

Job

How Do We Know What We Think We Know?

Sunday School Lesson #11

- I. ELIHU — TESTIMONY TO GOD’S FAITHFUL MESSAGE IN THE WORLD (HEBREWS 11:6-7)
 - A. Elihu’s faithful witness to the truth of God condemns the worldview of the four elders
 1. Job — Appeal to self-righteousness
 2. Eliphaz — Appeal to Metaphysical
 3. Bildad — Appeal to Empiricism
 4. Zophar — Appeal to Authority
 - B. By clearly presenting the truth of God devoid of appeals to metaphysical experience, empirical tradition or self-authority he soundly condemns Job’s self-righteousness as wickedness, as sin
 - C. He is the clear example of how the believer who speaks the truth will illuminate the errors of others (2 Corinthians 2:14-17)
 1. To the lost the true believer will be the aroma of death for God’s truth will reveal the unbeliever’s lost condition
 2. To the saved the true believer will be the aroma of life as God’s truth will confirm the truth of one’s beliefs
- II. ELIHU ANSWERS JOB AND THE THREE ELDERS (JOB CHAPTERS THIRTY-TWO THROUGH THIRTY-NINE)
 - A. Elihu lays the foundation of the words he will speak — the inspiration of God that gives the godly understanding (1 Corinthians 2:11-13)
 1. This demolishes the strongholds the elders used to justify the correctness of their arguments against Job
 - a) Their arguments were empty, had no convicting force to show Job the error of his ways
 - b) This is because their arguments were based on false assumptions and only strengthened Job’s conviction of his righteousness; thus, making them agents of Satan rather than of God
 2. This illustrates the major flaw in Job that he had not perceived despite all his religious piety and practice — his innate sinfulness
 - a) Job substituted works for faith because he did not have a relationship with God
 - b) Job believed that he could argue his righteousness before God and be vindicated

- c) Yet, Job believed that God was
 - 1) A bully who did not care about man, including himself (What kind of a hearing would you receive from such a god?)
 - 2) Wrong for “punishing” Job showing that he did not understand the basic definition of God (God is immutable (unchanging) and incapable of making an error which would violate His omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotent and the only source of righteousness.)
 - d) Job’s arguments on God were no more rationale than his partners showing that he was no more righteous than they
- B. Elihu had waited respectfully for the elders to help Job only to discover that they had an incorrect understanding of God
- 1. The Old Testament frequently flies in the face of tradition and eldership to fulfill the prerogatives of God.
 - a) God chose Jacob over the elder Esau
 - b) God chose Isaac over the elder Ishmael
 - c) Christ chooses the rejected people of the world to receive His gospel message (1 Corinthians 1:26-29)
 - 2. This does not mean that the younger have license to disrespect the elders, as was popularized in the 1960s and remains with us today as an acceptable form of childhood behavior
 - a) Arguments are not accepted based on these logical fallacies we have discussed in Job, to include age
 - b) Arguments, statements of truth are proved and accepted based solely on the preponderance of evidence showing their veracity
 - 1) One’s worldview must be guided by the Bible
 - 2) One’s understanding of the Bible must be guided by correct hermeneutics
 - 3) One’s trust in the Bible must be grounded in the witness of the indwelling Holy Spirit which will testify according to the word of God contained in the Bible
 - 3. The sole criteria for speaking is speaking God’s truth no matter what one’s age, position, sex and so forth which means you *must* read the Bible! (Matthew 21:14-16)
- C. Elihu’s methodology
- 1. He LISTENED!
 - 2. He THOUGHT!

3. He COMPARED his opinions to God's Word!
 4. He SPOKE:
 - a) Respectfully
 - b) Clearly
 - c) Concisely
 - d) Truthfully
 - 1) Promoting God's righteousness
 - 2) Illustrating man's sinfulness
 - 3) Providing God's Gospel
- D. Elihu clearly delineates between God's absolute truth and his understanding of God's truth
1. The four elders all spoke as if they had intimate, absolute knowledge of God, which they obviously did not possess — they were not saved and therefore had NO true knowledge of God
 - a) They were passing their opinions as facts when their opinions did not even qualify as logical inferences thus violating the fourth Law of Logic
 - b) Each man was so intent on promoting his own view of works-based religion that he had no ability to listen or analyze contrary opinions (1 Corinthians 2:14)
 - c) The cacophony of words only obfuscated what little true understanding each man may have possessed
 2. Elihu clearly states when he is giving his thoughtful opinion based on the inspiration that God has given him
 - a) The Hebrew word (h1843) translated as opinion (ESV) really means to infer from knowledge (this word is found only five times and only in Job in the mouth of Elihu [32:6, 10, 17; 36:3; and 37:16]) congruent with the fourth Law of Logic
 - b) God guides each of us in our understanding of Him according to our desire to truly know Him (1 Corinthians 2:12-13)
 - c) Meditating (analyzing) what God's Spirit has taught us by comparing Scripture with Scripture we then make *application* of His Word according to our understanding (opinion)
 - d) Elihu's "opinion" is not based upon his own thoughts ("I think", "I feel" or "I believe") but upon analysis of God's inspiration and this holds true today
 3. This prevents Elihu from make the mistake the others made

- a) Thinking they also had the mind of God so they could instruct Him (especially Job)
 - b) God was developing His mind in Elihu but toward understanding what God was teaching him, NOT to instill pride so Elihu could instruct God
 - c) God in Christ is still doing this in His people today (1 Corinthians 2:16)
4. Therefore, Elihu cannot contain the truth of God, just as we should not also when hearing the foolishness of those who claim to know better

III. ELIHU REBUKES JOB (JOB CHAPTER 33) [ELIHU QUOTES JOB THEN REFUTES JOB'S CLAIMS BASED ON GOD'S TRUTH)

- A. Elihu does not promote himself above the others
1. He asserts that God has made him and not he himself
 2. He freely acknowledges that he is a man born of the flesh the same as them
 3. He is NOT in a position of power or authority so they should not agree based on fear or any other logical fallacy
- B. Job's words
1. Job claimed to be pure, without sin (Job 9:21; 10:7; 12:4; 13:18; 16:16-17; 23:10-11)
 2. Job claimed that God counted Job as His enemy and basically "punished" him unjustly (Job 27:1-2)
- C. Elihu's response
1. Elihu tells Job that he is wrong
 - a) Yes, God is greater than man
 - b) Job claimed that God would not answer him but Elihu contends that God does speak to man in multiple ways though it may not be in the manner that Job (or you) expect
 - 1) God may speak to a person through visions in the night, seen occasionally in the Old Testament but not a reliable means of communication, especially today when Christians have the indwelling Holy Spirit.
 - 2) God may afflict a person with illness or chronic pain bringing that person close to or to death
 2. Elihu tells Job that God is merciful looking at man's destiny from an eternal perspective
 - a) God sends a mediator, a messenger, a witness (could that be *you*) to deliver one from the pit (eternity without God) as a merciful act

- b) God has found a ransom to pay for the transgression of God's righteousness
 - c) God may do this several times during a person's life to bring him, or her, to the point of accepting the Gospel
3. This Hagiazo process results in man praying to God and receiving salvation
- a) Righteousness is restored to man
 - b) The redeemed is humbled understanding that
 - 1) He had perverted what was right
 - 2) God did not demand of him a full accounting of justice but clothed him in the righteousness of the ransom sacrifice
 - 3) That person praises God's graciousness and mercy to others
4. Elihu reasserts that he is not interested in humbling Job
- a) He wants Job to speak if he understands the truth that Elihu is speaking or else be silent and listen so that he may understand the truth of God and be saved
 - b) Elihu does not want to win an argument but to help Job understand true righteousness so that he may look upon the *light* and avoid the pit