

# Elihu Readies Job to Hear God's Correction

## Job Chapter 33:15–26

*Job 33:15 In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed;*

WHEN men are at rest, reviewing the events of their day, God will often use this time to reveal His will through instructing them through dreams and visions in the night—that silent time when daily clutter is at its least and men are the most open to be taught spiritual revelation. When believers, or even sinners, lack the spiritual perception to recognize the Lord's voice in the day, then the Lord will often approach them at night.

Dreams and visions, especially in the Old Testament, were a common means of imparting heavenly instruction. These divine methods of imparting revelation were often able to make an even more indelible imprint on the soul than even the prophet's words. In fact, prophets themselves were often instructed by the Lord through dreams and visions in the night. *And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream* (Num. 12:6). One of the reasons for this is that dreams and visions are very intimate ways that God speaks to men. They originate

inside a man's soul, and as such, they seem to spring from the man himself.

Unbelievers also, like Abimelech, were warned by God in dreams.<sup>1</sup> Pharaoh likewise experienced a vision from God in Joseph's day (though Pharaoh was unable to interpret it<sup>2</sup>) that warned him of seven plentiful years of crops followed by seven years of famine.<sup>3</sup> Thus, Elihu instructs Job in the first of three ways that God speaks to men through dreams and visions in the night.

*(Keil and Delitzsch Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, Job 33:15)* Elihu now describes the first mode in which God speaks to man: He Himself comes forward as a witness in man's sleep, He makes use of dreams or dream-like visions, which come upon one suddenly within the realm of nocturnal thought (vid., Psychol. S. 282f.), as a medium of revelation—a usual form of divine revelation, especially in the heathen world, to which positive revelation is wanting. . . . In this condition of deep or half sleep, *revelat aurem hominum*, a phrase used of the preparation of the ear for the purpose of hearing by the removal of hindrances, and, in general, of confidential communication, therefore: He opens the ear of men, and seals their admonition, i.e., the admonition that is wholesome and necessary for them.

<sup>1</sup> Gen. 20:3 *But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife.*

<sup>2</sup> Gen. 41:32 *And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.*

<sup>3</sup> Gen. 41:1–7 *And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river. <sup>2</sup>And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well favoured kine and fatfleshed; and they fed in a meadow. <sup>3</sup>And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill favoured and leanfleshed; and stood by the other kine upon the brink of the river. <sup>4</sup>And the ill favoured and leanfleshed kine did eat up the seven well favoured and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke. <sup>5</sup>And he slept and dreamed the second time: and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good. <sup>6</sup>And, behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them. <sup>7</sup>And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream.*

## *I Repent in Dust and Ashes*

Through dreams, visions, and revelations that are given from the Lord, the most restless and sometimes troubling nights can prove to be the most life-changing ones.<sup>4</sup>

***Job 33:16 Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction,***

Dreams and vision can be as impactful and instructional to the soul as any revelation given to a man through traditional means. This is seen when the wise men who came to worship the newborn Christ refused to return to Herod and chose another route home, because a dream

had warned them of impending danger.<sup>5</sup> Joseph also was given revelation through a dream, divinely instructed not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife.<sup>6</sup> Later also Joseph was warned in a similar manner to flee into Egypt in order to save Jesus.<sup>7</sup> By dreams and visions believers are both warned and instructed just as clearly as if the Lord spoke to them while they were awake. By this process divine will is sealed, and there remains no doubt that it is the Lord, Who has opened men's ears. It is also worth noting that sinners, and sometimes even believers, can be as deaf and dumb spiritually as some men's senses are impaired naturally.<sup>8</sup>

4 Abimelech was warned in a dream not to touch Sarah, Abraham's wife: *Gen. 20:3, 14* Joseph dreamed he would one day rule over his family, commencing events that would lead him to save them: *Gen. 37:5*

Jacob went to Egypt after a vision: *Gen. 46:1-5*

Gideon led Israel into a winning battle after a dream: *Jdgs. 7:13-15*

Ezekiel had visions of the Almighty on His throne: *Ezek. 1:1-28*; God's displeasure with Israel: *Ezek. 8:1-16*; Israel as a harlot: *Ezek. 15-19*; the valley of dry bones come to life: *Ezek. 37:1-14*; the destruction of Gog and Magog, and peace in their own land for Israel: *Ezek. 38-39*; and a vision of the new temple: *Ezek. 40-48*

Joseph was told in a dream to take Mary as his wife: *Matt. 1:19-24*

After being warned, the Wise Men went another way home to avoid Herod: *Matt. 2:11-12*

Joseph was warned in a dream to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt: *Matt. 2:13-14*

Joseph was also told in a dream it was safe to return to the land of Israel: *Matt. 2:19-20*

Pilate's wife had a dream and warned her husband not to have anything to do with the death of Jesus: *Matt. 27:19*

Ananias' vision told him to go to Saul (later renamed Paul), who had been blinded, and to share the Gospel with him, while Saul had a vision of Ananias coming to him: *Acts 9:10-12*

Cornelius (a Gentile) was told in a vision to find and listen to Simon Peter, which caused Cornelius' household to be saved: *Acts 10:1-7*; *Acts 10:44-45*

Peter had a vision to show him that heaven was opened to anyone who would believe in Jesus Christ, not just Jews: *Acts 10:9-15*

5 *Matt. 2:11-12 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh. <sup>12</sup>And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.*

6 *Matt. 1:20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.*

7 *Matt. 2:13-21 And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. <sup>14</sup>When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: <sup>15</sup>And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.*

<sup>16</sup>*Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. <sup>17</sup>Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, <sup>18</sup>In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not. <sup>19</sup>But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, <sup>20</sup>Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life. <sup>21</sup>And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.*

8 *Ps. 38:13 But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth.*

**Job 33:17** *That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.*

By interceding in men's lives and revealing His will to them, the Lord seeks to prevent the great and dangerous consequences of sinners pursuing their own will. This will is always driven through fleshly pride. It is because of pride that men and even angels pursue their own designs but in the process depart from God's will for their lives.<sup>9</sup> Ultimately man is his own worst enemy<sup>10</sup> as the pride, lust, and self-will within him can easily lead him to depart from God and God's will for his life. To do so will always be spiritually disastrous.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 33:17) That he may withdraw man from his purpose—*Margin, "work." The sense is plain. God designs to warn him of the consequences of executing a plan of iniquity. He alarms him by showing him that his course will lead to punishment, and by representing to him in the night visions, the dreadful woes of the future world into which he is about to plunge. The object is to deter him from committing the deed of guilt which he had contemplated, and to turn him to the paths of righteousness. Is it unreasonable to suppose that the same thing may occur now, and that God may have a purpose in the dreams which often visit the man who has formed a plan of iniquity, or who is living a life of sin? It cannot be doubted that such people often have alarming dreams; that these dreams are such as are fitted to deter them from the commission of their contemplated wickedness; and that in fact they not unfrequently do it.

**Job 33:18** *He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.*

This is the result of God's warnings through dreams and visions; it is to keep men's souls from the pit and their lives from perishing. It is impossible to place too great an emphasis on this great verse, that men are saved from the pit and future destruction only because God has drawn them away from the pride in their hearts, which always will lead to death if left unaddressed.<sup>11</sup> Hence, without the Lord's divine intercession and intervention in men's lives, all sinners, including us, would perish.

**Job 33:19** *He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain:*

Those who insist on disregarding divine will often will be chastened with internal pain, consuming both their bodies and souls. If the Lord's commandments are insufficient to draw men's hearts closer to His will, then bodily pain is purposed to weaken their flesh through warning them spiritually of the dangers of sin and departing from the Lord. Hence, if truth cannot properly grab a man's attention when he is healthy and cause him to repent of his sin, then the Lord hopes that either physical or mental unhealthiness might. Undoubtedly pain will weaken the pride of self-will, which is at the core of men abandoning divine will. Bodily affliction is thus the next divine means

9 Isa. 14:12–15 *How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!* <sup>13</sup>*For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: <sup>14</sup>I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. <sup>15</sup>Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.*

Dan. 4:30–32 *The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?* <sup>31</sup>*While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. <sup>32</sup>And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.*

10 Prov. 14:12 *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*

11 Rom. 8:6 *For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

Elihu reveals that the Lord uses to open men's ears, just as dreams and visions are purposed to do. And though most view sickness, sorrow, and even suffering as punishment, it is often meant to be a spiritual deterrent, with the divine hope that if men experience a little of the fruit of sin, they will abandon continuing living in it.

(*Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Job 33:19–28) Job complained much of his diseases and judged by them that God was angry with him; his friends did so too: but Elihu shows that they were all mistaken, for God often afflicts the body in love, and with gracious designs of good to the soul, as appears in the issue. This part of Elihu's discourse will be of great use to us for the due improvement of sickness, in and by which God speaks to men.

Practically, the Lord allowed Satan to inflict Job's body so that he might learn an even more important lesson, which is the discovery of a broken and contrite spirit,<sup>12</sup> a spirit also that through personal affliction or even spiritual enlightenment has had all fleshly pride broken. Every true child of God also must and will be chastised, and Job's life is a very clear biblical demonstration of this.<sup>13</sup> *But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons* (Heb. 12:8).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 33:19) Elihu now says, that affliction is a part of a dis-

ciplinary government; that it is one of the means which God adopts, when warnings are ineffectual, to restrain people and to bring them to reflection and repentance. This appears to have been a view which was almost entirely new to them.

*And the multitude of his bones with strong pain*—The bones, as has before been remarked, it was supposed might be the seat of the acutest pain; see the notes at Job 30:17;<sup>14</sup> compare Job 20:11; Job 7:15; Job 30:30.<sup>15</sup> The meaning here is, that the frame was racked with intense suffering in order to admonish men of sin, to save them from plunging into deeper transgression, and to bring them to repentance.

**Job 33:20–21** *So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat.*  
<sup>21</sup> *His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen stick out.*

The degree to which the body needs to be afflicted before the spirit is broken, and consequently open to repentance, will be determined by the level of stubbornness in the soul. Therefore some will often need to endure much bodily pain and suffering before they will even remotely consider repenting for their sins.

(*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, Job 33:19–28) Pain is the fruit of sin; yet, by the grace of God, the pain of the body is often made a means of good to the soul. When afflictions have done their work, they shall be removed.

12 Ps. 34:18 *The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.* Ps. 51:17 *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.* Isa. 66:1–2 *Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?*<sup>2</sup> *For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.*

13 Job 2:4–7 *And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. <sup>5</sup>But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. <sup>6</sup>And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. <sup>7</sup>So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.*

14 Job 30:17 *My bones are pierced in me in the night season: and my sinews take no rest.*

15 Job 20:11 *His bones are full of the sin of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust.*

Job 7:15 *So that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life.*

Job 30:30 *My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat.*

So stubborn also are the pride and self-righteousness of sinners that sometimes they will even be willing to sacrifice their own physical lives in order not to have to abandon the pride and self-will within their hearts. This was practically evidenced in Pharaoh, who allowed the destruction of an entire nation,<sup>16</sup> and eventually the loss of even his own life,<sup>17</sup> instead of submitting to God's will. It is also worth noting that he who will not repent for his pride and remains resistant to God's will is only storing up for himself even greater divine wrath and judgment. *But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God* (Rom. 2:5).

**Job 33:22** *Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers.*

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, Job 33:22) *To the destroyers; to the instruments of death or destruction, whether it be angels, whom God sometimes useth in those cases; or devils, who have the power of death. Hebrews 2:14;<sup>18</sup> or diseases, which by God's appointment are ready to give the fatal blow.*

As revealed earlier, the Lord often uses angels and heavenly ministers to warn men<sup>19</sup> just as He uses these same celestial beings to carry out His judgments on the earth.<sup>20</sup>

**Job 33:23** *If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness:*

16 Exod. 7:17–18 *Thus saith the LORD, In this thou shalt know that I am the LORD: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. <sup>18</sup>And the fish that is in the river shall die, and the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall loathe to drink of the water of the river.*

Exod. 9:23–24 *And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. <sup>24</sup>So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.*

Exod. 10:14–15 *And the locust went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. <sup>15</sup>For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt.*

Exod. 12:29–30 *And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. <sup>30</sup>And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead.*

17 Exod. 14:27–28 *And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. <sup>28</sup>And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them.*

Exod. 15:19 *For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea.*

Ps. 136:13–15 *To him which divided the Red sea into parts: for his mercy endureth for ever: <sup>14</sup>And made Israel to pass through the midst of it: for his mercy endureth for ever: <sup>15</sup>But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

18 Heb. 2:14 *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;*

19 Gen. 19:15 *And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.*

20 II Sam. 24:16 *And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite.*

Ps. 78:49 *He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them.*

There is no guarantee that God will send a messenger or an interpreter of His will to the afflicted, but if it is done, it is always a reflection of divine grace. True messengers sent by the Lord are also extremely rare, as Elihu reveals that they remain only *one among a thousand*. This is evidenced throughout biblical history, when similar to Elijah's day, for every one Elijah there were four hundred fifty prophets of Baal.<sup>21</sup> Elihu also reveals that there are but few messengers and interpreters of God's will who will uphold God's uprightness in order that men can come to know that it is not God Who commits sin against man but rather man against God, that the Lord is both righteous and upright and that it is always foolish to accuse Him of committing sin or iniquity in any manner.

*(Benson Commentary, Job 33:23–24) If there be a messenger with him—*If there be a prophet or teacher with the afflicted man; *an interpreter—*One whose office and work it is to declare to him the mind and will of God, and his design in this dispensation of his providence, and what is the sick man's duty under it. *One of a thousand—*A person rightly qualified for this great and difficult work, such as there are but very few; *to show unto man his uprightness—*Not man's, but God's uprightness; namely, his justice in inflicting these sufferings, and the sufferer's desert of condemnation and wrath; God's way of pardoning and justifying the penitent;

his sincerity and faithfulness to his promises, and the necessity of acquiescing in his will without murmuring or repining, and of walking in the way of faith and holiness. *Then he is gracious unto him—*In that case, or upon the sick man's turning to God in true repentance and faith, God graciously pardons his sins, and saves him, probably from his dangerous disease and from death, but, if not, at least from going down to the pit of hell, and from everlasting destruction.

***Job 33:24 Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.***

If sinners heed the words of God's messengers, as Nineveh did with Jonah,<sup>22</sup> their lives can be spared. Because also Job repented for his sin and did as God commanded and prayed for his friends,<sup>23</sup> the Lord found both a ransom and a reason for ending his captivity<sup>24</sup>—as is the case that after all true and sincere acknowledgment of sin, heavenly grace and mercy are shown to the penitent.<sup>25</sup>

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 33:24) I have found—*That is, there is a ransom; or, I have seen a reason why he should not die. The idea is, that God was looking for some reason on account of which it would be proper to release the sufferer, and restore him to the accustomed tokens of his favor and that such a ransom had now appeared. There was now

*II Kgs. 19:35 And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.*

*21 I Kgs. 18:22 Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.*

*22 Jnh. 1:1–2 Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, <sup>2</sup>Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.*

*Jnh. 3:1–3 And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, <sup>2</sup>Arise, 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.*

*Jnh. 3:5 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.*

*Jnh. 3:10 And 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.*

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

*24 Job 42:10 And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.*

*25 Job 42:12 So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.*

no necessity why those sufferings should be prolonged, and he could consistently restore him to health.

A *ransom*—Margin, or, “an atonement.” Hebrew, כֹּפֶר *kôpher*. On the meaning of this word, see the notes at Isaiah 43:3.<sup>26</sup> The expression here means that there was something which could be regarded as a valuable consideration, or a reason why the sufferer should not be further afflicted, and why he should be preserved from going down to the grave. What that price, or valuable consideration was, is not specified; and what was the actual idea which Elihu attached to it, it is now impossible with certainty to determine. The connection would rather lead us to suppose that it was something seen in the sufferer himself; some change done in his mind by his trials; some evidence of acquiescence in the government of God, and some manifestation of true repentance, which was the reason why the stroke of punishment should be removed, and why the sufferer should be saved from death. This might be called by Elihu “a ransom”—using the word in a very large sense.

There can be no doubt that such “a fact” often occurs. God lays his hand on his erring and wandering children. He brings upon them afflictions which would consign them to the grave, if they were not checked. Those afflictions are effectual in the case. They are the means of true repentance; they call back the wanderer; they lead him to put his trust in God, and to seek his happiness again in him; and this result of his trials is a reason why they should extend no further. The object of the affliction has been accomplished, and the penitence of the sufferer is a sufficient reason for lightening the hand of affliction, and restoring him again to health and prosperity.

When men come to know their sin, confess it,<sup>27</sup> and no longer deny its existence

within themselves, then the door is opened for God's forgiveness and mercy to be given to them. *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy* (Prov. 28:13). What this teaches us is that for divine mercy to be given, there must be both a confession and a forsaking of sin. Hence, no sinner should mislead himself to think that without confession of sin God's mercy will ever, nor should ever, be given him.

*Job 33:25–26 His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth:*

<sup>26</sup> *He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness.*

In speaking these words to Job, Elihu hoped to impart unto him seeds of hope—assuring Job that through repentance his body could regain its vigor and his soul rediscover reason to hope. So great then is the mercy and grace of God that when sin is repented of and no longer denied nor covered, the Lord will then allow a man to regain his previous right standing with Him. The final result of forgiveness being granted is that the penitent will be filled with divine joy and ultimately behold even more clearly the Lord in his life. Through confession of sin a clearer view of God will be gained and God's spiritual joy, which is His possession alone, will fill the heart. *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full* (John 15:11). Therefore, a penitent man, it will be proved, will always be a much more blessed and happy man.

<sup>26</sup> Isa. 43:3 *For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.*

<sup>27</sup> I John 1:10 *If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

I John 1:6 *If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:*

