

# Elihu Silences Job's Critics: Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar

## Chapters 32:15–33:3

*Job 32:15&16 They were amazed, they answered no more: they left off speaking.<sup>16</sup> When I had waited, (for they spake not, but stood still, and answered no more;)*

**I**MMEDIATELY we see the effectiveness of Elihu's spiritual ministry as Job's friends were (1) amazed, (2) no longer formulating arguments to refute his words, and (3) no longer speaking. This teaches us that hardly anything is more effective at shutting men's mouths than one sent by God delivering His revelations. Then even the most imperceptive men seem to realize that God has entered the room.

*They were amazed* — Job's three friends stood mute, like persons amazed, not knowing what to reply to his arguments, and wondering at his bold and confident assertions concerning his integrity, and his interest in the favour of God, under such terrible and manifest tokens, as they thought them, of God's just displeasure against him. They answered no more...<sup>1</sup>

Though some who speak from a human spirit may entertain the masses, they cannot prompt men to shut their mouths and drop to their knees in repentance. *I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.*<sup>2</sup> This teaches us that God's voice alone has the power to silence rebuttal and stop men from defending their own self-righteousness. It is one thing to use God's name and quite

another thing to speak for Him. *But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the LORD, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.*<sup>3</sup> It takes spiritual power to turn sinners from their evil ways. None shall bring sinners to repentance without first receiving power from the Lord to do so. Jesus equipped His witnesses with the power of the Holy Spirit,<sup>4</sup> and all who are chosen by Him to speak on His behalf will share in this same spiritual power.

"I am full of (or filled with) power by the Spirit of the Lord and of judgment and might." The false prophets, walked after their own spirit, Ezekiel 13:3.<sup>5</sup> Their only power or influence was from without, from favoring circumstances, from adapting themselves to the great or to the people, going along with the tide, and impelling persons whither they wished to go. The power of the true prophet was inherent, and that by gift of "the Spirit of the Lord"...

*I am filled with power* - So our Lord bade His Apostles, "Tarry ye, until ye be endued with power from on high" Luke 24:49: "ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" Acts 1:8; and "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" Acts 2:4. The three gifts, "power, judgment, might," are the fruits of the One Spirit of God, through whom the prophet was filled with them. Of these, "power" is always strength residing in the person, whether it be the "power" (Exodus 15:6; Exodus 32:11; Numbers 14:17, etc.)<sup>6</sup> or "might of wisdom" Job 36:5 of Almighty God Himself, or "power" which He imparts Deuteronomy 8:18; Judges 16:5, Judges 16:9,

<sup>1</sup> Benson Commentary, Job 32:15

<sup>2</sup> Isa. 45:23

<sup>3</sup> Micah 3:8

<sup>4</sup> Acts 1:8 *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

<sup>5</sup> Ezek. 13:3 *Thus saith the LORD God; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!*

<sup>6</sup> Exod. 15:6 *Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.*

Exod. 32:11 *And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand?*

Num. 14:17 *And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying,*

Judges 16:19<sup>7</sup> or implants. But it is always power lodged in the person, to be put forth by him. Here, as in John the Immerser Luke 1:17<sup>8</sup> or the Apostles Luke 24:49,<sup>9</sup> it is divine power, given through God the Holy Spirit, to accomplish that for which he was sent, as Paul was endued with might 2 Corinthians 10:5, "Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." It is just that, which is so wanting to human words, which is so characteristic of the word of God, "power." ...

Lap.: "These gifts the prophets know are not their own, but are from the Spirit of God, and are by Him inspired into them. Such was the spirit of Elijah, unconquered, energetic, fiery, of whom it is said, 'Then stood up Elias as fire, and his word burned like a lamp' (Eccles. 48:1). Such was Isaiah, 'Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew My people their transgression and the house of Jacob their sins' Isaiah 58:1. Such was Jeremiah; 'Therefore I am full of the fury of

the Lord; I am weary of holding in. I have set thee for a trier among My people, a strong fort; and thou shalt know and try their ways' Jeremiah 6:11, Jeremiah 6:27. Such was John Baptist, who said, 'O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?' Matthew 3:7. Such was Paul, who, when he Acts 24:25<sup>10</sup> reasoned of temperance, righteousness and judgment to come, made Felix tremble, though unbelieving and ungodly. Such were the Apostles, who, when they had received the Holy Spirit Psalm 48:8,<sup>11</sup> broke, with a mighty breath, ships and kings of Tarshish. Such will be Elias and Enoch at the end of the world, striving against antichrist, of whom it is said Revelation 11:5, if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies."<sup>12</sup>

The power to silence critics is seen not only in Jesus's ministry<sup>13</sup> but also in those He has ordained for ministry.<sup>14</sup> *The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.*<sup>15,16</sup> Though men have no power in their own words,

<sup>7</sup> Deut. 8:18 *But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.*

Judg. 16:5 *And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth, and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him; and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred pieces of silver.*

Judg. 16:9 *Now there were men lying in wait, abiding with her in the chamber. And she said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he brake the withs, as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire. So his strength was not known.*

Judg. 16:19 *And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him.*

<sup>8</sup> Luke 1:17 *And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*

<sup>9</sup> Luke 24:49 *And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.*

<sup>10</sup> Acts 24:25 *And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.*

<sup>11</sup> Ps. 48:8 *As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever. Selah.*

<sup>12</sup> Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Micah 3:8

<sup>13</sup> John 8:1-9 *Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. <sup>2</sup>And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. <sup>3</sup>And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, <sup>4</sup>They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. <sup>5</sup>Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? <sup>6</sup>This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. <sup>7</sup>So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. <sup>8</sup>And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. <sup>9</sup>And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.*

<sup>14</sup> Acts 6:8-10 *And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. <sup>9</sup>Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. <sup>10</sup>And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.*

<sup>15</sup> II Sam. 23:2

<sup>16</sup> Neh. 9:30 *Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands.*

Matt. 10:20 *For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.*

God does in His,<sup>17</sup> so when men speak and are genuinely led by His Spirit, the Holy Spirit's influence will accompany them. When men speak with neither the wisdom nor the power of God, believers should know that even if they say they come in His name, they have not been sent by Him, for none shall speak for the Lord without divine spiritual power being evident in them.

When men believe God's Word, one result is that they can clearly identify sin in themselves. *What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*<sup>18</sup> A man cannot have true knowledge of his own sin until he believes God's Word, since it takes the light of the Word to manifest the darkness and depravity of human nature.<sup>19</sup> *The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.*<sup>20</sup> Sadly, if men refuse God's Word, they can never discover their own sinful nature.<sup>21</sup> Because they shut out the truth, it is impossible for them to know their true condition. Thinking themselves righteous, they know neither God's Word nor His laws, but ignorance of a sinful nature cannot exist if the heart is actually open to being taught by God. *Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord.*<sup>22</sup>

*Mark 13:11 But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.*

*Luke 12:12 For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.*

<sup>17</sup> *Gen. 1:3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.*

*Ps. 33:6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.*

*Ps. 107:20 He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.*

*Isa. 55:11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*

*Heb. 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

*Heb. 11:3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*

<sup>18</sup> *Rom. 7:7*

<sup>19</sup> *Ps. 119:105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

*II Pet. 1:19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:*

<sup>20</sup> *Ps. 119:130*

<sup>21</sup> *I John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

<sup>22</sup> *Acts 7:57*

*Jer. 20:9*

*Job 32:17-19 I said, I will answer also my part, I also will shew mine opinion.*

<sup>18</sup> *For I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me.*

<sup>19</sup> *Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles.*

Here Elihu reveals how God's Spirit has been ready to burst forth from him. The conviction of the Holy Spirit in a messenger of God is strong enough not only to convict his own heart of sin but also to prevent the presence of sin and erring wisdom to go unaddressed in others. Jeremiah briefly assumed that he could cease to speak in God's name, yet the strong influence of the Spirit of God would not allow him to do so. *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.*<sup>23</sup> So strong is God's Spirit in a man's heart that if the Lord wants His Word spoken, human will can't suppress it.

*Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name:* this daily scorn and reproach which the prophet saw himself exposed unto, for preaching against the sin and wickedness of the people, was a sore temptation upon him to lay down his employment as a prophet. He did not speak this openly, but he spoke it in his heart, he had (as he confesseth) many such thoughts in his breast. But he saith he was not able to do what he thought to do, he found in his heart

a constraint to go on, that when a revelation came at any time from God unto him, it was like a fire in his bones, which he must quench by uttering what God had revealed to him.<sup>24</sup>

No man can resist God,<sup>25</sup> and this is certainly true for those filled with His Spirit to turn men back to the Lord. The burden of God's Spirit in their heart carries so much consternation and compulsion that regardless of circumstances, God's will must be held forth.<sup>26</sup> When God inspires His prophets to speak, none can resist His will, even if it jeopardizes their own lives.

***Job 32:20 I will speak, that I may be refreshed: I will open my lips and answer.***

Only when men obey and act upon what God is working in them will spiritual refreshment come. Compliance with God's will is the only path to quieting a troubled conscience. Elihu knew that the only way he could be relieved from his spiritual burden and find refreshment in his soul was to speak what the Spirit had been urging within.

It is great refreshment to a good man, to speak for the glory of the Lord, and to edify others...<sup>27</sup>

***Job 32:21 Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man.***

One of the great standards for ministers of the Lord is that they are not in any way to be found as respecters of persons. *Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the*

<sup>24</sup> Matthew Poole's Commentary, Jer. 20:9

<sup>25</sup> II Chron. 20:6 And said, O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?

<sup>26</sup> Isa. 29:16 Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?

<sup>27</sup> Dan. 4:35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

<sup>28</sup> Mal. 1:1 The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi.

<sup>29</sup> Matthew Poole's Commentary, Job 32:20

<sup>30</sup> Lev. 19:15

<sup>31</sup> Deut. 1:17

<sup>32</sup> Gen. 25:27&28 And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents. <sup>28</sup>And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.

<sup>33</sup> Gal. 1:10

<sup>34</sup> Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Gal. 1:10-14

*person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.*<sup>28</sup> So also, *Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it.*<sup>29</sup> Impartiality in judgment is the very foundation for proper justice. Observe also that at the core of human partiality and favoritism is personal and selfish gain. This is seen in Isaac's affection for Esau because the venison he ate and relished was hunted by Esau and not Jacob.<sup>30</sup> In short, men who alter their spiritual judgment because it is beneficial to them personally greatly sin against the Lord because he who shows favoritism really favors only himself. *For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.*<sup>31</sup>

In preaching the gospel, the apostle sought to bring persons to the obedience, not of men, but of God. But Paul would not attempt to alter the doctrine of Christ, either to gain their favour, or to avoid their fury. In so important a matter we must not fear the frowns of men, nor seek their favour, by using words of men's wisdom. Concerning the manner wherein he received the gospel, he had it by revelation from Heaven. He was not led to Christianity, as many are, merely by education.<sup>32</sup>

***Job 32:22 For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my maker would soon take me away.***

Flattery is a deceptive sin in that it is generally not recognized until the flatterer

has accomplished his purpose.<sup>33</sup> Also, he who is fond of flattering others is even more fond of flattering himself. Because of this, the flatterer cannot detect the sin that lies within himself. *In their own eyes they flatter themselves too much to detect or hate their sin.*<sup>34</sup>

The word rendered “flattereth” - חָלַק *châlaq* - means to be smooth; then, to be smooth in the sense of being bland or flattering: Hosea 10:2; Psalm 5:9; Proverbs 28:23; Proverbs 2:16; Proverbs 7:5.<sup>35,36</sup>

Elihu knew of the sin of flattery and its consequences.<sup>37</sup> He knew that if he committed it, God would remove him. *The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things.*<sup>38</sup> What flatterers do is smooth over not only their own sin but also the sin of others—the complete opposite work of the Holy Spirit, who convicts men of sin so that they repent of it.<sup>39</sup> The Word of God always maintains its sharpness so that it may cut to reveal the true heart of men.<sup>40</sup> Whereas flattery smooths over and minimizes sin, the Holy Spirit and God's Word expose it. Flattery also requires a dexterous tongue

so what is said is pleasing to people's ears, and many false prophets have gained their religious reputations through flattery. Through flattering divinations and/or false revelations from the Lord, people are told what they desire to hear, not what they need to hear.<sup>41</sup> Corrupt egos are enlarged, and the flatterer's personal standing is increased. The devil also catches just as many unsuspecting people with flattery as he does with persecution. This is what he did in Genesis with Adam and Eve,<sup>42</sup> and it will be the same with us. The purpose of flattery, it should be remembered, is to lead God's people into error. *And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied in Baal, and caused my people Israel to err.*<sup>43</sup> It is those whose merchandise is flattery who cause God's people to believe and trust in lies.<sup>44</sup> Pride and flattery go hand in hand, and God has a great distaste for both, since it is the proud who flatter themselves and others and the proud whom God says, like flatterers, will be cut off.

***Job 33:1 Wherefore, Job, I pray thee, hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words.***

<sup>33</sup> Prov. 20:19 *He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.*

Prov. 29:5 *A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet.*

<sup>34</sup> Ps. 36:2 (NIV)

<sup>35</sup> Hosea 10:2 *Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty: he shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images.*

Ps. 5:9 *For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue.*

Prov. 28:23 *He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue.*

Prov. 2:16 *To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words;*

Prov. 7:5 *That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words.*

<sup>36</sup> Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Ps. 36:2

<sup>37</sup> Prov. 26:28 *A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.*

<sup>38</sup> Ps. 12:3

<sup>39</sup> John 16:8 *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:*

<sup>40</sup> Heb. 4:12 *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

<sup>41</sup> Ezek. 13:9 *And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the LORD GOD.*

Ezek. 22:28 *And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the LORD GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken.*

Jer. 14:14 *Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.*

<sup>42</sup> Gen. 3:5 *For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*

<sup>43</sup> Jer. 23:13

<sup>44</sup> Jer. 29:31 *Send to all them of the captivity, saying, Thus saith the LORD concerning Shemaiah the Nehelamite: Because that Shemaiah hath prophesied unto you, and I sent him not, and he caused you to trust in a lie:*

It is not wrong to implore, pray, or even demand that men listen to our words if what we are about to speak will lead them closer to God. Peter said to the lame man, *Look on us*,<sup>45</sup> so his faith might be focused and the man could be cured of his infirmity.<sup>46</sup> Jonah cried to Nineveh so the people might hear the Lord's warnings and be spared His judgment for their sin.<sup>47</sup> Jeremiah, another minister, was instructed by the Lord to cry in the ears of Jerusalem so restoration with God could be found.<sup>48</sup> Last, it was the apostle Peter who stood up with the eleven and demanded Israel's attention to the great sin committed against Jesus. The result was that about three thousand were saved.<sup>49</sup> This

teaches us that when the Spirit of God is working in men to speak His Word, it is quite appropriate, yea, essential, that people are alerted to the importance of what will be said.

***Job 33:2&3 Behold, now I have opened my mouth, my tongue hath spoken in my mouth.***

***<sup>3</sup> My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart: and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly.***

Seeking to distinguish himself from Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar's words, Elihu declares he will speak with uprightness of heart and clarity of message. True wisdom possesses not only

<sup>45</sup> Acts 3:3–5 *Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. <sup>4</sup>And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. <sup>5</sup>And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.*  
<sup>46</sup> Acts 3:6 *Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.*

<sup>47</sup> Jonah 3:1–5 *And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, <sup>2</sup>rise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. <sup>3</sup>So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey. <sup>4</sup>And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. <sup>5</sup>So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.*

<sup>48</sup> Jer. 2:1&2 *Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, <sup>2</sup>Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.*

<sup>49</sup> Acts 2:14–41 *But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: <sup>15</sup>For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. <sup>16</sup>But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; <sup>17</sup>And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: <sup>18</sup>And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: <sup>19</sup>And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: <sup>20</sup>The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come: <sup>21</sup>And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. <sup>22</sup>Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: <sup>23</sup>Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: <sup>24</sup>Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. <sup>25</sup>For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: <sup>26</sup>Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: <sup>27</sup>Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. <sup>28</sup>Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. <sup>29</sup>Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. <sup>30</sup>Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; <sup>31</sup>He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. <sup>32</sup>This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. <sup>33</sup>Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. <sup>34</sup>For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, <sup>35</sup>Until I make thy foes thy footstool. <sup>36</sup>Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. <sup>37</sup>Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? <sup>38</sup>Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. <sup>39</sup>For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. <sup>40</sup>And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. <sup>41</sup>Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

purity<sup>50</sup> but also clarity. Hence, those who might have previously rejected others' weak and confusing arguments can be persuaded by the clarity and purity of divine revelation. *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*<sup>51</sup> Whereas human wisdom is anything but pure, heavenly wisdom is, and because the wisdom from above has God as its source, it will possess the very same holy attitudes as the Lord. Hence, while carnal and human wisdom will only agitate the confused further, the Lord's wisdom will promote peace.<sup>52</sup> Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar's words did nothing but provoke Job and cause him internal unrest. Yet Elihu's message would do just the opposite. Originating from above, it would prove easy to entreat. Elihu would provide a breath of fresh air for Job, whereas debate and strife had previously ruled the day. Job's friends had spoken of their own will, but Elihu would speak under the direction of God's will.

If God has not commissioned us to speak for Him, it is not enough to claim that we come in His name. Job's friends unintentionally acted like false prophets. God did not send them to speak for Him, yet they ran, egotistically thinking they could serve in His stead. *I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.*<sup>53</sup> It is easy to see why Eliphaz's, Bildad's, and Zophar's words manifestly failed: they told Job things that were not the truth and focused on arguments devoid of God's Spirit.

*I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran,....* They might be sent of men, and be

<sup>50</sup> Jas 3:17 *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*

<sup>51</sup> Jas. 3:17

<sup>52</sup> Rom. 8:6 *For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

<sup>53</sup> Jer. 23:21

<sup>54</sup> Heb. 5:4 *And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.*

<sup>55</sup> Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Jer. 23:21

<sup>56</sup> II Peter 1:21

<sup>57</sup> Jer. 1:5

<sup>58</sup> Matt. 4:18&19 *And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.* <sup>19</sup>*And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.*

Luke 6:13 *And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;*

Rom. 1:1 *Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,*

encouraged by them; but they were not sent of God: it is not only necessary that men employed in religious affairs should have an external call, in an orderly way, from the church of God; but also an internal call from the Lord himself; he qualifying them with gifts, putting his word into their mouths, and inclining their hearts to publish it; see Hebrews 5:4;<sup>54</sup> but these false prophets had no mission nor commission from the Lord, nor were they sent on any errand, or with any message from him; and yet they ran; showed great diligence and zeal, and made haste to tell the people what the Lord had never said to them, but what were the warm imaginations of their own heads and hearts; they ran a race or course of ministry, but it was not good...

*I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied;* wherefore what they prophesied was not the word of the Lord, but what they themselves devised; and so was what was false, as the Targum adds: it is a sad character of men when they speak in public neither by the will of God, nor according to the word of God.<sup>55</sup>

True prophecy sent from God is led by neither human will nor human imagination. Since its source is God, it contains nothing of man. *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*<sup>56</sup> To speak for God, one must first be called by Him. Jeremiah received this call from the Lord even before he was born. *Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.*<sup>57</sup> Many have failed in ministry simply because they sought a divine calling that was not given to them by God. Men cannot possess any gift of ministry without Jesus calling them to it.<sup>58</sup> God sets the

members of Christ's church as it pleases Him,<sup>59</sup> not how it pleases its members. Whenever men arise to speak for God through their own human will and desire, it is an indication of false prophecy. *And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.*<sup>60</sup>

A call is required, not only external, on the part of men, but also internal from God, that one should undertake a pastor's office [Calvin].<sup>61</sup>

All offices and ministries of the church require the call of God. When God has not called a man to speak for Him and yet he still does so, the Lord considers this a great sin against His people. The sentence for this sin in the Old Testament was death, because if the words of false prophets were believed, it would lead to the spiritual death of others. Since they led others to death, Old Testament law demanded that death should be their sentence. Many who were not called by God to speak have committed this sin throughout history; because of ego and chance of gain, they mistakenly thought

doing so would be advantageous. *But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.*<sup>62</sup>

*But the prophet which shall presume to speak in my name,....* Pretending a mission and commission from God, and yet was never sent by him, like the prophets in Jeremiah 23:21,<sup>63</sup>

*which I have not commanded him to speak;* which though true was not to be spoken in a public manner, by assuming a public office, without a divine authority or a commission from God, and much less what was false, and never commanded to be spoken at all by any:

*or, that shall speak in the name of other gods;* the idols of the people, as the Targum; as if any should affirm they were sent by Jove, or inspired by Apollo, as some are said to prophesy by Baal, as if they had received their orders and instructions from him, and were inspired by him, Jeremiah 2:8.<sup>64</sup>

*even that prophet shall die;*<sup>65</sup>

*I Cor. 1:1 Paul called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,*

*59 I Cor. 12:18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.*

*60 Matt. 24:11*

*61 Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Jer. 23:21*

*62 Deut. 18:20*

*63 Jer. 23:21 I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.*

*64 Jer. 2:8 The priests said not, Where is the LORD? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit.*

*65 Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Deut. 18:20*