

The Introduction of Elihu

Job Chapter 32:1–14

Job 32:1–2 So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

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

THE structure of the Book of Job reveals the great importance of Elihu's ministry in preparing Job to hear from the Lord directly.

THE BOOK OF JOB AS A WHOLE.

A | i. 1–5. Introduction. Historical.

B | i. 6—ii. 10. Satan's assault. Job stripped of all.

C | ii. 11–13. The Three Friends. Their arrival.

D | iii. 1—xxx. 40. Job and his friends.

E | xxxii.—xxxvii. Elihu.

D | xxxviii. 1.—xlii. 6. Jehovah and Job.

C | xlii. 7–9. The Three Friends. Their departure.

B | xlii. 9, 10. Satan's defeat. Job blessed with double.

A | xlii. 11–17. Conclusion. Historical.¹

Elihu is the only one whose message Job does not refute, the only one who could silence Job's critics,² and also the only human character in the book whom God Himself does not reprove and correct.³ This fact alone should draw our attention to this relatively obscure biblical figure. Ultimately, Elihu was exactly who he claimed to be—one sent to speak on God's behalf. *Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee that I have yet to speak on God's behalf* (Job 36:2).

Job could not be persuaded of his guilt, nor did his conscience convict him of sin, because he was righteous in his own eyes. When men are righteous in their own sight and claim innocence before God, He will often send a minister. Throughout human history the ignorance of men has required physical messengers led by the Holy Spirit to open their ears. Only then can they hear the great lessons critical for their deliverance, such as that personal righteousness is never greater than God's⁴ and that it is always a sin against heaven to justify self over God (v. 2). God chose Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite,⁵ to introduce these lessons to Job, thus preparing his heart

1 Structure from Bullinger's *The Book of Job: The Oldest Lesson in the World*

2 *Job 32:15 They were amazed, they answered no more: they left off speaking.*

3 *Job 42:7–9 And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. ⁸Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job. ⁹So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD commanded them: the LORD also accepted Job.*

4 *Job 35:1–2 Elihu spake moreover, and said, ²Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's?*

5 *Job 32:6 And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion.*

I Repent in Dust and Ashes

for the entrance of the Lord's own words.⁶ Practically, Elihu's ministry prepared Job for a much greater ministry to follow: the ministry of the Lord Himself. As John the Baptist was a forerunner to Christ,⁷ so does Elihu assume a similar role for Jehovah. It is customary that before sinners are ready for direct exposure to the Lord, repentance of sin must take place. And just as John the Baptist's ministry preached repentance,⁸ so does Elihu's ministry do the same.

In studying the book we observe that Elihu speaks to Job for five uninterrupted chapters. Strikingly, Job offers

no retort or disagreement with any of his words, as he had previously done with his other accusers.⁹ While Job resisted his friends' unjust accusations of committing sin, once Elihu began his address, he remains silent. Perhaps the reason for this is that true wisdom will often silence those who know it is lacking in their own lives. Jesus' words to those who brought to Him the woman taken in adultery is a great example of this,¹⁰ revealing that the words of the Holy Spirit spoken by messengers sent by the Lord often produce speechlessness in the hearers.¹¹ Ultimately, the sword of the Spirit pierces the sinner's heart so ef-

6 *Job 38:1-2 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, ²Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*

7 *Mark 1:1-8 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; ²As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. ³The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. ⁴John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. ⁵And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey; ⁷And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. ⁸I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.*

8 *Matt. 3:1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,*

9 *Job 16:2 I have heard many such things: miserable comforters are ye all.*

10 *John 8:1-9 Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. ²And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. ³And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, ⁴They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. ⁵Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? ⁶This 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. ⁷So 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. ⁸And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. ⁹And 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.*

11 *Luke 14:1-6 And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him. ²And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy. ³And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? ⁴And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go; ⁵And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day? ⁶And they could not answer him again to these things.*

John 8:1-11 Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. ²And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. ³And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, ⁴They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. ⁵Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? ⁶This 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. ⁷So 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. ⁸And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. ⁹And 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. ¹⁰When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? ¹¹She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

fectively that even the tongue is stopped from defending itself.¹² Only by Elihu's spiritual ministry could the self-righteousness in Job be broken, as his other friends' attempts had failed, teaching us that it takes inspired prophecy provided by the Lord for a self-righteous man's heart to be touched. Only then may God teach him about the presence of sin and his need to repent for it. The Lord's Word is essential for God's purposes, and no amount of human wisdom can replace it. *But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth* (I Cor. 14:24–25). Prophecy brought forth from the Lord therefore will do for the unbelieving sinner what human assumption and reason cannot: it will cause him to recognize the presence and reality of God. The Holy Spirit accomplishes this great feat by revealing to men that God knows the thoughts and intentions of their hearts—so that when a man's inner soul is made known to him through both the Word and Spirit of God, the door then opens for the sinner to realize that it is not man who is addressing him, but God.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I Cor. 14:24) The word here rendered “convinced” (*ἐλέγχεται* *elengchetai*) is rendered “reprove” in John 16:8, “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin,” etc. Its proper meaning is to “convict,” to show one to be wrong; and then to rebuke, reprove, admonish, etc. Here it means, evidently, that the man would be convicted, or convinced of his error and of his sin; he would see that his former opinions and practice had been wrong; he would see and acknowledge the force and truth of the Christian sentiments which should be uttered, and would acknowledge the error of his former opinions and life. The following verse shows that the apostle means something more than a mere convincing of the understanding, or a mere conviction that his opinions had been erroneous. He evidently refers to what is now known also as “conviction” for sin; that is, a deep sense of the depravity of the heart, of the errors and follies of the past life, accompanied with mental anxiety, distress, and alarm. The force of truth, and the appeals which should be made, and the observation of the happy effects of religion, would convince him that he was a sinner, and show him also his need of a Saviour.

When a man filled with God's Holy Spirit brings forth prophecy from the Lord, its power will produce conviction of sin for those who believe it. Examples include David, Nineveh, and Saul.¹³ Thus,

12 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.*

13 **David:** II Sam. 11:1–26 *And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem. ²And it came to pass in an evening tide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. ³And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? ⁴And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house. ⁵And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child. ⁶And David sent to Joab, saying, Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David. ⁷And when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded of him how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered. ⁸And David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet. And Uriah departed out of the king's house, and there followed him a mess of meat from the king. ⁹But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house. ¹⁰And when they had told David, saying, Uriah went not down unto his house, David said unto Uriah, Camest thou not from thy journey? why then didst thou not go down unto thine house? ¹¹And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my*

by God's own holy Word, produced by the inspiration of His Spirit, sinners are

wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing. ¹²And David said to Uriah, Tarry here to day also, and to morrow I will let thee depart. So Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day, and the morrow. ¹³And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house. ¹⁴And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. ¹⁵And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die. ¹⁶And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were. ¹⁷And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell some of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also. ¹⁸Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war; ¹⁹And charged the messenger, saying, When thou hast made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king, ²⁰And if so be that the king's wrath arise, and he say unto thee, Wherefore approached ye so nigh unto the city when ye did fight? knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall? ²¹Who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? did not a woman cast a piece of a millstone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez? why went ye nigh the wall? then say thou, Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. ²²So the messenger went, and came and shewed David all that Joab had sent him for. ²³And the messenger said unto David, Surely the men prevailed against us, and came out unto us into the field, and we were upon them even unto the entering of the gate. ²⁴And the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants; and some of the king's servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. ²⁵Then David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it: and encourage thou him. ²⁶And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband.

Nineveh: *Jnh. 3:1-10* And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, ²Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. ³So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey. ⁴And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. ⁵So 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. ⁶For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. ⁷And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: ⁸But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. ⁹Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? ¹⁰And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

Saul: *Acts 9:1-21* And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, ²And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. ³And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: ⁴And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? ⁵And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. ⁶And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. ⁷And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. ⁸And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. ⁹And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. ¹⁰And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. ¹¹And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, ¹²And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. ¹³Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: ¹⁴And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. ¹⁵But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: ¹⁶For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. ¹⁷And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. ¹⁸And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. ¹⁹And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. ²⁰And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. ²¹But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this

brought to their knees to recognize their sins against Him.

Once Elihu had finished addressing Job's sin in chapters 32–37, the Lord commenced His own correction in chapters 38–42. God's reproof and correction of Job included that he had spoken without knowledge¹⁴ and had dismissed God's judgments so that he could maintain his own self-righteousness.¹⁵ Sinners are often willing to condemn God and His dealings with them in order to maintain innocence in their own eyes. By falsely claiming fault with God, this allows for justification of self. And most men, because they love themselves more than the Lord, are much more ready to find fault with Him than with themselves.¹⁶ Though this would not prove true with Job, it will with many. The last eleven chapters of the book reveal the great amount of heavenly correction needed for Job to fully come to know the extent of his sin and the critical need to repent for it. Without the confession of sin there will not be, nor should we expect there to be, forgiveness. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness* (1 John 1:9). Although Job feared the Lord,¹⁷ he still lacked much understanding concerning the Lord's dealings with man. Thus, it would take not only God's messenger, Elihu, but also Jehovah Himself to fully instruct this sincere though self-righteous man in the things still deficient in his faith. Job's

confession at the end of the book helps us to understand the great spiritual lessons he learned and that which God's spiritual correction ultimately instructed him in.

Job 42:1–6 Then Job answered the LORD, and said,

² *I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.*

³ *Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.*

⁴ *Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.*

⁵ *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.*

⁶ *Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

Job's confession of sin ultimately led him to repent in dust and ashes.¹⁸ When the Lord shows a God-fearing man his spiritual ignorance, he will repent. Little will bring a truly godly man to his knees more quickly than realizing that so much of what he has spoken about the Lord has been false. To harm our own name because of sin is a tragedy; to harm God's name is transgression.

Job 32:2–3 Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was

he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

14 *Job 38:2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*

15 *Job 40:8 Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?*

16 *11 Tim. 3:1–2 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholly,*

17 *Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.*

Job 1:8 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

Job 1:9 Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?

Job 2:3 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.

18 *Job 42:6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God.

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

Elihu's wrath was twofold. (1) He was angry with Job's three friends for having no answer for Job yet they had still condemned him. (2) His wrath was directed toward Job because he justified himself rather than God. Wherever two parties have the same flaw of self-righteousness (as proved by Job and his three friends), the revelation needed for deliverance will remain elusive. Often when men cannot help the broken, they will judge them instead. Job's friends had condemned him when in fact they should have spent more time analyzing why they could not persuade him of his guilt. It takes little wisdom to condemn others; it takes much greater wisdom to help them find their way back to God.¹⁹ What these verses also teach us is that spiritual anger prompted by the Lord in His servants should not be considered wrong, and especially so in dealing with those who remain righteous in their own sight.²⁰

Job 32:4–5 Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken, because they were elder than he.

⁵ When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, then his wrath was kindled.

Elihu, maintaining proper respect for those older than himself, waited until Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar had finished speaking. Only then, when it became fully evident that they possessed no real spiritual ability to help their friend, did Elihu feel that he had the permission from God to bring forth his own opinion.²¹ A word fitly spoken is one uttered at exactly the most opportune time,²² and no word can be fitly spoken unless a man is led by the Spirit concerning when he should speak. Examples of this include Peter calling Israel to repent after they had seen the Holy Spirit descend upon the apostles,²³ as well as Nathan's words to David informing him that he was guilty of sinning against Uriah and Bathsheba after Nathan's story of the poor man's lamb.²⁴ Wisdom should teach us that it is not enough to speak revelation from the Lord until it is first revealed when it should be spoken. Pa-

19 Gal. 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

20 Prov. 30:12 There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. Luke 16:15 And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

II Cor. 10:18 For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

21 Job 32:6 And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion.

22 Prov. 25:11 A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

23 Acts 2:38 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.

24 II Sam. 12:1–13 And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. ²The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: ³But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. ⁴And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. ⁵And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die. ⁶And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. ⁷And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; ⁸And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. ⁹Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife

tience is essential in doing the will of God, and the timing of speaking forth the truth is no different. There is always a proper moment to hold forth God's Word, even as there are times that God's Spirit will instruct His ministers to remain silent.²⁵ Elihu possessed the spiritual wisdom to know when to do both. *A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak* (Eccl. 3:7).

(*Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*, Eccl. 3:7) *a time to keep silence, and a time to speak* (k); when it is an evil time, a time of calamity in a nation, it is not a time to be loquacious and talkative, especially in a vain and ludicrous way, Amos 5:13 [*Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it is an evil time.*]; or when a particular friend or relation is in distress, as in the case of Job and his friends, Job 2:13 [*So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.*]; or when in the presence of wicked men, who make a jest of everything serious and religious, Psalm 39:1 [*I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.*]; and so when under afflictive dispensations of Providence, it is a time to be still and dumb, and not open the mouth in a murmuring and complaining way, Leviticus 10:3 [*Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.*].

Job 32:6 *And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, I am young,*

and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion.

(*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, Job 32:6) Elihu professes to speak by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and corrects both parties. He allowed that those who had the longest experience should speak first. But God gives wisdom as he pleases; this encouraged him to state his opinion. By attention to the word of God, and dependence upon the Holy Spirit, young men may become wiser than the aged; but this wisdom will render them swift to hear, slow to speak, and disposed to give others a patient hearing.

Youth alone does not disqualify a man from either spiritual service or divine responsibility. Timothy was a young Christian leader when Paul gave him the charge to preach the Word and assume the role of leading the church. *I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine* (II Tim. 4:1–2). No doubt Elihu was a man like Timothy; though young in years, still the Lord had chosen him for ministry. David too was the youngest of Jesse's sons when God anointed him.²⁶ As far as the Lord is concerned, a humble young man is much more valuable than an aged old man who lacks the spiritual humility to be taught. Jesus also stated that it was necessary for all to maintain the heart of a child in order to enter His kingdom.²⁷ *And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be*

*to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.*¹⁰ *Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.*¹¹ *Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.*¹² *For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.*¹³ *And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.*

²⁵ *Isa. 53:7* He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

²⁶ *I Sam. 16:13* Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

²⁷ *Mark 10:15* Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

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converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 18:3–4).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Mark 10:15) Whosoever shall not receive—Whosoever shall not manifest the spirit of a little child. . . .

As a little child—With the temper and spirit of a child—teachable, mild, humble, and free from prejudice and obstinacy.

No matter a man's longevity in ministry or position in the church, if he does not have a tender and humble spirit to be taught by God, heaven cannot be entered.

Job 32:7 I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.

One might assume that the older men get, the wiser they become; however, this is hardly the case, for true wisdom is not imparted through earthly years but is given solely as a gift from God.²⁸ It is the Lord who imparts spiritual wisdom into men's hearts since it cannot be merely acquired by the length of years they live.²⁹ *For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding (Prov. 2:6).* Wisdom is the first gift and manifestation of God's Spirit listed in I Corinthians 12. *For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit*

28 I Kgs. 4:29 And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore.

Eccl. 2:26 For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit.

Luke 21:15 For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

Eph. 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

Jas. 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

29 Exod. 28:3 And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

Exod. 35:31 And he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship;

Exod. 35:35 Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work.

Exod. 36:1–2 Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whom the LORD put wisdom and understanding to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the LORD had commanded. ²And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise hearted man, in whose heart the LORD had put wisdom, even every one whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it:

I Kgs. 10:24 And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.

II Chrn. 9:23 And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, that God had put in his heart.

Ps. 51:6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

Dan. 2:20–23 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: ²¹And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: ²²He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. ²³I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.

Acts 7:10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.

I Cor. 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

(I Cor. 12:8). For a man to possess the wisdom of God, the Spirit of God must first dwell in him, even as none can truly manifest spiritual power and insight if they lack the Holy Spirit Himself.³⁰ Just as God gives the Holy Spirit,³¹ so too does He provide the special gift of heavenly wisdom through the Spirit.³² *And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore* (I Kgs. 4:29). Men generally have very small and narrow minds constrained by the rigidity of human thought. Yet God gave Solomon *largeness of heart*, increasing and enlarging his thinking capacities so that he might possess the wisdom and ability to accomplish what God had purposed for his life. To then serve the Lord and fulfill His will for our lives, it is essential that God's own wisdom is given us, as no man can properly serve the Lord, and be effective in spiritual ministry without God's Spirit and wisdom leading him.

(Benson Commentary, I Kgs. 4:29) And largeness of heart — Vastness of understanding, or a very comprehensive mind, capable of receiving the knowledge of all things, both divine and human.

It is ultimately the Lord Who opens the mind of man so that He can then teach him the spiritual mysteries of God. *He answered and said unto them, Because*

it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given (Matt. 13:11). By God's own spiritual power are men enlightened to the mysteries of heaven. Yet if the Lord desires to withhold this wisdom from any, then there remains nothing that they can do on their own to help them to gain it. *Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea farther; though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it* (Eccl. 8:17).

(Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Eccl. 8:17) that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: he can find out that it is done, but not the reason why it is done: the ways of God are in the deep, and not to be traced; they are unsearchable and past finding out; there is a depth of wisdom and knowledge, in them, inscrutable by the wisest of men . . .

Job 32:8 But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

These are Elihu's words, and they reveal what every fruitful and faithful minister of God knows: that it is the Spirit of God and the inspiration of the Almighty that produces true spiritual understanding,

30 Rom. 8:9 *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

31 Acts 2:38 *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.*

Acts 8:20 *But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.*

Acts 10:45 *And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

Acts 11:17 *Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?*

32 Exod. 31:3 *And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,*

Exod. 31:6 *And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee; Jas. 1:5 *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.**

that true wisdom is from above,³³ and God is the only real impartor of it.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 32:8) But there is a spirit in man— . . . He now finds that wisdom is not the attribute of rank or station, but that it is the gift of God, and therefore it may be found in a youth. All true wisdom, is the sentiment, is from above; and where the inspiration of the Almighty is, no matter whether with the aged or the young, there is understanding. Elihu undoubtedly means to say, that though he was much younger than they were, and though, according to the common estimate in which the aged and the young were held, he might be supposed to have much less acquaintance with the subjects under consideration, yet, as all true wisdom came from above, he might be qualified to speak. The word "spirit" here, therefore, refers to the spirit which God gives; and the passage is a proof that it was an early opinion that certain men were under the teachings of divine inspiration.

Spiritual understanding is something God must give to man and nothing man can gain by himself. Hence, if true spiritual enlightenment is to be possessed, then it will take the inspiration of the Almighty. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, as is all heavenly wisdom given to God's people today.³⁴

Job 32:9 Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment.

Elihu reinforced his point that though Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar eclipsed him in years, neither their age nor previous

religious experience had brought them to understand not only what Job's sin was, but more importantly, their own. It is impossible through mere human ability to guess where sin lies in men and where it does not. And only a fool will attempt to address sin without first receiving revelation from the Lord as to what specifically the sin is and the extent that it has grown and manifested itself in the human heart.

Job 32:10 Therefore I said, Hearken to me; I also will shew mine opinion.

Elihu, now ready to instruct, summons those present to listen to what he is about to declare.

(Pulpit Commentary, Job 32:10) Therefore I said, Hearken to me. Elihu evidently claims, not exactly what is ordinarily understood by inspiration, but that his spirit, is divinely enlightened, and that therefore he is more competent to take part in the controversy that has been raised than many of the aged. I also will show mine opinion. "I also," or "even I"—i.e. I, young as I am, "will show my opinion," or "utter what I know on the subject." Elihu does not speak of his convictions as mere "opinions," but claims to be in possession of actual "knowledge."

It is not prideful to speak boldly for the Lord, especially when God is inspiring the message.³⁵ Often those filled with the Lord's Holy Spirit must demand men's attention if God's deliverance is to be given to them. Just as Peter and John did at the gate called Beautiful when they instructed the lame man to *look on us*,³⁶

33 Prov. 2:6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

Dan. 2:20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:

Jas. 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

34 II Tim. 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

35 Acts 5:20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

36 Acts 3:4-7 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. ⁵And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. ⁶Then 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. ⁷And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

so does Elihu demand the same spiritual attention and concentration here. When spiritual men inwardly know they have something useful and profitable to say on God's behalf, they will not lack the courage to harken for men to hear them. Jonah heralded the prophecy of Nineveh's destruction if its inhabitants did not repent of their sin,³⁷ Jeremiah cried in the ears of Jerusalem for its sin against God,³⁸ John the Baptist with great boldness publicly proclaimed Christ's coming and had no trepidation concerning those he knew would be the Lord's enemies.³⁹ Where the Spirit of God truly abides, boldness to speak the Lord's words will also abide.⁴⁰ *And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness* (Acts 4:31).

Job 32:11–12 *Behold, I waited for your words; I gave ear to your reasons, whilst ye searched out what to say.*

¹² *Yea, I attended unto you, and, behold, there was none of you that convinced Job, or that answered his words:*

It is worth considering that Elihu could actually be the author of the Book of Job. Elihu's words *Behold, I waited for your words; I gave ear to your reasons* indicate that it was likely he who penned this marvelous historical account of a man afflicted by Satan but then delivered by God. This would explain a great deal, as only two people are good candidates as to who would be most qualified to record the events in Job's life: either Elihu or Job himself. The Lord very likely used one of the most obscure men in the Bible to bring forth some of its most important and precious lessons—that a *broken* and *contrite spirit*⁴¹ is always a pearl of great price, and that when men are led to possess this, God's blessings will await them. Job had previously offered sacrifice and offering for the sin of his children⁴²—now he was ready to be taught that spiritual sacrifice and offering the Lord really seeks

37 Jnh. 3:4 *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.*

38 Jer. 2:1–2 *Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ²Go 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.*

Jer. 7:1–3 *The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, ²Stand in the gate of the LORD's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD. ³Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.*

Jer. 11:6 *Then the LORD said unto me, Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them.*

Jer. 18:11 *Now therefore go to, speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.*

39 Matt. 3:1–5 *In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, ²And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. ³For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. ⁴And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. ⁵Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,*

40 John 20:19 *Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.*

41 Ps. 51:17 *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*
42 Job 1:5 *And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.*

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from men. *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise* (Ps. 51:17).

Job 32:13 Lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom: God thrusteth him down, not man.

Here we have the spiritual reason why Job's three friends were never given the wisdom to help their friend—simply because in human arrogance they would have claimed that they had found out wisdom. But just as a fool does not know God,⁴³ neither will God grant heavenly wisdom to any who wish to use divine wisdom to glory in themselves.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 32:13) You were not permitted to refute or convince him, for if you had been you would have been lifted up with pride, and would have attributed to yourselves what belongs to God.

What was true of Job's friends is equally true of many today, that even if God did provide wisdom for them, men would still claim it as their own. No doubt the old saying, "God created man last so that he could never claim that creation was his own work," has some truth to it.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 32:13) *God thrusteth him down, not man*—These are the words of Elihu. The meaning is, "God only can drive Job from his position, and show him the truth, and humble him. The wisdom of man fails. The aged, the experienced, and the wise have been unable to meet his arguments and bring him down from the positions which he has taken. That work can be done only by God himself, or by the wisdom which he only can give." Accordingly

Elihu, who proposes to meet the arguments of Job, makes no appeal to experience or observation; he does not ground what he says on the maxims of sages or the results of reflection, but proposes to adduce the precepts of wisdom which God had imparted to him; Job 33:4, Job 33:6.⁴⁴

Elihu knew that God alone could convict Job of sin and that the Lord singly could humble him sufficiently enough that he would repent of it, teaching us that it is not men's words that lead people to true heavenly repentance, but only God's.

Job 32:14 Now he hath not directed his words against me: neither will I answer him with your speeches.

Elihu made it very clear that he had absolutely no role whatsoever in the failed attempts to help Job and that the spiritual wisdom that he would bring forth did not come from anything previously heard. This wisdom came from afar and appropriately had God as its true Source. *I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker* (Job 36:3). Elihu's words would bring forth fresh and new spiritual understanding, which also eventually contributed to Job being made ready to hear from the Lord Himself.

(Pulpit Commentary, Job 32:14) *Now he hath not directed his words against me.* Elihu thinks that he can interfere in the controversy with the better prospect of a good result, since he is untouched by any of Job's words, and can therefore speak without passion or resentment. *Neither will I answer him with your speeches.* He is also going to bring forward fresh arguments, which, as they avoid the line taken by the three friends, may soothe, instead of exasperating, the patriarch.

⁴³ Ps. 53:1 *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good.*

⁴⁴ Job 33:4 *The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.*
Job 33:6 *Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead: I also am formed out of the clay.*