

In coming to chapter 32, we come to a transition. From chapter 3-31 we considered three rounds of discussion between Job and his friends. With the end of chapter 31, these discussions have ended (thus, chapter 31 ends with the words – 'the words of Job are ended' and 32 begins with the words – 'so these three men ceased answering Job').

Beginning with chapter 32 we are introduced to a young man named Elihu, who speaks uninterruptedly through chapter 37. He begins by rebuking Job and his three friends, and then gives four back-to-back speeches wherein he largely vindicates God.

Thus, it becomes rather evident throughout these four speeches (6 chapters), that while Elihu doesn't take sides, he recognizes that Job's friends were terribly out of order, and that Job too at times spoke harsh against God. There's a sense in which, Elihu let's all four of them have it.

Now, before we come to this chapter, I want to say, there have been two views of Elihu that represent extremes we must avoid. First, that Elihu is a proud reckless man who's little better than Job's three friends; second, that Elihu is accurate in everything he says, and can't be faulted in any sense. I think these are two extremes that must be avoided.

Overall, Elihu is correct in what he says, and is a very happy improvement upon Job's three friends (and in some ways Job himself). And so I want to survey this chapter under three headings (summarizing each one with a particular theme).

- I. His Anger (vv1-5)
- II. His Humility (vv6-9)
- III. His Boldness (vv10-22)

I. His Anger (vv1-5)

1. Chapter 32 begins by providing the reason why Job's three friends refused to continue the conversation.
2. V1—"So these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes"—that is, because they perceived he was righteous in his own eyes.
3. That is, from their perspective, Job refused to acknowledge his hypocrisy and the fact that he deserved his suffering.
4. Then, we learn from v2 that Elihu's wrath was kindled against Job and in v3 it was kindled against Job's friends.
5. But before I come to consider this, let me say a few brief words about our new friend by the name of Elihu.
6. While very little is revealed about him, it's evident he was listening to the back-and-forth discussion between Job and his friends.
7. As we will see, throughout his four speeches, Elihu quotes or refers to several statements by Job and his friends.
8. His name literally means "He is my God" and likely underscores the fact that he too, like Job, was a righteous man.
9. Derek Thomas—"Elihu's pedigree is impressive. His name, which is similar to Elijah, means *He is my God*. His father's name, Barakel, means *Bless, O God*, and the fact that he was a Buzite identifies him as a descendant of Abraham (Buz being one of Abraham's sons, Gen.22:21). These facts seem to imply that Elihu's appearance is meant to signify that he is here to defend God's honor."

10. (1) His anger against Job, v2—"Then the wrath of Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, was aroused against Job; his wrath was aroused because he justified himself rather than God."
11. Elihu rightly accused Job of being more concerned with vindicating himself than he was with vindicating God.
12. If you remember, Job's friends largely accused Job of being a hypocrite, for according to their theology, only sinners suffer.
13. Thus, throughout these chapters, Job seeks to vindicate himself from these false accusations, which, isn't in itself wrong.
14. But here's the problem—Job did so by questioning God's dealings with him—he even accused God of being unjust toward him.
15. Job should have defended himself from these false accusations, without accusing God of being harsh and unjust.
16. Thus, like Job's three friends, Elihu is angry with Job but for two very different reasons—Job's friends were angry with him because they thought he was a lying hypocrite, whereas, Elihu is angry with Job because of what he's presently said about God.
17. (2) His anger against Job's friends, v3—"Also against his three friends his wrath was aroused, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job."
18. That is, they condemned Job wrongly, without being able to give him any words of true help or comfort.
19. Though these men spoke many words to Job, they were unable to speak a single word of encouragement.
20. For all their speaking, they merely condemned him; and in fact, they condemned him over and over again.
21. The term rendered "aroused" (NKJV) and "kindled" (KJV) literally means "to become hot" or "to burn."
22. Elihu's wrath or anger burned against Job and his three friends—he isn't merely upset with them but angry.
23. Now, as most of you know, being angry in and of itself is not sinful—there is righteous anger and there is sinful anger.
24. And we know that not all anger is sinful simply because Scripture describes God and Christ as angry (in fact at least six times, Christ was angry in the gospels, and the book of Revelation speaks about the wrath of the Lamb).
25. Furthermore, Paul in Eph.4:26 says—"Be angry, and do not sin"—that is, you can be angry and not sin.
26. Joseph Caryl—"Anger is a fire, and fire is good, but it must be kept in its proper place; fire on the hearth and fire in the chimney is good, but fire in the roof, or among the household stuff consumes all."
27. Thus, I want to take a few minutes and provide (suggest) a fourfold description of righteous anger (or wrath).
28. Description 1—Righteous anger is proportionate anger—by this I mean, it's proportionate to the offense.
29. Righteous anger doesn't go overboard—it isn't unbalanced—its intensity matches the sin or the offense.
30. In contrast, unrighteous anger rarely fits the crime—for example, let's say, someone forgets to empty the dishwasher and you lose it.
31. The anger doesn't match the crime—it's overboard—it's excessive—and that's usually true for unrighteous anger.

32. But in contrast, righteous anger is proportionate anger—its intensity matches the seriousness of the sin.
33. Description 2—Righteous anger is controlled anger—by this I mean, it doesn't act hasty or out of control.
34. Even our blessed Savior, who twice cleansed the temple of the moneychangers, was never out of control.
35. Description 3—Righteous anger is religious anger—by this I mean, it is driven by a love for religion.
36. Now, you know there's good and bad religion—religion isn't a bad word (even though it's recently fallen on bad terms).
37. But here's my point—righteous anger is driven by a love for God and for His truth—we are angered when God or His truth are maligned.
38. This is at the heart of what righteous anger is—it's the response of a holy soul to evil and wickedness.
39. And in fact, I would go a step further and say—it's also a sign of true grace and maturity—mature Christians get angry.
40. And to be specific, they get angry when God or the things of God are misrepresented, misused, or maligned.
41. Thus, righteous anger is actually driven by love for God and the things of God—it's the necessary corollary of love.
42. Every person who loves God and the things of God, will of necessity, hate everything that opposes God.
43. Thus, Elihu isn't angry for any old reason, he's angry because Job and his friends misspoke against God.
44. Again, think of our Savior cleansing the temple—He was upset because the Pharisees turned His Father's house into a den of thieves.
45. Description 4—Righteous anger is sad anger—by this I mean, it's usually tempered with a holy grief.
46. Mk.3:5—"And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts."
47. Our Savior was angry and grieved at the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, who complained He healed on the Sabbath.
48. Ps.119:53—"Indignation has taken hold of me because of the wicked, who forsake Your law" v136—"Rivers of water run down from my eyes, because men do not keep Your law."
49. Any anger that lacks grief and compassion for others is very likely not righteous anger but carnal anger.
50. Octavius Winslow—"When our anger springs from zeal for God, His truth, and worship, and glory, and when it prompts us to seek, in the spirit of meekness, humility, and love, the good of those whose conduct we condemn, it then becomes in us, what it was in Christ, a holy, amiable, God-honoring emotion, unmixed with sin and self."

II. His Humility (vv6-9)

1. Within verses 6-9, Elihu explains why he's delayed his response—it can be summarized as follows: because Job and his friends were older than Elihu, out of respect, Elihu allowed the others to speak first.
2. V6—"I am young in years, and you are very old; therefore I was afraid, and dared not declare my opinion to you."

3. Here Elihu should be commended—he understood that young people should ordinarily learn from older people.
4. V7—"I said, 'Age should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom'"—this is very commendable.
5. Elihu was taking a backseat—he had rightly concluded that younger people should learn wisdom from the lips of older people.
6. Ordinarily, people grow in wisdom as they grow in age—thus, the older a person was, the wiser he becomes.
7. Job 12:12—"Wisdom is with aged men, and with length of days, understanding"—ordinarily, wisdom and understanding come with years.
8. Prov.16:31—"The silver-haired head is a crown of glory, if it is found in the way of righteousness" Prov.20:29—"The glory of young men is their strength, and the splendor of old men is their gray head."
9. Why is "gray hair" an honor, but because wisdom and understanding usually (not always) accompany it.
10. V8—"But there is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding"—that is, it's the Spirit of God who gives wisdom.
11. The implication being—God does not always give wisdom to every aged person to the same degree (v9).
12. V9—"Great men are not always wise, nor do the aged always understand justice"—"great men" refers to men of power (or influence).
13. Just because a person is in a position of influence or power doesn't necessarily mean they are men of wisdom.
14. Observation 1—The aged should be honored—this is an important truth that's often neglected in our day.
15. We live in a day where the voice of our elderly is ignored and even despised—nobody cares what they say.
16. We've reared a generation who want to hear their own voices, and yet turn a deaf ear to prior generations.
17. This is very unlike Elihu, who said—"Age (days) should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom."
18. Lev.19:32—"You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the LORD."
19. Rev.1:14—"His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire."
20. Observation 2—The aged are not always wise—just because a person is older doesn't make them wiser.
21. We have to remember the definition of wisdom given back in 29:28—"Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom."
22. One of the saddest things I've seen since becoming a Christian, is that this world is filled with older fools.
23. I've met so many older people, grey-headed people, who have absolutely no true or Biblical wisdom.
24. Yes, they have a certain wisdom about worldly things, as they've learned these things through experience.
25. But when it comes down to Biblical wisdom based upon Biblical facts, they are nothing more than fools.
26. Observation 3—True wisdom is a gift from God—it's something that ultimately comes from God alone.

27. And this is very good news, for God is more than willing to give wisdom to every person who asks for it.
28. Jas.1:5—"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him."
29. This is good news for two reasons: first, God is more than willing to give wisdom; second, He has an abundance of it to give.
30. V8—"But there is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding"—God's Spirit gives wisdom to our spirit.

III. His Boldness (vv10-22)

1. Beginning with v10, Job formerly begins his first speech, which includes the whole of chapters 32-33 (this morning we want to limit our consideration to vv10-22).
2. We can divide these verses into two main parts, each part provides a reason behind his four discourses.
3. In fact, each of these two reasons (or sections) begins in the same way, v10—"I will declare my opinion" v17—"I too will declare my opinion."
4. (1) Their inability (vv10-16), v11—"Indeed I waited for your words, I listened to your reasonings, while you searched out what to say."
5. Elihu is speaking about Job's friends—he listened to their words and reasonings (that is, to their logic).
6. V12—"I paid close attention to you; and surely not one of you convinced Job, or answered his words."
7. That is, not one of them were able to make sense of Job's condition—they were unable to convince of the truth.
8. V13—"Lest you say, 'We have found wisdom'"—that is, he's addressing them so that they would not think they are wise.
9. He's speaking to Job's friends, and he's concerned they will say to themselves that they have found wisdom (the point being – they spoke unwise to Job).
10. V13b—"God will vanquish him, not man"—that is, God will refute Job Himself and not man (his three friends).
11. V14—"Now he has not directed his words against me; so I will not answer him with your words"—that is—"Because Job didn't speak to me, I'm not going to use your words or arguments against him."
12. V15—"They are dismayed and answer no more; words escape them"—here's he's speaking about Job's friends.
13. V16—"And I have waited, because they did not speak, because they stood still and answered no more."
14. (2) His necessity (vv17-22)—here Elihu provides another reason he must speak—he's "full of words."
15. Verses 17-19—"I also will answer my part, I too will declare my opinion. For I am full of words; the spirit within me compels me. Indeed my belly is like wine that has no vent; it is ready to burst like new wineskins."
16. It's as if words were like wine that expands and busts the wineskin—his words were about to burst his soul.
17. V0—"I will speak, that I may find relief; I must open my lips and answer"—he must give vent to his soul.
18. He had to open the top of the wineskin—he needed to open his mouth and give vent or relief to his soul.

19. V21—"Let me not, I pray, show partiality to anyone; nor let me flatter any man"—Elihu refers to two common errors.
20. The first is partiality and the second is flattery—partiality is when you show favoritism to a person or group.
21. Flattery is when you commend someone in order to influence them—it's commendation for selfish reasons.
22. One man said—"Gossip is only said behind someone's back, whereas flattery is only said to their face."
23. In other words, a gossip will never criticize you to your face and a flatterer will never praise you behind your back.
24. Deut.1:17—"You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid in any man's presence, for the judgment is God's."
25. Ps.12:3—"May the LORD cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaks proud things"
Prov.26:28—"A lying tongue hates those who are crushed by it, and a flattering mouth works ruin."
26. Thus, in the time we have left, I want to suggest we learn several important things about Elihu (in vv10-22).
27. But I want to be rather specific and suggest, within Elihu we find a good example of how to give counsel.
28. And these principles that I want to suggest, are not only helpful to pastors, but parents, spouses, siblings, and Christians in general.
29. Observation 1—Be a good listener—we are not told how long the dialogue between Job and his friends lasted.
30. It very likely lasted for days even weeks, and yet, Elihu patiently waited and listened to everything that was said.
31. V11—"I listened to your reasonings" v12—"I paid close attention to you"—he listened to every word before he spoke.
32. This is half the problem—people simply don't hear each other—they don't listen to what others are saying.
33. Jas.1:19—"So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."
34. In many ways, this verse accurately describes Elihu—he was swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath.
35. Observation 2—Be a straight shooter—that is, don't fear the face of men and fail to clearly speak the truth.
36. Elihu was a bold man—he was a man who spoke plainly—he feared not the face of Job or his three friends.
37. Ecc.3:7—"There is a time to be silent and a time to speak"—blessed are those who have people around them who know when to listen and know when to speak.
38. Both are equally a problem—while some fail to listen others listen well but fail to plainly tell the truth.
39. Observation 3—Be zealous for God's glory—by this I mean, Elihu spoke with a desire to honor God.
40. His goal wasn't merely to win an argument or even to refute others, but ultimately to defend the truth.
41. Can you imagine how online conversations would be transformed if we learned these three simple principles.
42. Can you imagine how marriages would be transformed if we simply listened, plainly told the truth, and aimed for the glory of God.