

JOB – Chapters 32-37 – “Elihu Contradicts Job’s Friends; Elihu Contradicts Job; Elihu Proclaims God’s Justice; Elihu Condemns Self-Righteousness; Elihu Proclaims God’s Goodness; Elihu Proclaims God’s Majesty”

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on “Latest Studies” under “Bible Studies” on the right side. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

BREATHE ON ME, BREATH OF GOD – Edward Hatch – York College Concert Choir

Breathe on me, Breath of God, fill me with life anew, that I may love what Thou dost love, and do what Thou wouldst do.

Breathe on me, Breath of God, until my heart is pure, until with Thee I will one will, to do and to endure.

Breathe on me, Breath of God, till I am wholly Thine, till all this earthly part of me glows with Thy fire divine.

Breathe on me, Breath of God, so shall I never die, but live with Thee the perfect life of Thine eternity.

At the end of the Book of Job, what does the LORD say about the comments made by Job? By his three “friends”? By Elihu?

The Lord Answers Job –

- **Job 38:1-2** Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said: [2] **"Who is this who darkens counsel By words without knowledge? (Who does “this” refer to?)**
- **Job 42:7-8** And so it was, after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, that the **LORD said to Eliphaz** the Temanite, "My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, **for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has.** [8] Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job shall pray for you. For I will accept him, lest I deal with you *according to your folly; because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has.*"

Elihu, the Super-spiritual (Dr. Henry Morris – *The Remarkable Record of Job*; pgs. 75-82)

With all their arguments, Job’s three fair-weather friend had been unable to convict him of sin (as they wanted), or to break his faith (as Satan wanted). Finally they sat in silence with Job still maintaining his innocence of any known sin and still strong in faith toward God. He was confused and lonely, unable to understand why God dealing with him so harshly, **but he never wavered in his absolute trust in God, as Satan was pressuring him to do.** Even in his final, emotion-filled plea, Job still spoke of God as “*the God that is above*” and “*the Almighty*” (Job 31:28, 35). Anyone else undergoing such suffering would surely have lost faith long before this. Multitudes of Christians have abandoned they faith for much less cause than Job had. Yet Job still trusted God.

Satan, however, had one more trick up his sleeve. Elihu was there. Though evidently unacquainted with either Job or the other, he was intensely absorbed in the highly charged scene before him. Apparently, he had come out of curiosity. A learned young man interested in theological and philosophical disputations, he was also impressed with his own spiritual insights and was looking for an opportunity to demonstrate them to these older, better known scholars.

Elihu had listened in silence up to this point, but now he jumped into the argument with great enthusiasm. His six-chapter monologue is the longest in the entire book, and **a great portion is taken up with his own commendation of his forthcoming counsel.**

For example: **Job 32:9-10** *Great men are not always wise, Nor do the aged always understand justice. [10] "Therefore I say, 'Listen to me, I also will declare my opinion.'* **Job 32:18** *For I am full of words; The spirit within me compels me.* **Job 32:20** *I will speak, that I may find relief; I must open my lips and answer.* **Job 33:2-3** *Now, I open my mouth; My tongue speaks in my mouth. [3] My words come from my upright heart; My lips utter pure knowledge.* **Job 33:33** *If not, listen to me; Hold your peace, and I will teach you wisdom."* **Job 34:2** *"Hear my words, you wise men; Give ear to me, you who have knowledge.*

There are many other statements in the same vein. Elihu held a very high opinion of his own spiritual understanding and philosophical insight.

With such a high recommendation from the speaker himself, we are led to expect some new and brilliant revelation that will solve all the problems and conflicts exposed in the earlier chapters. Many commentators, taking Elihu’s boast on their own terms have argued that he gives a better understanding of the problems than did Job or the other three friends.

Yet when we look closely at his arguments, we find him merely rephrasing the charges made by Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. Furthermore, he seriously distorts Job’s testimonies and pleas, ignoring his repeated assertions of trust in God. Elihu also ignored Job’s acknowledgment of innate sin, the possibility that he may have sinned unknowingly, and his desire only to be made aware of whatever may have occasioned God’s (apparent) sudden hostility.

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Chapters 32-37 – “Elihu Contradicts Job’s Friends; Job 32:1 So these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

Job 32:2 Then the wrath of Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, was aroused against Job; his wrath was aroused because he justified himself rather than God.

Job 32:3 Also against his three friends his wrath was aroused, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.

Job 32:4 Now because they were years older than he, Elihu had waited to speak to Job.

Job 32:5 When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, his wrath was aroused.

Job 32:6 So Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, answered and said: "I am young in years, and you are very old; Therefore I was afraid, And dared not declare my opinion to you.

Job 32:7 I said, 'Age should speak, And multitude of years should teach wisdom.'

Job 32:8 But there is a spirit in man, And the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding.

Job 32:9 Great men are not always wise, Nor do the aged always understand justice.

Job 32:10 "Therefore I say, 'Listen to me, I also will declare my opinion.'

Job 32:11 Indeed I waited for your words, I listened to your reasonings, while you searched out what to say.

Job 32:12 I paid close attention to you; And surely not one of you convinced Job, Or answered his words—

Job 32:13 Lest you say, 'We have found wisdom'; God will vanquish him, not man.

Job 32:14 Now he has not directed his words against me; So I will not answer him with your words.

vs. 1-5 So these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes: Job’s three friends still thought that Job was completely wrong, so confirmed in his own that he was righteous in his own eyes, that it was useless to keep talking. ***Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram:*** This is the first mention of Elihu, which means *God-is-He*, who now appears, dominates all discussion and then abruptly leaves. ***Then the wrath of Elihu . . . was aroused against Job:*** Elihu was a silent listener up this point. He was angry against Job because he felt that Job justified himself rather than God; also felt that Job was more concerned about being right himself than God being right. ***Also against his three friends his wrath was aroused:*** Elihu, angry at everyone, was also angry at Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar because they had failed to solve the controversy, while at the same time they were too harsh against Job. ***Because they were years older than he,*** Elihu had waited to speak to Job: Out of respect for those older than he, Elihu held back for as long as he felt he could. Now, he felt that he simply had to speak.

vs. 6-9 I am young in years, and you are very old: Because Elihu was a younger man, he was willing to hold his words for a long time. ***But there is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding:*** Elihu believed that God speaks to men of all ages and that it was not just the older men who had received understanding from the Almighty. ***Great men are not always wise, nor do the aged always understand justice:*** Most likely Job and his three friends would all disagree that this young upstart could be wiser or have more understanding than they did.

vs. 10-14 Therefore I say, “Listen to me, I also will declare my opinion”: Most likely the disdainful looks on the faces of Job and his three friends prompted Elihu to request their attention. Elihu pressed forward, asking for this audience. ***Surely not one of you convinced Job, or answered his words:*** Job’s friends didn’t put him in his place the way Elihu thought they should. Elihu in following the debate, likely was thinking of what he would say in response to Job. He probably thought that the answers of Job’s friends were not as brilliant as the answers in his own mind.

vs. 1-5 Elihu is upset in that he thought Job was questioning why God allowed all of these things to happen, intimating that God was not dealing fairly with him, because of all of these calamities. He really didn’t know why the calamities, (“I am innocent”). In a sense Job was justifying himself, rather than seeking to justify God. We need to be careful about justifying ourselves and not God, especially not to justify ourselves and blame Him!

vs. 6-9 At all ages, men must be careful of their pride in speaking as though they know more than anyone else. Again, no comfort here!

vs. 10-14 Job had answered his friends, calling them windbags and counselors of no value. He says I’ve listened carefully and I will give my opinion on the subject. Elihu will say that Job’s suffering is not necessarily due to past or secret sins, but a warning against future sin or that his suffering is being given by God to build his faith. While there is generally truth in what he says, it doesn’t fit or apply to Job’s situation. Again wrong diagnosis. No comfort or help for Job.

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

*Job 32:15 "They are dismayed and answer no more; Words escape them.
Job 32:16 And I have waited, because they did not speak, Because they stood still and answered no more.
Job 32:17 I also will answer my part, I too will declare my opinion.
Job 32:18 For I am full of words; The spirit within me compels me.
Job 32:19 Indeed my belly is like wine that has no vent; It is ready to burst like new wineskins.
Job 32:20 I will speak, that I may find relief; I must open my lips and answer.
Job 32:21 Let me not, I pray, show partiality to anyone; Nor let me flatter any man.
Job 32:22 For I do not know how to flatter, Else my Maker would soon take me away.*

Elihu Contradicts Job;

*Job 33:1 "But please, Job, hear my speech, And listen to all my words.
Job 33:2 Now, I open my mouth; My tongue speaks in my mouth.
Job 33:3 My words come from my upright heart; My lips utter pure knowledge.
Job 33:4 The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.
Job 33:5 If you can answer me, Set your words in order before me; Take your stand.
Job 33:6 Truly I am as your spokesman before God; I also have been formed out of clay.
Job 33:7 Surely no fear of me will terrify you, Nor will my hand be heavy on you.
Job 33:8 "Surely you have spoken in my hearing, And I have heard the sound of your words, saying,
Job 33:9 'I am pure, without transgression; I am innocent, and there is no iniquity in me.
Job 33:10 Yet He finds occasions against me, He counts me as His enemy;
Job 33:11 He puts my feet in the stocks, He watches all my paths.'*

vs. 15-22 They are dismayed and answer no more; words escape them: In the mind of Elihu, Job’s friends were exhausted by the debate. Elihu believes he is fortunate that he had much energy and many words because now he could start where the three friends had left off. *For I am full of words; the spirit within me compels me:* Elihu certainly was full of words and will go on and on for the next five chapters, the longest speech in the Book, unable to shut up and let anyone else speak. *Let me not, I pray, show partiality to anyone; nor let me flatter any man. For I do not know how to flatter, else my Maker would soon take me away:* Elihu apparently was determined to flatter no man, except himself. Here presents himself as smarter, wiser, and having more understanding than any of the four other men with him. He seemed to be totally unaware of how he sounded and looked.

vs. 1-7 But please, Job, hear my speech, and listen to all my words: Elihu displays a gift for speaking without saying much. These first seven verses of the chapter are mostly a wordy, windy introduction. *The Spirit of God has made me . . . Truly I am as your spokesman before God:* Notice the pride that marked Elihu, often typical of young men. He wanted to show Job and to his three friends that he was just as good, just as spiritual, and just as wise as they were. *Surely no fear of me will terrify you, nor will my hand be heavy on you:* Elihu assures Job that he had nothing to fear from his offer to be Job’s spokesman to God.

vs. 8-11 Surely you have spoken in my hearing . . . “I am pure, without transgression; I am innocent, and there is no iniquity in me”: Elihu claimed to have listened to Job carefully, and now reporting what he heard. He said that Job claimed to be pure, to be without transgression, to be innocent, and sinless (*there is no iniquity in me*), which shows that young Elihu had not listened carefully. He heard his words, but he did not listen carefully to the meaning and context of Job. *Yet He finds occasions against me, He counts me as His enemy:* Here Elihu was more faithful in explaining the mind of Job. At times Job did feel that God regarded him as an enemy, and had imprisoned him. But Elihu misunderstood this feeling of Job’s because he put it in the context of Job’s claim to sinless perfection. When Elihu put the true claim of Job’s sense that God was his enemy next to the false claim that Job said he was sinless, it made the claim that God was his enemy seem much more wrong and even ridiculous.

vs. 15-22 Elihu does make one fully truthful statement here. “For I am full of words”. Elihu’s high opinion of himself and his talking down to the older men for such a long time is something NOT to do!

vs. 1-7 We can learn much from the characteristics of Elihu – of what not to do and be. He talks too much; he repeats; he is enormously conceited. Worst of all, he seriously misreads Job’s problem as being one of unrepented sin, resulting in condemning a righteous man.

vs. 8-11 Misunderstanding the feeling of Job, Elihu put it in the context of Job’s claim to sinless perfection. When Elihu put the true claim of Job’s sense that God was his enemy next to the false claim that Job said he was sinless, it made the claim that God was his enemy seem much more wrong and ridiculous.

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Job 33:12 "Look, in this you are not righteous. I will answer you, For God is greater than man.
Job 33:13 Why do you contend with Him? For He does not give an accounting of any of His words.
Job 33:14 For God may speak in one way, or in another, Yet man does not perceive it.
Job 33:15 In a dream, in a vision of the night, When deep sleep falls upon men, While slumbering on their beds,
Job 33:16 Then He opens the ears of men, And seals their instruction.
Job 33:17 In order to turn man from his deed, And conceal pride from man,
Job 33:18 He keeps back his soul from the Pit, And his life from perishing by the sword.
Job 33:19 "Man is also chastened with pain on his bed, And with strong pain in many of his bones,
Job 33:20 So that his life abhors bread, And his soul succulent food.
Job 33:21 His flesh wastes away from sight, And his bones stick out which once were not seen.
Job 33:22 Yes, his soul draws near the Pit, And his life to the executioners.
Job 33:23 "If there is a messenger for him, A mediator, one among a thousand, To show man His uprightness,
Job 33:24 Then He is gracious to him, and says, 'Deliver him from going down to the Pit; I have found a ransom';
Job 33:25 His flesh shall be young like a child's, He shall return to the days of his youth.
Job 33:26 He shall pray to God, and He will delight in him, He shall see His face with joy, For He restores to man His righteousness.
Job 33:27 Then he looks at men and says, 'I have sinned, and perverted what was right, And it did not profit me.'
Job 33:28 He will redeem his soul from going down to the Pit, And his life shall see the light.
Job 33:29 "Behold, God works all these things, Twice, in fact, three times with a man,
Job 33:30 To bring back his soul from the Pit, That he may be enlightened with the light of life.
Job 33:31 Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me: Hold thy peace, and I will speak.
Job 33:32 If thou hast anything to say, answer me: Speak, for I desire to justify thee.
Job 33:33 If not, hearken thou unto me: Hold thy peace, and I will teach thee wisdom.

vs. 12-18 I will answer you, for God is greater than man: Young Elihu again spoke in his wordy, imprecise way. His reason for this conclusion is the first big disappointment in his speech. It certainly was true that God is greater than man, all know that, but that did not mean that Elihu could or should answer Job in the way that he did. *Why do you contend with Him? For He does not give an accounting of any of His words:* Here Elihu spoke the truth, but he was proud and too confident in his own wisdom and analysis. He was correct in telling Job that God did not owe him or anyone an explanation for what He does, and that Job was wrong to demand such. *For God may speak in one way, or in another:* Elihu's thought is here is that perhaps God had spoken to Job already but Job did not perceive it. It might possibly have been through a dream or vision that God warned Job to repent, but Job wasn't paying attention.

vs. 19-28 Man is also chastened with pain on his bed: Elihu had just suggested that God spoke to Job in a dream; now he suggests that maybe God spoke to him through his physical suffering. *If there is a messenger for him:* Again, Elihu in too wordy way, told Job that God did send a messenger of some sort; Job's problem was that he did not receive it. *Then He is gracious to him:* In the view of Elihu, if Job would only receive and respond to God's messenger, if he would only admit to God's uprightness, then he would be restored to God's favor, receiving God's grace; be rescued from destruction; be healed; have his relationship with God restored. Elihu's argument is really just the argument of the three friends of Job, merely restated and delivered with new energy. Elihu thought that he knew more or could explain better than Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, but really could not. *He shall pray to God: Verses:26-28* wonderfully describe a genuine conversion experience. It shows someone who has seriously turned to God and has a real, joyful fellowship with God. Elihu told Job that all this could be his again, if he would only start listening to God, but this section could not rightly be applied to Job and his situation.

vs. 29-33 Behold, God works all these things, twice, in fact, three times with a man: Elihu wanted Job to understand that God was being very patient with Job, although Job felt that God was being harsh and treating him like an enemy. Elihu wanted Job to appreciate what he understood to be God's longsuffering towards Job. *Hold your peace, and I will teach you wisdom:* We don't know Job's reaction, but Elihu felt the need to tell Job to “Hold your peace” and felt he had to assure Job that he would teach him wisdom, as if Job couldn't judge for himself.

vs. 12-18 We note here two characteristics to avoid or to ask the Lord help with – Being too proud and too self-confident!

vs. 19-28 Elihu claimed that his message came directly from God and had the tempting offer of renewed health and prosperity if Job would only confess to sins that Job knew were non-existent. This was a vicious dilemma. If Elihu were really speaking words from God, as he claimed, then God was asking Job to confess to what both he and God knew was a lie, and such a “god” could not be the God Job had trusted and obeyed all his life. Yet how could he charge Elihu with being a liar? He seemed sincere, and he spoke with genuine knowledge of God's creation and in expressions of apparent deep piety. This was surely a master stroke of Satanic deception. Elihu was an intelligent, spiritually minded young man who probably was unaware that he was being manipulated in such a way. Much of what he says is true and helpful, especially his eulogy of God' creative handiwork and providential ordering of his creation – (Job 36:24-37:24) (Morris)

vs. 29-33 Elihu wanted Job to appreciate what he understood to be God's longsuffering towards Job. Elihu felt the need to tell Job to “Hold your peace”. Elihu felt he had to assure Job that he would teach him wisdom, as if Job couldn't judge for himself. How brash for this young man to speak to righteous Job!

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Elihu Proclaims God’s Justice;

Job 34:1 Elihu further answered and said:

Job 34:2 "Hear my words, you wise men; Give ear to me, you who have knowledge.

Job 34:3 For the ear tests words As the palate tastes food.

Job 34:4 Let us choose justice for ourselves; Let us know among ourselves what is good.

Job 34:5 "For Job has said, 'I am righteous, But God has taken away my justice;

Job 34:6 Should I lie concerning my right? My wound is incurable, though I am without transgression.'

Job 34:7 What man is like Job, Who drinks scorn like water,

Job 34:8 Who goes in company with the workers of iniquity, And walks with wicked men?

Job 34:9 For he has said, 'It profits a man nothing That he should delight in God.'

Job 34:10 "Therefore listen to me, you men of understanding: Far be it from God to do wickedness, And from the Almighty to commit iniquity.

Job 34:11 For He repays man according to his work, And makes man to find a reward according to his way.

Job 34:12 Surely God will never do wickedly, Nor will the Almighty pervert justice.

Job 34:13 Who gave Him charge over the earth? Or who appointed Him over the whole world?

Job 34:14 If He should set His heart on it, If He should gather to Himself His Spirit and His breath,

Job 34:15 All flesh would perish together, And man would return to dust.

Job 34:16 "If you have understanding, hear this; Listen to the sound of my words:

Job 34:17 Should one who hates justice govern? Will you condemn Him who is most just?

Job 34:18 Is it fitting to say to a king, 'You are worthless,' And to nobles, 'You are wicked'?

Job 34:19 Yet He is not partial to princes, Nor does He regard the rich more than the poor; For they are all the work of His hands.

Job 34:20 In a moment they die, in the middle of the night; The people are shaken and pass away; The mighty are taken away without a hand.

vs. 1-9 Hear my words, you wise men: Another wordy introduction to his point.

Here Elihu will quote, quoting selectively and unfairly, the words of Job, the ones he felt accused God and justified himself. *My wound is incurable, though I am without transgression:* Although Job certainly did claim to be wounded so severely by his trials that it might seem incurable; yet again he never claimed to be sinless. He only claimed that there was not some special sin that made him the target of this special terrible affliction. *What man is like Job . . . who goes in company with the workers of iniquity:* Unthinkably and in language even stronger than that of his elders, Elihu seems to believe that Job actually was companion of wicked men, possibly considering that Job’s confused moral thinking led him to associate with the morally corrupt. *For he has said, “It profits a man nothing that he should delight in God”:* Although Job certainly said nothing like this, apparently that’s how Elihu thought this about Job. Job claimed to delight in God and he now seemed to claim that it profited him nothing. But Elihu is taking general trains of thought of Job, and extending them too far. Elihu was most alarmed that Job somehow had the gall to blame God for his problems, and yet still to consider himself righteous and faithful.

vs. 10-15 For he repays man according to his work: Elihu followed the simple “you always reap what you sow” equation earlier promoted by Eliphaz in the very first speech of Job’s friends. If there were such an absolute spiritual law it would surely damn us all. Instead, the Bible relates the principle of sowing and reaping to the way we manage our resources before the Lord. *Surely God will never do wickedly, nor will the Almighty pervert justice:* Elihu is now caught in the same logic as the friends. By affirming that God’s ways cannot be questioned, he is forced to denounce Job’s opinions as irreverent. *If He should gather to Himself His Spirit and His breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust:* Elihu wanted to emphasize the idea of God’s independence and transcendence and for Job to remember that God was so mighty that Job was entirely wrong to question Him at all.

vs. 16-20 Will you condemn Him who is just? Elihu took Job’s agonized cries to God as Job condemning God. It was an unfair assumption; Job’s agony was deeply rooted in the sense that he did love God and respect His justice. *Yet He is not partial to princes, nor does He regard the rich more than the poor:* Elihu, using many words, was again emphasizing the perfect justice of God.

vs. 1-9 Elihu continues to selectively and unfairly quote Job in the area of Job’s accusing God and justifying himself. Although Job did say things that would have been best unsaid regarding his innocence at the expense of blaming God, he didn’t do anywhere near what Elihu is condemning him here.

vs. 10-15 Like Job’s three friends, Elihu takes a simple “you always reap what you sow” statement and condemns Job with the logic of it.

vs. 16-20 Elihu took Job’s agonized cries to God as Job condemning God. It was an unfair assumption.

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

*Job 34:21 "For His eyes are on the ways of man, And He sees all his steps.
Job 34:22 There is no darkness nor shadow of death Where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.
Job 34:23 For He need not further consider a man, That he should go before God in judgment.
Job 34:24 He breaks in pieces mighty men without inquiry, And sets others in their place.
Job 34:25 Therefore He knows their works; He overthrows them in the night, And they are crushed.
Job 34:26 He strikes them as wicked men In the open sight of others,
Job 34:27 Because they turned back from Him, And would not consider any of His ways,
Job 34:28 So that they caused the cry of the poor to come to Him; For He hears the cry of the afflicted.
Job 34:29 When He gives quietness, who then can make trouble? And when He hides His face, who then can see Him, Whether it is against a nation or a man alone?—
Job 34:30 That the hypocrite should not reign, Lest the people be ensnared.*

*Job 34:31 "For has anyone said to God, 'I have borne chastening; I will offend no more;
Job 34:32 Teach me what I do not see; If I have done iniquity, I will do no more'?
Job 34:33 Should He repay it according to your terms, Just because you disavow it? You must choose, and not I; Therefore speak what you know.*

*Job 34:34 "Men of understanding say to me, Wise men who listen to me:
Job 34:35 'Job speaks without knowledge, His words are without wisdom.'
Job 34:36 Oh, that Job were tried to the utmost, Because his answers are like those of wicked men!
Job 34:37 For he adds rebellion to his sin; He claps his hands among us, And multiplies his words against God."*

vs. 21-30 *His eyes are on the ways of man, and He sees all his steps:* Elihu continued on the theme of God’s perfect justice. Here he emphasized the idea that sees all. There is nothing man does is hidden from the eyes of God. ***He strikes them as wicked men in the open sight of others, because they turned back from Him, and would not consider any of His ways:*** Elihu meant this as a warning for Job. God’s judgment was so perfect that He judged the kings and princes of this world without partiality. Therefore, if Job did not repent of the sin that prompted his crisis, God would surely judge him as one who turned back from Him. ***That the hypocrite should not reign, lest the people be ensnared:*** Elihu thought it was important to emphasize these points because without them, the moral order of society would be overturned. If these things were shaken, then the hypocrite would reign and the common people would be ensnared.

vs. 31-33 *For has anyone said to God:* Elihu speaks the words of humble repentance that he thought Job should have said. Elihu thought Job should have manfully taken the chastening; they he should have promised to offend no more, therefore admitting his previous guilt and that he should have humbly submitted, asking God to teach him. It angered Elihu to see none of this in Job, so Elihu pressed Job to do what he thought was right. ***Should He repay it according to your terms:*** Elihu criticized what he thought was Job’s arrogance, just like the other three friends, Elihu wrongfully jumped to the same: Job is to blame. His guilt is measured by the amount of his suffering. ***You must choose and not I; therefore speak what you know:*** Young Elihu tried to persuade Job with ultimatums and pressure that the three friends of Job did not use. Painfully he pressed his points on Job with great vigor, but not helping Job at all!

vs. 34-37 *Job speaks without knowledge, his words are without wisdom:* This, according to Elihu, was the common opinion of the men of understanding and the wise men who looked at Job’s situation. They all agreed that he had no real wisdom or knowledge in his situation. ***Oh, that Job were tried to the utmost, because his answers are like those of wicked men!*** Young Elihu believing that Job had not suffered enough, thought that a little more suffering trying Job even further, might bring Job to repentance. He ends the chapter by again rebuking Job with a stern severity that exceeds even that of his “friends”.

vs. 21-30 Elihu warned Job that God’s judgment was so perfect that He judged the kings and princes of this world without partiality. Therefore, if Job did not repent of the sin that prompted his crisis, God would surely judge him as one who turned back from Him. Similar to the other three friends, Elihu mistakenly blames Job’s suffering on his sins.

vs. 31-33 Just like the other three friends, Elihu jumped to the wrong conclusion that Job is to blame. His guilt is measured by the amount of his suffering. Elihu tried to persuade Job with ultimatums and pressure that even the three friends of Job did not use.

vs. 34-37 Elihu believing that Job had not suffered enough, thought that a little more suffering, trying Job even further, might bring Job to repentance. He again rebuking Job with a stern severity that exceeds even that of his “friends”.

JOB – Chapters 32-37 – “Elihu Contradicts Job’s Friends; Elihu Contradicts Job; Elihu Proclaims God’s Justice; Elihu Condemns Self-Righteousness; Elihu Proclaims God’s Goodness; Elihu Proclaims God’s Majesty”

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Elihu Condemns Self-Righteousness;

Job 35:1 Moreover Elihu answered and said:

Job 35:2 "Do you think this is right? Do you say, 'My righteousness is more than God's'?"

Job 35:3 For you say, 'What advantage will it be to You? What profit shall I have, more than if I had sinned?'

Job 35:4 "I will answer you, And your companions with you.

Job 35:5 Look to the heavens and see; And behold the clouds—They are higher than you.

Job 35:6 If you sin, what do you accomplish against Him? Or, if your transgressions are multiplied, what do you do to Him?

Job 35:7 If you are righteous, what do you give Him? Or what does He receive from your hand?

Job 35:8 Your wickedness affects a man such as you, And your righteousness a son of man.

Job 35:9 "Because of the multitude of oppressions they cry out; They cry out for help because of the arm of the mighty.

Job 35:10 But no one says, 'Where is God my Maker, Who gives songs in the night,

Job 35:11 Who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth, And makes us wiser than the birds of heaven?'

Job 35:12 There they cry out, but He does not answer, Because of the pride of evil men.

Job 35:13 Surely God will not listen to empty talk, Nor will the Almighty regard it.

Job 35:14 Although you say you do not see Him, Yet justice is before Him, and you must wait for Him.

Job 35:15 And now, because He has not punished in His anger, Nor taken much notice of folly,

Job 35:16 Therefore Job opens his mouth in vain; He multiplies words without knowledge."

Chapter 35 vs. 1-3 For you say, 'What advantage will it be to You? What profit shall I have, more than if I had sinned?' Job said nothing of the sort. Likely Elihu was referring to Job’s statement ***Job 21:15 Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? And what profit do we have if we pray to Him?'*** However, Elihu has taken it out of context. Job was not expressing his own feelings here. He was quoting the sentiment of the wicked! In building his case against Job, Elihu resorted to distortion and deception.

vs. 4-8 I will answer you, and your companions with you: Elihu’s arguments and ideas were essentially the same as those of Job’s friends. Yet he thought of himself as different, and that he could correct both Job and his friends. ***Look to the heavens and see; and behold the clouds, they are higher than you:*** Elihu wanted Job and his friends to understand an idea that they had already discussed and agreed upon, that God is greater than man and beyond man. ***If you are righteous, what do you give Him?*** God was so far beyond man that there was nothing man could do to God’s benefit. Elihu felt that Job had lost his fear and godly appreciation of God. In one sense, Elihu had trapped himself in his own argument. If God is so beyond man, then what use is it for Job to repent at all? “God is indeed God; but Elihu missed how close God comes to man.

vs. 9-12 Because of the multitude of oppressions they cry out: Elihu understood that men cried out to God when they were oppressed or felt afflicted by the arm of the mighty. Elihu wanted to explain why God did not answer the afflicted. ***But no one says, “Where is God my Maker”:*** Elihu noted that men often seek God insincerely in their time of need. They don’t recognize God as their Maker, they don’t recognize His comforts (***who gives songs in the night***), and the wisdom He gave (***makes us wiser than the birds of heaven***), which is right in the majority of cases. ***They cry out, but He does not answer, because of the pride of evil men:*** Elihu is saying, when men cry out to God in such insincerity, that God does not answer them, and He does not answer because of their pride.

vs. 13-16 Surely God will not listen to empty talk: Elihu resumed his harsh words, saying that God did not hear Job because he was a false, empty seeker. ***Although you say you do not see Him, yet justice is before Him:*** Elihu wanted Job to see that God was indeed right in front of him, present in the fact of justice. If Job would only be patient (***you must wait for Him***), he would see the God whom he claimed was hidden from him. ***Because He has not punished in His anger . . . therefore Job opens his mouth in vain:*** Harshly speaking, Elihu saw that God had not yet answered Job yet, at least not in any way that Job had hoped. Therefore he said ***“Job opens his mouth in vain.”*** “Job, if you were really a godly man, then God would have answered you by now. The fact that He hasn’t shows your ungodliness.”

vs. 1-3 It’s so important when making any response, to listen carefully and not to jump to the wrong conclusion. Here Elihu takes Job’s comments out of context and wrongfully chastises him. May we not do that!

vs. 4-8 Elihu demonstrates his pride and arrogance again in thinking his arguments and ideas were so much different and correct that those of Job’s three “friends”, when essentially they were the same!

vs. 9-12 Elihu wrongfully said this with awareness that Job had complained that God would not answer him, associating Job with the insincere, proud, and evil men.

vs. 13-16 May this account be a reminder for us not to jump to our own conclusions, making wrongful accusation, especially with respect to another person’s relationship with God.

JOB – Chapters 32-37 – “Elihu Contradicts Job’s Friends; Elihu Contradicts Job; Elihu Proclaims God’s Justice; Elihu Condemns Self-Righteousness; Elihu Proclaims God’s Goodness; Elihu Proclaims God’s Majesty”

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Elihu Proclaims God’s Goodness;

Job 36:1 Elihu also proceeded and said:

Job 36:2 "Bear with me a little, and I will show you That there are yet words to speak on God's behalf.

Job 36:3 I will fetch my knowledge from afar; I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.

Job 36:4 For truly my words are not false; One who is perfect in knowledge is with you.

Job 36:5 "Behold, God is mighty, but despises no one; He is mighty in strength of understanding.

Job 36:6 He does not preserve the life of the wicked, But gives justice to the oppressed.

Job 36:7 He does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous; But they are on the throne with kings, For He has seated them forever, And they are exalted.

Job 36:8 And if they are bound in fetters, Held in the cords of affliction,

Job 36:9 Then He tells them their work and their transgressions—That they have acted defiantly.

Job 36:10 He also opens their ear to instruction, And commands that they turn from iniquity.

Job 36:11 If they obey and serve Him, They shall spend their days in prosperity, And their years in pleasures.

Job 36:12 But if they do not obey, They shall perish by the sword, And they shall die without knowledge.

Job 36:13 "But the hypocrites in heart store up wrath; They do not cry for help when He binds them.

Job 36:14 They die in youth, And their life ends among the perverted persons.

Job 36:15 He delivers the poor in their affliction, And opens their ears in oppression.

Job 36:16 "Indeed He would have brought you out of dire distress, Into a broad place where there is no restraint; And what is set on your table would be full of richness.

Job 36:17 But you are filled with the judgment due the wicked; Judgment and justice take hold of you.

Job 36:18 Because there is wrath, beware lest He take you away with one blow; For a large ransom would not help you avoid it.

Job 36:19 Will your riches, Or all the mighty forces, Keep you from distress?

Job 36:20 Do not desire the night, When people are cut off in their place.

Job 36:21 Take heed, do not turn to iniquity, For you have chosen this rather than affliction.

Chapter 36 vs. 1-4 Bear with me a little, and I will show you that there are yet words to speak on God’s behalf: Perhaps Elihu saw that his listeners were becoming uncomfortable with his wordy condemnation. He asks them to keep listening, insisting that he is speaking *on God’s behalf. I will fetch my knowledge from afar . . . One who is perfect in knowledge is with you:* Elihu, too confident in his knowledge and words is probably referring to God here as the One with *perfect knowledge*.

vs. 5-12 Behold, God is mighty, but despises no one: Elihu again promotes the ideas of God’s power and perfect justice. In His perfect justice, God punishes the wicked and works for the oppressed. *He does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous:* Job had said and felt that God had removed His eyes from Job. Elihu is clearly counting Job among the wicked. In Elihu’s mind, the freedom God has for the righteous does not belong to Job because Job is not among the righteous. *If they do not obey, they shall perish by the sword:* Elihu once again gives of his strong warnings to Job. He warned Job to repent and to not be like the disobedient who perish and who die without knowledge.

vs. 13-15 The hypocrites in heart store up wrath: Just as the three “friends” has done, Elihu repeatedly insisted that God gave blessings to the righteous and punishment to the wicked. Elihu thought Job was a hypocrite for continuing to deny his guilt. He felt Job was putting himself under a greater and greater outpouring of God’s wrath. *Their life ends among the perverted persons:* Elihu painted a most bleak future for an unrepentant Job.

vs. 16-21 Indeed He would have brought you out of dire distress: Elihu here projects to Job about what God would have done for Job, if Job would only had repented as he should have. How presumptive and wrong for Elihu! He is saying if Job would only have repented then God would have brought him out of his *dire distress*; into a *broad place* where there is *no restraint*, to a *table . . . full of richness*. *But you are filled with the judgment due the wicked:* For Elihu, Job’s problems were easy to diagnose, albeit wrongfully. Job did not have the blessings God gives to the obedient and repentant; therefore he was not obedient and repentant, filled with the judgment due the wicked. *Will your riches, or all the mighty forces, keep you from distress?* This is often true, but it was not true in Job’s case. Elihu is wrong again! *You have chosen this rather than affliction:* It was this kind of counsel that must have driven Job crazy, because it demanded that he forsaking his integrity and making a show of repentance just to please his friends.

vs. 1-4 Sadly young Elihu spoke with a directness Job’s other friends did not use. Job’s other friends appealed to conventional, ancient wisdom and common knowledge. Elihu claimed to speak on God’s behalf! How wrong!

vs. 5-12 Job had said and felt that God had removed His eyes from Job. Presumptuously and wrongfully Elihu is counting Job among the wicked. In Elihu’s mind, the freedom God has for the righteous does not belong to Job because Job is not among the righteous.

vs. 13-15 Just as Job’s three friends had done, Elihu does the same thing – wrongfully accusing him of being a hypocrite.

vs. 16-21 In saying “judgment and justice take hold of you,” Elihu could not be clearer. There was one reason for Job’s crisis and loss; it was that the judgment and justice of God was against him. It is helpful to remind ourselves that Job chapters 1 and 2 make it clear that Elihu was absolutely wrong in this analysis.

JOB – Chapters 32-37 – “Elihu Contradicts Job’s Friends; Elihu Contradicts Job; Elihu Proclaims God’s Justice; Elihu Condemns Self-Righteousness; Elihu Proclaims God’s Goodness; Elihu Proclaims God’s Majesty”

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

*Job 36:22 "Behold, God is exalted by His power; Who teaches like Him?
Job 36:23 Who has assigned Him His way, Or who has said, 'You have done wrong'?
Job 36:24 "Remember to magnify His work, Of which men have sung.*

*Job 36:25 Everyone has seen it; Man looks on it from afar.
Job 36:26 "Behold, God is great, and we do not know Him; Nor can the number of His years be discovered.
Job 36:27 For He draws up drops of water, Which distill as rain from the mist,
Job 36:28 Which the clouds drop down And pour abundantly on man.
Job 36:29 Indeed, can anyone understand the spreading of clouds, The thunder from His canopy?
Job 36:30 Look, He scatters His light upon it, And covers the depths of the sea.
Job 36:31 For by these He judges the peoples; He gives food in abundance.
Job 36:32 He covers His hands with lightning, And commands it to strike.
Job 36:33 His thunder declares it, The cattle also, concerning the rising storm.*

Elihu Proclaims God’s Majesty”

*Job 37:1 "At this also my heart trembles, And leaps from its place.
Job 37:2 Hear attentively the thunder of His voice, And the rumbling that comes from His mouth.
Job 37:3 He sends it forth under the whole heaven, His lightning to the ends of the earth.
Job 37:4 After it a voice roars; He thunders with His majestic voice, And He does not restrain them when His voice is heard.
Job 37:5 God thunders marvelously with His voice; He does great things which we cannot comprehend.
Job 37:6 For He says to the snow, 'Fall on the earth'; Likewise to the gentle rain and the heavy rain of His strength.
Job 37:7 He seals the hand of every man, That all men may know His work.*

vs. 22-24 *Behold, God is exalted by His power; who teaches like Him?* Elihu, possibly inspired by the approaching storm, again wanted to exalt God in the eyes of Job, thinking that Job’s problem was that he had too low a view of God, and too high a view of himself. Elihu does speak with a more inspired, less harsh way than previously. ***Remember to magnify His work, of which men have sung:*** Job himself had magnified the work of God, and was well aware of the power, majesty, and glory of God. As the storm approached and the Lord’s appearing, it’s interesting to note the contrast between Job and Elihu, as evidenced by their different responses to the Lord’s appearing. Job, the more mature man of faith is silent. A holy hush falls over him, and his lips grow as still as his heart. But the young man Elihu keeps on babbling. ***“Be still and know that I am God!”***

vs. 25-33 *Behold, God is great, and we do not know Him:* Elihu again promoted the concept of the transcendence of God. He heard and sensed how Job demanded answers from God, and told Job to understand that God was beyond Job and explaining things This was Elihu’s most truthful and powerful argument, yet it itself was based on the premise that Job had to do this in light of his great transgression against God. It was a powerful, good principle wrongly applied to Job’s situation. ***For He draws up drops of water, which distill as rain from the mist;*** In this beautiful section Elihu analyzed the water cycle of evaporation, distillation, and rain and used it as an example of God’s brilliance and beauty as a Designer. ***The cattle also, concerning the rising storm:*** Even cattle can perceive the rain and when it is ready to fall, which gives men timely notice of it.

Chapter 37 vs. 1-5 *Hear attentively the thunder of His voice:* Elihu felt that Job needed a good dose of the greatness of God. Again, it was good advice wrongly applied to Job’s situation. Elihu did rightly understand that the mighty sound of thunder seems to man to be the voice of God. ***He does great things which we cannot comprehend:*** This is a repetition of Elihu’s theme that Job had transgressed the line that separates God and man, and that Job presumed to know more than he could or should know from God. In this, Elihu was partially correct.

vs. 6-13 *For He says to the snow:* Elihu previously spoke of God’s voice as being like mighty thunder. Now he considered that the voice of God commanded the snow, the gentle rain, and the heavy rain; His breath makes ice and freezes the broad waters. ***He seals the hand of every man, that all men may know His work:*** The idea, somewhat similar to the Book of Job, is that when God sends the cold and the snow, the farmer cannot do his work. His hand is sealed from further effort, and the time away from work makes him reflect on the work of God. ***And they swirl about, being turned by His guidance, that they may do whatever He commands them:*** Elihu wanted Job to not only appreciate the greatness of God, but also the submission of creation. The implication was that unrepentant Job should submit to God the way His creation does.

vs. 22-24 Elihu presumably thought Job’s problem was that he had too low a view of God, and too high a view of himself. We need to note the contrast between Job and Elihu, as evidenced by their different responses to the Lord’s appearing. Job, the more mature man of faith is silent, whereas Elihu keeps on talking!

vs. 25-33 Elihu heard and sensed how Job demanded answers from God, telling Job that God was beyond him and explaining things This was Elihu’s most truthful and powerful argument, yet it itself was incorrectly based in that Job had to do this in light of his great transgression against God. It was a good principle, wrongly applied to Job’s situation.

vs. 1-5 Amazingly Elihu felt that Job needed to better understand the greatness of God! Again, it was good advice wrongly applied to Job’s situation!

vs. 6-13 Elihu wanted Job to not only appreciate the greatness of God, but also the submission of creation, implying that Job should submit to God the way His creation does.

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Job 37:8 The beasts go into dens, And remain in their lairs.

Job 37:9 From the chamber of the south comes the whirlwind, And cold from the scattering winds of the north.

Job 37:10 By the breath of God ice is given, And the broad waters are frozen.

Job 37:11 Also with moisture He saturates the thick clouds; He scatters His bright clouds.

Job 37:12 And they swirl about, being turned by His guidance, That they may do whatever He commands them On the face of the whole earth.

Job 37:13 He causes it to come, Whether for correction, Or for His land, Or for mercy.

Job 37:14 "Listen to this, O Job; Stand still and consider the wondrous works of God.

Job 37:15 Do you know when God dispatches them, And causes the light of His cloud to shine?

Job 37:16 Do you know how the clouds are balanced, Those wondrous works of Him who is perfect in knowledge?

Job 37:17 Why are your garments hot, When He quiets the earth by the south wind?

Job 37:18 With Him, have you spread out the skies, Strong as a cast metal mirror?

Job 37:19 "Teach us what we should say to Him, For we can prepare nothing because of the darkness.

Job 37:20 Should He be told that I wish to speak? If a man were to speak, surely he would be swallowed up.

Job 37:21 Even now men cannot look at the light when it is bright in the skies, When the wind has passed and cleared them.

Job 37:22 He comes from the north as golden splendor; With God is awesome majesty.

Job 37:23 As for the Almighty, we cannot find Him; He is excellent in power, In judgment and abundant justice; He does not oppress.

Job 37:24 Therefore men fear Him; He shows no partiality to any who are wise of heart."

vs. 14-18 *Listen to this, O Job:* Young Elihu again appealed to Job in a very direct and personal way, more personal than the three other friends of Job had. *Stand still and consider the wondrous works of God:* Significantly, God will address Job among similar lines when God begins to speak starting at *Job 38 (Do you know . . . Do you know)*. Elihu had many of the right ideas, but he presented them with a wrong premise, the premise that Job’s whole crisis came from his sin.

vs. 19-24 *Teach us what we should say to Him:* Elihu confronted what he believed to be Job’s arrogance in saying that man deserved an audience or a justification from God. “Job, if you insist that God owes us an audience, then please *teach us what we should say to Him.*” Elihu was trying to bring Joy to realize the impossibility of knowing God perfectly, and the folly of his complaining. *As for the Almighty, we cannot find Him:* Elihu returned to his theme of God’s distance, apparently wanting to discourage Job from insisting that God owed him or anyone an audience or an explanation. Interestingly, the God whom Elihu believed to be utterly unreachable by man (*we cannot find Him*) has come in the storm, and will speak to Job. It seems that God had finally heard enough of the partially right wisdom of man, and had heard enough of this talk that He was so beyond man that He was beyond reach. God was about to confront not only Job, but his three friends and especially Elihu, with both His words and His presence.

SUMMARY:

In any case, this terrible dilemma facing Job climaxed months of unparalleled suffering and a day of depressing argumentation and final rejection by his closest friends. He could **neither confess to non-existent sins for that would deny his God of truth** nor **deny that God could send the messenger for which he had prayed, for that also would deny God, and here was Elihu in all sincerity claiming to be such a messenger.**

Consequently, Job did not answer Elihu at all! And by choosing not to do so, he did not deny God, as Satan had predicted and tried to get him to do. Furthermore, with is deception, Satan had gone too far. He had tried to maneuver Job into such a position that he would have no choice but to deny God.

It was time, therefore, for God finally to break His silence. Job had “kept the faith” in spite of the worst Satan could do, so the contest was over, and we hear no more of Satan, nor of his arguments.

Nevertheless, there is some unfinished work for God to accomplish in the heart of Job and in the lives of his three well-meaning but self-justifying friends. This brings us to the climax of the Book and heart of its message – the magnificent two-fold discourse from non other than the God of creation. (Morris)

vs. 14-18 Elihu had many good and right ideas, but he presented them with a wrong premise, that being that Job’s whole crisis came from his sin.

vs. 19-24 Elihu was trying to bring Job to realize the impossibility of knowing God perfectly, and the folly of his complaining. Interestingly, the God whom Elihu believed to be utterly unreachable by man has come in the storm and will speak to Job. It seems that God had finally heard enough of the partially right wisdom of man, and had heard enough of this talk that He was so beyond man. God was about to confront not only Job, but his three friends and especially Elihu, with both His words and His presence.

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