

The Book of Job Chapters 32-37

The Three Friends Cease Responding to Job, and the Young Man Elihu Responds

At this time, Job's three friends stopped responding to Job. A young man name Elihu was listening to all the discourse. Once the three friends ceased to respond to Job, Elihu took advantage of the opportunity to speak. When he does, it is out of anger. He is angry at Job for justifying himself at God's expense, and he was angry at the three friends because they were unable to get to the root of Job's problem or show Job that it was wrong for him to be self-righteous. When Elihu speaks, he comes closer than the friends did to show Job where he is in error, and this sets the stage for God to enter the discussion and set the record straight. Job did not have the opportunity to respond to Elihu, because God intervenes in a storm right after Elihu finishes.

Job 32:1-3 So these three men ceased answering Job, because he *was* righteous in his own eyes. 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. ³ Also against his three friends his wrath was aroused, because they had found no answer, and *yet* had condemned Job.

Question:

1. How important is the observation in the first three verses?
2. Is Elihu's anger against Job and his three friends justified?

Proverbs 3:5-8 ⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. ⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. ⁸ It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones (NKJ).

Romans 12:3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith (NKJ).

Luke 10: 25-29 ²⁵ And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶ He said to him, "What is written in

the law? What is your reading *of it?*" ²⁷ So he answered and said, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'" ²⁸ And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live." ²⁹ But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" (NKJ)

Job 32:4-22 ⁴ Now because they *were* years older than he, Elihu had waited to speak to Job. ⁵ When Elihu saw that *there was* no answer in the mouth of these three men, his wrath was aroused. 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. ⁷ I said, 'Age should speak, And multitude of years should teach wisdom.' ⁸ But *there is* a spirit in man, And the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding. ⁹ 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.' ¹¹ Indeed I waited for your words, I listened to your reasonings, while you searched out what to say. ¹² I paid close attention to you; And surely not one of you convinced Job, *Or* answered his words-- ¹³ Lest you say, 'We have found wisdom'; God will vanquish him, not man. ¹⁴ Now he has not directed *his* words against me; So I will not answer him with your words. ¹⁵ "They are dismayed and answer no more; Words escape them. ¹⁶ And I have waited, because they did not speak, Because they stood still *and* answered no more. ¹⁷ I also will answer my part, I too will declare my opinion. ¹⁸ For I am full of words; The spirit within me compels me. ¹⁹ Indeed my belly *is* like wine *that* has no vent; It is ready to burst like new wineskins. ²⁰ I will speak, that I may find relief; I must open my lips and answer. ²¹ Let me not, I pray, show partiality to anyone; Nor let me flatter any man. ²² For I do not know how to flatter, *Else* my Maker would soon take me away.

Comments & Questions:

3. Notice the respect that Elihu showed his elders in his response (verse 4-7).
4. How do things change beginning at verse 9?
5. What is Elihu saying in verses 10-12?
6. What is Elihu saying in verse 14-15?
7. What do you think of the analogy the Elihu uses in verses 19?

Job 33:1-18 "But please, Job, hear my speech, And listen to all my words. ² Now, I open my mouth; My tongue speaks in my mouth. ³ My words *come* from my upright heart; My lips utter pure knowledge. ⁴ The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life. ⁵ If you can answer me, Set *your words* in order before me; Take your stand. ⁶ Truly I *am* as your spokesman before God; I also have been formed out of clay. ⁷ Surely no fear of me will terrify you, Nor will my hand be heavy on you. ⁸ "Surely you have spoken in my hearing, And I have heard the sound of *your words, saying,* ⁹ "I *am* pure, without transgression; I *am* innocent, and *there is* no iniquity in me. ¹⁰ Yet He finds occasions against me, He counts me as His enemy; ¹¹ He puts my feet in the stocks, He watches all my paths.' ¹² "Look, *in* this you are not righteous. I will answer you, For God is greater than man. ¹³ Why do you contend with Him? For He does not give an accounting of any of His words. ¹⁴ For God may speak in one way, or in another, *Yet man* does not perceive it. ¹⁵ In a dream, in a vision of the night, When deep sleep falls upon men, While slumbering on their beds, ¹⁶ Then He opens the ears of men, And seals their instruction. ¹⁷ In order to turn man *from his* deed, And conceal pride from man, ¹⁸ He keeps back his soul from the Pit, And his life from perishing by the sword.

Comments:

1. Notice in verses 1-7 that Elihu tells Job to prepare himself (v. 5) because Elihu is going to do what the other three did not do, that is, put Job in his place.
2. Notice that Elihu thinks he has wisdom that demands respect (v. 3).
3. In verses 8-14, Elihu summarizes what Job has been saying:
 - a. I am pure, without transgression,
 - b. I am innocent, and there is no iniquity in me (v 9).
 - c. But nevertheless, God is treating like an enemy (vv. 10-11).
4. Elihu feels that this is wrong for Job to say or believe (v. 12)
5. Elihu believes that it makes no sense for Job to be arguing with God because:
 - a. God can do what He wants and not give an account of His actions (v. 13). This begs the question: "Can you trust God even when He allows things to happen to us when it appears to be unfair?" We serve a sovereign God.

- b. God speaks to people in many different ways that people can understand what God is saying, but God eventually opens their ears to understand instruction (vv. 14-16).
- c. God allows us to hear His instructions so that we can turn from our deeds, overcome the pride in us, and save our souls from destructions (vv. 17-18).

Job 33:19-33 ¹⁹ "Man is also chastened with pain on his bed, And with strong *pain* in many of his bones, ²⁰ So that his life abhors bread, And his soul succulent food. ²¹ His flesh wastes away from sight, And his bones stick out *which once* were not seen. ²² Yes, his soul draws near the Pit, And his life to the executioners. ²³ "If there is a messenger for him, A mediator, one among a thousand, To show man His uprightness, ²⁴ Then He is gracious to him, and says, `Deliver him from going down to the Pit; I have found a ransom'; ²⁵ His flesh shall be young like a child's, He shall return to the days of his youth. 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. ²⁷ Then he looks at men and says, `I have sinned, and perverted *what was* right, And it did not profit me.' ²⁸ He will redeem his soul from going down to the Pit, And his life shall see the light. ²⁹ "Behold, God works all these *things*, Twice, *in fact*, three *times* with a man, ³⁰ To bring back his soul from the Pit, That he may be enlightened with the light of life. ³¹ "Give ear, Job, listen to me; Hold your peace, and I will speak. ³² If you have anything to say, answer me; Speak, for I desire to justify you. ³³ If not, listen to me; Hold your peace, and I will teach you wisdom."

Comments:

- 6. Elihu speaks similarly to what the other three were saying, that God punishes people and allow them to feel the pain that come from evil (vv. 19-22).
- 7. In verses 23-24, Elihu expresses the concept of a mediator, like the Christ, with the purpose of taking the punishment for others' sin, to show our sinfulness, and to redeem us from destruction (vv. 23-30).
- 8. In verses 31-33, Elihu appears to be disrespectful to Job, especially in verse 33. Job should not be placed in the position of being talked down to, or to be taught wisdom.

Job 34

Elihu declares that God never acts wickedly nor commits wrong acts.

Job 34:9-19 ⁹ For he has said, 'It profits a man nothing That he should delight in God.'
¹⁰ " Therefore listen to me, you men of understanding: Far be it from God *to do*
wickedness, And *from* the Almighty to *commit* iniquity. ¹¹ For He repays man *according*
to his work, And makes man to find a reward according to *his* way. ¹² Surely God will
never do wickedly, Nor will the Almighty pervert justice. ¹³ Who gave Him charge over
the earth? Or who appointed *Him over* the whole world? ¹⁴ If He should set His heart
on it, *If* He should gather to Himself His Spirit and His breath, ¹⁵ All flesh would perish
together, And man would return to dust. ¹⁶ "If *you have* understanding, hear this; listen
to the sound of my words: ¹⁷ Should one who hates justice govern? Will you condemn
Him who is most just? ¹⁸ *Is it fitting* to say to a king, '*You are* worthless,' And to nobles,
'*You are* wicked'? 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.

Comments:

1. Elihu points out that Job has been saying that it is not worth it to serve God (v. 9).
2. In verses 10-19, Elihu is saying the God is always right. He is righteous and never unjust.

Job 35

Elihu reproves Job for inferring that he is more righteous than God (v. 2).

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

Job 35:10-12 ¹⁰ But no one says, 'Where *is* God my Maker, Who gives songs in the night, ¹¹ Who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth, And makes us wiser than the birds of heaven?' ¹² There they cry out, but He does not answer, Because of the pride of evil men. ¹³ Surely God will not listen to empty *talk*, Nor will the Almighty regard it. ¹⁴ Although you say you do not see Him, *Yet* justice *is* before Him, and you must wait for Him.

Comments:

1. Elihu is saying in verses 10-12, that God made humankind superior to other creation. We must, therefore, understand that if we believe God is always righteous and just in what He does, then God must have allowed things for a good purpose. The question is: "What good purpose is God doing?"

2. If we believe that God is a God of justice, then we must trust Him enough to wait for Him to answer us (v. 14).

Job 36

In Chapter 36, Elihu emphasizes that God is the great Teacher.

Job 36:7-12 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. ⁸ And if *they are* bound in fetters, Held in the cords of affliction, ⁹ Then He tells them their work and their transgressions -- That they have acted defiantly. ¹⁰ He also opens their ear to instruction, And commands that they turn from iniquity. ¹¹ If they obey and serve *Him*, They shall spend their days in prosperity, And their years in pleasures. ¹² But if they do not obey, They shall perish by the sword, And they shall die without knowledge.

Comments:

1. Elihu shows that God has great interest in humankind. He wants to bless us. If we transgress, God will eventually let us know, allow us to hear Him, and command us to turn from iniquity (vv. 9-10). If we obey, God will prosper us, but if we do not obey, we will die without knowledge (vv. 11-12).

2. No one teaches like God:

Job 36:22 ²² " Behold, God is exalted by His power; Who teaches like Him?

Jesus was seen the same way: "Never man spoke like this man" (John 7:46).

Job 37

In Chapter 37, Elihu concludes his arguments to Job. Some of the things he says to Job will also be said to Job by God in the next few chapters. Elihu wants Job to gain understanding that God is beyond comprehension, and everything God does has some purpose.

Job 37:9-24 From the chamber *of the south* comes the whirlwind, And cold from the scattering winds *of the north*. ¹⁰ By the breath of God ice is given, And the broad waters are frozen. ¹¹ Also with moisture He saturates the thick clouds; He scatters His bright clouds. 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. ¹³ He causes it to come, Whether for correction, Or for His land, Or for mercy. ¹⁴ " Listen to this, O Job; Stand still and consider the wondrous works of God. ¹⁵ Do you know when God dispatches

them, And causes the light of His cloud to shine? ¹⁶ Do you know how the clouds are balanced, Those wondrous works of Him who is perfect in knowledge? ¹⁷ Why *are* your garments hot, When He quiets the earth by the south *wind*? ¹⁸ With Him, have you spread out the skies, Strong as a cast metal mirror? ¹⁹ "Teach us what we should say to Him, *For* we can prepare nothing because of the darkness. ²⁰ Should He be told that I *wish to* speak? If a man were to speak, surely he would be swallowed up. ²¹ Even now *men* cannot look at the light *when it is* bright in the skies, When the wind has passed and cleared them. ²² He comes from the north *as* golden *splendor*; With God *is* awesome majesty. ²³ *As for* the Almighty, we cannot find Him; *He is* excellent in power, *In* judgment and abundant justice; He does not oppress. ²⁴ Therefore men fear Him; He shows no partiality to any *who are* wise of heart."

Comments:

1. God is so awesome in majesty, splendor, and power (v. 22). Therefore, we fear Him (v. 24). However, God does not oppress (v. 23) and God is not partial to anyone who are wise (v. 24).
2. Notice verses 12-13, the things that God causes to happen are hard to understand, and we do not understand what the purposes could be. They could be to deal with the land, to correct, or to give mercy. Nevertheless, God accomplishes what He wants to do.
3. Although God is so much greater than humankind and far from us that we cannot find Him (v. 23), yet, God is near those who walk in His ways.

Isaiah 59:1-4 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. ² But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden *His* face from you, So that He will not hear. ³ For your hands are defiled with blood, And your fingers with iniquity; Your lips have spoken lies, Your tongue has muttered perversity. ⁴ No one calls for justice, Nor does *any* plead for truth. They trust in empty words and speak lies; They conceive evil and bring forth iniquity.

Isaiah 55:11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper *in the thing* for which I sent it.

Psalms 34:18 ¹⁸ The LORD *is* near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit.

Isaiah 57:15 ¹⁵ For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name *is* Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy *place*, With him *who* has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.