revelation to people,
and terrifies them with warnings,
to turn a person from his sin,
and to cover a person's pride.
- 18 He spares a person's life from corruption,
his very life from crossing over the river.

God Disciplines Men through Pain and Illness

- 19 Or a person is chastened by pain on his bed,
and with the continual strife of his bones,
so that his life loathes food,
and his soul rejects appetizing fare.
- 21 His flesh wastes away from sight,
and his bones, which were not seen,
are easily visible.
- 22 He draws near to the place of corruption,
and his life to the messengers of death.

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

- 23 If there is an angel beside him,
one mediator out of a thousand,

- to tell a person what constitutes his uprightness;
 24 and if God is gracious to him and says,
 ‘Spare him from going down
 to the place of corruption,
 I have found a ransom for him,’
 25 then his flesh is restored like a youth’s;
 he returns to the days of his youthful vigor.

God Accepts Those Who Repent of Their Sin

- 26 He entreats God, and God delights in him,
 he sees God’s face with rejoicing,
 and God restores to him his righteousness.
 27 That person sings to others, saying:
 ‘I have sinned and falsified what is right,
 but I was not punished according to what I deserved.
 28 He redeemed my life
 from going down to the place of corruption,
 and my life sees the light!’
 29 “Indeed, God does all these things,
 twice, three times, in his dealings with a person,
 30 to turn back his life from the place of corruption,
 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, Job—listen to me;
 be silent, and I will speak.
 32 If you have any words, reply to me;
 speak, for I want to justify you.
 33 If not, you listen to me;
 be silent, and I will teach you wisdom.”

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

Job 34

Job Remains Silent and Elihu Continues

- 1 Elihu answered:
 2 “Listen to my words, you wise men;
 hear me, you learned men.
 3 For the ear assesses words
 as the mouth tastes food.
 4 Let us evaluate for ourselves what is right;
 let us come to know among ourselves what is good.

Elihu Twists Job’s Words

- 5 For Job says, ‘I am innocent,
 but God turns away my right.
 6 Concerning my right, should I lie?
 My wound is incurable,
 although I am without transgression.’
 7 What man is like Job,
 who drinks derision like water!
 8 He goes about in company with evildoers,
 he goes along with wicked men.
 9 For he says, ‘It does not profit a man
 when he makes his delight 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,
from the Almighty to do evil.
- 11 For he repays a person for his work,
and according to the conduct of a person,
he causes the consequences to find him.
- 12 Indeed, in truth, God does not act wickedly,
and the Almighty does not pervert justice.
- 13 Who entrusted to him the earth?
And who put him over the whole world?
- 14 If God were to set his heart on it,
and gather in his spirit and his breath,
15 all flesh would perish together
and human beings would return to dust.

Defense of the Premise

- 16 “If you have understanding, listen to this,
hear what I have to say.
- 17 Do you really think
that one who hates justice can govern?
And will you declare guilty
the supremely righteous One,
18 who says to a king, ‘Worthless man’
and to nobles, ‘Wicked men,’
19 who shows no partiality to princes,
and does not take note of the rich more than the poor,
because all of them are the work of his hands?
20 In a moment they die, in the middle of the night,
people are shaken and they pass away.
The mighty are removed effortlessly.
- 21 For his eyes are on the ways of an individual,
he observes all a person's steps.
- 22 There is no darkness, and no deep darkness,
where evildoers can hide themselves.
- 23 For he does not still consider a person,
that he should come before God in judgment.
- 24 He shatters the great without inquiry,
and sets up others in their place.
- 25 Therefore, he knows their deeds,
he overthrows them in the night
and they are crushed.
- 26 He strikes them for their wickedness,
in a place where people can see,
27 because they have turned away from following him,
and have not understood any of his ways,
28 so that they caused the cry of the poor
to come before him,
so that he hears the cry of the needy.
- 29 But if God is quiet, who can condemn him?
If he hides his face, then who can see him?
Yet he is over the individual and the nation alike,
30 so that the godless man should not rule,
and not lay snares for the people.

Elihu Challenges Job to Repent

- 31 “Has anyone said to God,
‘I have endured chastisement,

but I will not act wrongly any more.

32 Teach me what I cannot see.

If I have done evil, I will do so no more.’

33 Is it your opinion that God should recompense it,
because you reject this?

But you must choose, and not I,
so tell us what you know.

Elihu Condemns Job When He Does Not

34 Men of understanding say to me—
any wise man listening to me says—

35 that Job speaks without knowledge
and his words are without understanding.

36 But Job will be tested to the end,
because his answers are like those of wicked men.

37 For he adds transgression to his sin;
in our midst he claps his hands,
and multiplies his words against God.”

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