

Session 12

Elihu's Reproof of Job

Job Chapter 33:4–33:14

Scriptures

<i>Job 33:4</i>	<i>Psalms 97:2</i>	<i>Job 33:10–11</i>
<i>Psalms 100:3</i>	<i>Exodus 33:20</i>	<i>Job 33:12</i>
<i>Job 33:5</i>	<i>Job 33:8–9</i>	<i>Proverbs 19:3</i>
<i>Job 33:6</i>	<i>Job 27:6</i>	<i>Job 33:13</i>
<i>Job 13:23</i>	<i>Job 42:6</i>	<i>Romans 14:12</i>
<i>Job 33:7</i>	<i>Job 23:10</i>	<i>Acts 17:31</i>
<i>Exodus 20:19</i>	<i>Job 40:4</i>	<i>Job 33:14</i>
<i>II Chronicles 6:1</i>	<i>Proverbs 30:12</i>	<i>Psalms 119:71</i>

Job 33:4 The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.

By acknowledging his Creator, Elihu revealed he knew the Lord as the true source of his life.

“As a man; so every man is made by God, and not by himself” (Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible, Job 33:4).

If men know themselves as made by God, and not gods themselves, they will pity the transgressor and not harshly judge him.

Elihu rightfully places himself on the same natural and human level as Job, in an attempt to help him realize that it was not human pride that was leading his correction.

Where Elihu did distinguish himself from Job, is by his possessing and obeying the Spirit of God within him.

Elihu would speak through being inspired by the Spirit of God, and his spiritual humility here proves that he is worthy of the task.

What Elihu speaks as true of himself is true of all mankind.

Psalms 100:3 Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Job 33:5 If thou canst answer me, set thy words in order before me, stand up.

It is necessary in all criminal proceedings that the defendant be given ample opportunity to mount a proper defense.

Elihu assures Job that if there was a fault in his own spiritual reasoning and conclusions, then Job would be given the opportunity to voice an objection. Yet, time would reveal that unlike the words of Job’s other three friends, the truth of Elihu’s message could not be refuted. Its source was the Lord, and it would begin to accomplish His divine purpose in Job’s life.

Let us also remember, Elihu is the only human character in the Book of Job whom God does not single out for divine reproof.

He is also the only human admonisher of Job whom Job listens to without either rebutting or denying the charges brought against him.

Whereas previously Job had defended both his faith and his person, now he does neither. By this fact alone we can rightfully assume that Elihu was indeed who he claimed to be, one sent by God, similar to John the Baptist (Matt. 3:1–3), to ready Job for the arrival of the Lord Himself (Job 36:2).

Job 33:6 Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead: I also am formed out of the clay.

Job had prayed for a mediator and intercessor to make known to him his sin; Elihu would become just this.

Job 13:23 How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 13:23

How many are mine iniquities and sins?—Job takes the place of the plaintiff or accuser. He opens the cause. He appeals to God to state the catalogue of his crimes, or to bring forward his charges of guilt against him. The meaning, according to Schultens, is, "That catalogue ought to be great which has called down so many and so great calamities upon my head from heaven, when I am conscious to myself of being guilty of no offence." God sorely afflicted him. Job appeals to him to show why it was done, and to make a statement of the number and the magnitude of his offences.

Make me to know—I would know on what account and why I am thus held to be guilty, and; why I am thus punished.

Job had wished for one capable of convincing him of sin, and if someone could be found, then his prayer would be answered.

Ultimately, it is only the Lord through the power of the Holy Spirit Who can convict men of sin, and only those actually led by It, who can assist in bringing other sinners to true repentance.

This is also why Job's other three friends had failed to convince Job of sin, simply because the Lord was neither inspiring their words, nor their ministries. They had spoken without being led by the Spirit of the Lord, and their failure and spiritual inability to help Job confirmed this.

The Lord knows the hearts of all men, and surely He will never give either spiritual power or spiritual authority to those not purposed to speak on His behalf.

God also imparts no heavenly gift, nor divine revelation, merely for a man's personal glory and/or religious advancement, since all gifts, powers, and endowments of the Spirit, are not given for the personal advancement of the recipient, but for the edification, healing, and/or illumination of those to whom they are sent.

Job 33:7 Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee.

Elihu well knew the terror that could overcome sinners when required to stand before the Lord in judgment; thus, he assures Job that his words would not compound Job's potential fear.

Where carnal judgment is heavy upon those whom it is directed, Christ's words are light, even when given in the form of reproof and correction.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 33:7

Behold my terror shall not make thee afraid—Job had earnestly desired to carry his cause directly before God, but he had expressed the apprehension that he would overawe him by his majesty, so that he would not be able to manage his plea with the calmness and self-possession which were desirable. He had, therefore, expressed it as his earnest wish, that if he were so permitted, God would not take advantage of his majesty and power to confound him; see the notes at Job 13:21. Elihu now says, that the wish of Job in this could be amply gratified. Though he spake in the name of God, and it might be considered that the case was fairly carried before him, yet he was also a man. He was the fellow, the equal with Job. He was made of the same clay, and he could not overawe him as the Almighty himself might do. There would be, therefore, in his case all the advantage of carrying the cause directly up to God, and yet none of the disadvantage which Job apprehended, and which must ensue when a mere man undertook to manage his own cause with the Almighty.

Until sinners come to realize God's true character and are cleansed of their sin, they will naturally fear the thought of entering His presence.

The Israelites begged and pleaded with Moses to intercede on their behalf, because of fear, in order that they might not need to have direct communication with the Lord.

Exodus 20:19 And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

God's glory is so great and the light of His person so radiant, that Scripture reveals that the Lord surrounds Himself in a cloud of thick darkness.

II Chronicles 6:1 Then said Solomon, The LORD hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness.

So also,

Psalms 97:2 Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.

The Lord surrounds Himself in darkness so that His presence will not destroy those too unholy to endure it. Hence, the Lord appeared on Mt. Sinai in a thick cloud (Exod. 19:9), and shielded His true celestial glory from Israel, even as He led the Israelites on their journey to Canaan, through His glory being hidden in a cloud (Exod. 13:21).

Practically, it is impossible for any mortal creature to observe God's true light and celestial glory and not be consumed by it.

Exodus 33:20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

Benson Commentary, Exod. 33:20

Thou canst not see my face—The full display of my glory, that *light inaccessible*, before which the angels stand, but which would be insufferable to mortal eyes; this *no man can see and live*.

Given the powerful and intimidating nature of God, it is not surprising that sinners shall hesitate in desiring direct communication with Him.

The sin in man no doubt highly cautions him to keep a great distance between himself and the Lord, absent approaching Him with full and complete repentance for his sin.

And though men are surely not wise, they do possess enough spiritual sense to realize that if they are in sin, they remain unworthy to stand in the divine, holy, and fearful majesty of God.

It is also worth noting that Jesus our Lord, will need to transform our own bodies, in order that we may both safely and with joy eventually see Him as He is (Phil. 3:21).

Job 33:8–9 Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words, saying,

⁹ I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me.

Though Job did not use these exact words, Elihu summarizes his inward confession of claiming innocence and lacking any provable iniquity. Job's insistence to maintain personal integrity and righteousness is seen in his memorable, though demonstrably wrong declaration:

Job 27:6 My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.

No doubt what Job uttered in chapter 27 was greatly revised in chapter 42.

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

What men claim of themselves regarding their character is seldom right or the truth.

This is evidenced when Peter proclaimed that he would never deny the Lord Jesus but then undoubtedly did (Luke 22:54–62).

Job also improperly presumed that he would be so well vindicated of being confirmed righteous before God, that after his trial he would come forth as pure gold.

Job 23:10 But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

What Job previously viewed as his own personal righteousness and strong religious integrity greatly changed, once he came to realize the extent of his sin committed against the Lord. For then, after true spiritual illumination, he would no longer view himself as a righteous man, one who was as pure as gold, but rather as a sinner stained and made vile by sin.

Job 40:4 Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.

One of the great initial purposes of the Holy Spirit is to convict men of sin (John 16:8). Just as light makes known darkness, the Lord's Holy Spirit will with great force convince men that darkness lives within themselves.

Any also who have not sincerely come to know themselves to be a sinner, prove, that they neither know the Lord, nor their own unholy nature. Since it is only those whose eyes are spiritually blind who cannot see their naturally-born sinful condition.

Proverbs 30:12 There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.

In the end, and in the Lord's sight, all mankind has gone astray, and there is not even one righteous, no, not one (Rom. 3:10–12). Though Job was not aware of this spiritual truth at the beginning or middle of his trial, at the end he surely would be.

Job 33:10–11 Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy, ¹¹ He putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths.

Through Elihu's correction we begin to observe Job's first accusative and observable sin, which was not only labeling God his enemy, as he had previously done in error (Job 19:11), but now there is actual public blame for the Lord sinning against him.

The repetition of *he* in these verses reveals the great emphasis that Job has openly placed upon God for placing him in captivity.

Job 33:12 Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man.

Belief in human purity, will very quickly transform into rebelling against divine authority.

He therefore who thinks himself pure in his own eyes, will be the first to believe that God is unjust towards him.

Because sinners view themselves as without sin, they will attribute sin to Him Who has none.

The man also who is prone to dangerously find fault with the Lord, innately believes that there is no true fault within himself.

Proverbs 19:3 The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the LORD.

Time would prove that the thoughts, opinions, and false beliefs which Job held of the Lord contained great error.

No one also would dare to call the Lord into question, let alone speak against His government, unless he internally believed, at least to a degree, himself equal with Him.

At the core of all spiritual rebellion remains the devilish and perverted belief that sinful and fallen man, is on the same level as the Lord, and thus has a legitimate spiritual right to judge Him.

For none also will bring accusation against any, unless they believe themselves either superior or equal to them.

Job 33:13 Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters.

It is because of vanity that men strive against the Lord and because of pride that they assume the Lord must give account to them.

So twisted also is the sinner's heart that he thinks himself the Lord's judge.

In actuality, it will never be God Who shall be forced to give account to man, but man, who must one day stand before the holy tribunal of God.

Romans 14:12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

The apostle Paul spoke of that day when the Lord will judge the world in righteousness by that Man Whom He has appointed.

Jesus' resurrection from the dead proved that He would be this Man.

Acts 17:31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Job 33:14 For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not.

Job had complained of the Lord not responding to his pleas, but Elihu reveals that God does speak to men, though they perceive it not. Was it perhaps that the Lord had spoken to Job, not only once but possibly twice, and yet Job could not perceive it?

It is also not the fault of God that men cannot perceive His voice, and are so dulled in spiritual perception, that they cannot recognize the Holy Spirit's presence.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 33:14

For God speaketh once—The object of what is here said is, to show the reason why God brings affliction upon people, or to explain the principles of his government which Elihu supposed had been sadly misunderstood by Job and his friends. The reason why he brings affliction, Elihu says, is because all other means of reclaiming and restraining people fail. He communicates his will to them; he speaks to them again and again in dreams and visions; he warns them of the error of their course Job 33:14–17, and when this is all ineffectual he brings upon them affliction. He lays them upon their bed where they must reflect, and where there is hope that they may be reclaimed and reformed, Job 33:18–28.

Yea, twice—He does not merely admonish him once. He repeats the admonition when man refuses to hear him the first time, and takes all the methods which he can by admonition and warning to withdraw him from his wicked purpose, and to keep him from ruin.

Yet man perceiveth it not—Or, rather, "Although he does not perceive it or attend to it." ... Of the truth of what Elihu here says, there can be no difference of opinion. It is one of the great principles of the divine administration that the sinner is often warned, though he heeds it not; and that God sends repeated admonitions even when people will not regard them, but are bent on their own ruin.

In truth, and according to Elihu's words, the Lord had spoken to Job, and more than once, but Job, because of spiritual dullness, either had not truly heard, or refused to hear, God's internal promptings in his heart.

Yea, the Lord does speak, not once, but twice, but it is men that perceive Him not.

Though Job was initially unaware of this, both affliction and then correction, would be necessary for him to truly learn God's involvement in his life.

Hence, by the end of the book, just like the psalmist, Job will with both joy and certainty view all that he has went through in coming to more properly know God, as a good thing.

Psalm 119:71 It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.

Once on the other side of spiritual trials and afflictions, true believers will thank God for them.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Ps. 119:71

It is good for me that I have been afflicted—See the notes at Psalm 119:67. Whatever may have been the form of the affliction, it was good for me. The design was benevolent; the result has been my own benefit. This will be the experience sooner or later resulting from all the afflictions of the righteous.

That I might learn thy statutes—That I might be brought more fully to understand what they require; and that I might be led to conform to them. It is implied here

(a) that this is the tendency of affliction; and

(b) that this is an advantage—a good.

Anything that will lead a man to obey God is a blessing and a favor. Whatever leads a sinner to secure the salvation of his soul is a gain to him. No matter what it may cost; no matter what he may be required to give up; no matter to what persecutions and troubles it may expose him; no matter what he may suffer, or how long he may suffer; no matter though poverty, contempt, toil—even the rack or the stake—may be the consequence of his religion—yet it is again to him; and he will be thankful for it in the end...

