

Elihu Begins His Speech

Job 32

Introduction:

- Elihu steps in to moderate this debate, and give his two cents
- Knowing when to speak, yet not keeping everything bottled up inside
- Deference and honor for elders
- Job and his three friends have sat down, and neither he nor they have anything more to say
- The reason why his three friends were now silent was because they claimed he was righteous in his own eyes. It served no purpose to argue with a man that was so adamant, v. 1. Those that are self-righteous are indeed hard to be workwith; there is more hope of a fool (a fool of God's making) than of those who are fools of their own making, Prov. 26:12. But they did not judge fairly concerning Job: he was really righteous before God, and not righteous in his eyes only.

- I. Elihu, Job's young friend- v. 2
 - a. This is the first mention of Elihu in the Book of Job
 - b. Modern textual critics believe he is a fictional character added later into the story
 - c. However, his genealogy is key because it shows us that he was not a fictional character!
 - d. Of all the friends of Job, Elihu is the only one with a genealogy. "The Buzite he is called, from Buz, the son of Nahor, who was the brother of Abraham- Genesis 22:21
 - e. His name means- My God is He

- f. V. 6-9- Elihu came as a young man among older men, and because of this was willing to hold his words for a long time.
- g. He was a modest, and humble man. It is a good thing for the younger to learn from the older- Titus 2:4ff
 - i. Usually experience brings wisdom, and takes time
- h. Days should speak. They do. Each has a message.
 - i. Yesterday speaks. It says, "Learn of me." To learn from the experience of the past is one of our prime duties. What is learned by experience is best understood: is best remembered; and is most practical in its influence.
 - ii. Today speaks. It says, "Use me. Turn me and my gifts to good account." Make prompt use of opportunity.
 - iii. Tomorrow speaks. It says, "Let me alone. Leave me. Trust me with God. Do not anticipate me." Wise and kindly message! Four considerations show this. Today has quite enough cares. Anxiety will not help us to bear tomorrow's cares. Christ is Lord of tomorrow. And tomorrow may be quite different from what we expect. (*W. R. Stevenson*)
- i. He was man of great awareness and courage, and one that knew as well when and how to speak as when and how to keep silence.
- j. Elihu believed that just because Job and his three friends were older, it did not mean that they were the only ones with a spirit in a man, and the only one who had received understanding from the Almighty.
- k. There is a spirit in a man: "So the senseis, Every man, as a man, whether old or young, hath a reasonable soul, by which he is able in some measure to discern between good and evil, and to judge of men's opinions and discourses; and therefore I also may venture to deliver my opinion." (Poole)
- l. V. 9- Elihu believed that the older men - for all of their supposed wisdom - didn't understand the matter at all
- m. We can only imagine the reaction from Job and his three friends at these words of Elihu. They were probably united together for the first time in a long time

- n. Ultimately, Elihu's theory is correct- "Age is no just measure of wisdom. There are beardless sages and greyheaded children." (Trapp)
- o. Ecc 4:13- Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished.
- p. Where does true wisdom come from?
 - i. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom!
 - ii. James 1:5, 3:13ff

II. Elihu's motives

- a. (Job 32:1-5) Elihu and his dissatisfaction with the answers of Job's friends.
- b. V. 2- He was angry against Job because he felt that Job justified himself rather than God. Elihu felt that Job was more concerned about being right himself than God being right.
- c. He felt that Job was irreverent, and was more concerned for his own honor than for God's. Elihu's point is that God is not unjust in afflicting Job- and that should have been Job's focus.
- d. V. 3- He was also angry at Job's friends for condemning him as a hypocrite and wicked man without any evidence.
- e. They could not disprove the evidence in fact that Job had been a righteous man
- f. Elihu, as a moderator, took part with neither, but was equally displeased with the mistakes and mismanagement of both.
- g. He had waited, holding his tongue all of this time- but not for much longer

III. Elihu begins his speech- v. 10

- a. V. 14- He will not rehash the arguments made against Job
- b. The friends had forced themselves and Job into a false dilemma: either Job is right or God is right. They could not see or understand how both were right. Elihu could not see this
- c. V. 18ff- He had to finally speak up- ii. "Four times in the Hebrew text we are told that he was angry. First at Job for justifying himself rather than God and then at the friends because of their inability to refute Job." (Smick)

- d. He had these thoughts bubbling up inside and he just had to let it out! We should have the same spirit regarding the Gospel- Jer 20:9 - 9 Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.
- e. Acts 4:20- For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.
- f. V. 18- Elihu certainly was full of words; for this and the next five chapters he will drone on and on, unable to shut up and unable to let anyone else speak. It is by far the longest single speech in the Book of Job, longer than even God's speech in later chapters.

Conclusion:

- All in all we must say that Elihu suffers from some pride issues himself. We notice already that Elihu has spent a whole chapter simply introducing his speech. He hasn't even gotten to the real points he wants to make.
- Elihu was determined to flatter no man, except himself it seems.
- Note: His conviction that he is accountable to God- v. 22
- There could be no better preventive for sin and hypocrisy than this. The conviction that we are soon to appear before God, where all are on a level, and where every mask will be stripped off, and everything appear as it is, If this rule were followed, what a change would it produce in the social, the political, and even the religious world!