

Chapter 10

The Introduction of Elihu

Job 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 directly from the Lord.

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—xxxii. 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 These facts alone should draw our attention to this relatively obscure biblical figure. The facts therefore indicate that 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 deliverance, such as that personal righteousness is nev-

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.*

The Introduction of Elihu

er greater than God's⁴ and that it is always a sin against heaven to justify self over God (v. 2). The Lord chose Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite,⁵ to introduce these deep and profound spiritual lessons to Job, thus preparing his heart for the entrance of the Lord's own correction.⁶ Practically, Elihu's ministry readied 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 first take place. And just as John the Baptist's ministry preached the need for repentance,⁸ so will 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 three friends.⁹ While Job resisted Eliphaz's, Bildad's, and Zophar's unjust accusations of committing sin, once Elihu begins his address, Job 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 true messengers of the Lord, often produce speechlessness in the hearers.¹¹

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.*

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. 3:1-2 *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.*

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 20:20-26 *And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor. ²¹And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly: ²²Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or no? ²³But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me? ²⁴Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Caesar's. ²⁵And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's. ²⁶And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.*

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.*

Ultimately, the sword of the Spirit¹² pierces the sinner's heart so effectively that even the tongue is stopped from defending itself. Only by Elihu's spiritually-appointed ministry could the self-righteousness in Job begin to be broken. His other friends' attempts to do this had astoundingly failed, teaching us that it requires inspired spiritual prophecy, provided by the Lord, for a self-righteous man's heart to be touched, whereas mere human wisdom attempting to do this will accomplish nothing. *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). Inspired prophetic truth will do for the unbeliever what human assumption and reason cannot—prompting him to recognize the presence and reality of God. The Holy Spirit accomplishes this great feat by revealing to sinners that God knows both their thoughts and the hidden intentions of their hearts. When the sinner's inner soul is made known to him via the Spirit of God, the door then opens for him to realize that it is not man who is actually addressing him but the Lord Himself.

(*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 personal conviction of sin in those who believe it. Examples include David, Nineveh, and Saul.

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 include that he had spoken without knowledge¹³ and had dismissed the Lord's judgments in order to maintain his own self-righteousness.¹⁴ Sinners are often willing to condemn the Lord and His dealings with them in order to hold steadfast to their false belief of being innocent before Him. By falsely claiming fault with the Lord, sinners are allowed to justify themselves. And most, because

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.

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

¹⁴ Job 40:8 Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?

The Introduction of Elihu

they love self more than the Lord,¹⁵ are much more ready to find fault with Him than with themselves.

The last eleven chapters of the book reveal the great amount of heavenly correction needed for Job to come to know the extent of his sin and the critical need to repent for it.¹⁶ 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 things still deficient in his faith. Job's confession at the end of the book helps us to understand one of the great spiritual lessons he learned, that the Lord knows even the thought of sin, hidden and attempted to be kept secret in the heart. *I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee* (Job. 42:2).

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.*

To understand properly the book of Job, Job's confession here to the Lord is critical to remember. For it is not simply Job's words against the Lord that he repents of but also his thoughts, teaching us that what was transpiring inside of Job was even more contentious than what he actually spoke. It was therefore not just Job's words that found fault with God but also his heart, of which a degree of what he felt he wished to remain private.

Job's confession of sin ultimately led him to repent in *dust and ashes*. When the Lord reveals to a truly God-fearing man his spiritual ignorance, he will repent. Little will bring a sincere, godly man to his knees more quickly than when he realizes that so much of what he has spoken concerning the Lord has been both false and in error. To harm our own name because of personal sin is painful; to harm God's name is tragic.

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 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.*

¹⁵ II 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, unholy,*

¹⁶ I John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

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.*

Elihu's wrath was twofold: (1) He was angry with Job's three friends for having no answer for Job yet still condemning him. (2) His wrath was directed toward Job because he had justified himself rather than God. Wherever two parties have the same flaw of self-righteousness (as evidenced 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.¹⁸ What these verses also teach us is that inspired spiritual anger prompted by the Lord in His servants should not be considered wrong or sinful, and especially so when dealing with those who remain self-righteous in their own sight.¹⁹ Elihu's wrath was kindled against Job and his three friends, and very soon a similar spiritual anger would both appear and be manifested by the Lord.

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 maintained proper respect and deference for those older than himself, because not until Job's other three friends had finished voicing their opinions did Elihu, who was younger than all of them, voice his. Elihu's anger stemmed from the fact, that though older than himself²⁰ and supposedly more spiritually mature, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar had offered nothing truly useful to help Job. Job's friends had spoken much, but not a word was fitly and rightly spoken²¹ regarding Job's sin or a way to escape it. A word fitly spoken is one uttered at exactly the most opportune time, and no word can be truly this 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 descending upon the apostles,²² as well as Nathan's words to David informing him that he was guilty of sinning against Uriah and Bathsheba after David heard Nathan's story of the poor man's lamb.²³ Wisdom should teach us that it is not enough to speak for the Lord until it is first revealed when it is right and proper to speak. Patience also

18 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.

19 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.

20 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.

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

22 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.

23 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

The Introduction of Elihu

is often essential in doing the will of God. Since there is a moment when it is righteous to hold forth God's Word, even as there are times that God's Spirit will instruct His messengers to remain silent.²⁴ Elihu possessed the spiritual wisdom to know when to do both. Hence, Elihu had remained quiet, spiritually subject, and discreet in listening to those older than himself until it was fully realized that they had absolutely no answer for Job but had still foolishly condemned him. As with all things, timing—even the time to speak—is everything. *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 32:6–14) 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 for either spiritual service or divine responsibility. Timothy was a young Christian when Paul gave him the charge to preach the Word of the Lord with boldness and assume the role of overseeing the early Christian church.²⁵ No doubt Elihu

*thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;*⁸ *And 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.*⁹ *Wherefore 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 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.*

²⁴ *Mark 14:60–61* *And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?*⁶¹ *But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?*

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.*

²⁵ *II Tim. 4:1–2* *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.*

was a man like Timothy; though young in years, still the Lord had chosen him for a very specific and important ministry. David also was the youngest of Jesse's sons when the Lord anointed him,²⁶ teaching us that a humble young man can be much more valuable in ministry than an aged and foolish old man who also lacks the spiritual wisdom to know either what to speak or when to speak it. Jesus stated that it was necessary for all believers to maintain the heart of a child, regardless of age, in order to enter His kingdom.²⁷ *Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein* (Mark 10:15).

(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 the length in ministry or position in the church, if men do not have the heart of a child, then heaven cannot be entered nor others helped in their time of need.

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 generally not the case, since true wisdom is not imparted through the number of years lived but rather is solely a gift from God.²⁸ It is the Lord Who imparts wisdom into men's hearts;²⁹ consequently, without His doing so, it cannot be actually possessed. *For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and under-*

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 Matt. 18:3–4 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

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.

Ecl. 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. 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:

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.

I Kgs. 10:24 And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which 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.

The Introduction of Elihu

standing (Prov. 2:6). Spiritual wisdom is the first gift listed in connection to possessing the Holy Spirit 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* (I Cor. 12:8). For a man to possess the wisdom of God, the Spirit of God must dwell in him. Hence, just as God gives the Holy Spirit,³⁰ so too must He impart the gift of divine wisdom for any to possess it.³¹ Men generally have very small minds, constrained by rigidity of human thought. In contrast to this, the Lord gave Solomon what was said to be *largeness of heart*, or a heart that was able to be instructed in, and enlightened to, understanding the will of God and how it was to be applied in leading the people of God. *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).

(*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.

Jesus spoke of giving spiritual enlightenment to some while withholding it from others. *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). Without wisdom being given to men by God, it is impossible for them to understand

any of the workings of God. For this, both the Spirit of God and the gift of wisdom are necessary. *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 produce true spiritual understanding in the soul, that true wisdom is received from above³² and cannot be gained through natural means.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Job 32:8) *But there is a spirit in man*—... 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

³⁰ Luke 11:13 *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?*

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 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?*

³¹ 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;*

³² 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:*

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.

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 their previous religious experience had brought them to understand not only the nature of Job's sin but more importantly, how to help him to recover from it.

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

Elihu, now ready to instruct, summons those present to hearken to what he is about to reveal.

(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 if God is inspiring the message.³³ Just as Peter and John at the gate called Beautiful demanded the lame man to *look on us*,³⁴ so does Elihu demand the same spiritual attention given to him here. Jonah also heralded the prophecy of Nineveh's destruction if its inhabitants did not repent of their sin.³⁵ Jeremiah likewise cried to open the ears of those in Jerusalem for their sins against God,³⁶ and John the Baptist also with great boldness publicly proclaimed Christ's coming.³⁷ Thus, where the Spirit of the Lord truly abides, boldness to speak on God's behalf will also abide.³⁸

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

34 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.

35 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.

36 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.

37 Matt. 3:1–3 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.

38 Acts 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

Acts 4:31 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.

The Introduction of Elihu

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. This would explain a great deal, as only two people are realistic candidates as to who would be most qualified to record the events in Job's life: either Elihu or Job himself. Hence, the Lord very likely used one of the most obscure men in the Bible to bring forth one of the most important messages—that a *broken and contrite spirit* is always a pearl of great price. And to possess this, God will not despise. *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise* (Ps. 51:17).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Ps. 51:17) *Thou wilt not despise*—Thou wilt not treat with contempt or disregard. That is, God would look upon them with favor, and to such a heart he would grant his blessing. See the notes at Isaiah 57:15;³⁹ notes at Isaiah 66:2.⁴⁰

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

Here we see the spiritual reason that Job's three friends were never given the wisdom to help their friend—simply because in human arrogance they would have

claimed that they themselves had found out wisdom. But just as a fool does not know God,⁴¹ neither will God grant heavenly wisdom to any who secretly desire to use divine wisdom as a means for glorying 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 them spiritual wisdom, the praise would go not to God but rather only to themselves. No doubt the old saying that the Lord created man last so that he could never claim that creation was his own work has a realistic measure of 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 33:6.⁴²

Acts 14:3 Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

Acts 19:8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

³⁹ *Isa. 57:15* For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

⁴⁰ *Isa. 66:2* 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.

⁴¹ *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.

⁴² *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.

Elihu knew that the Lord alone could convict Job of sin and that His divine spiritual correction was necessary to sufficiently humble Job in order that he might know the real depth of his sin.

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 previous failed attempts to help Job. Elihu will also reveal later in the book that he would both search and fetch his wisdom from afar.⁴³ Because of this, that His source was from the Spirit of the Almighty, Elihu's answers to Job's problems would con-

tain a spiritual newness and freshness not found in any of the preceding arguments of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, as well as Job himself. Elihu's words would bring forth new spiritual understanding, which would both humble and ready Job for the Lord's entrance.

(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 *Job 36:3 I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.*

