

Sorting Through the Questions

Selections from Job chapters 29 - 37

Job 31.35 - 32.10

³⁵Oh, that I had one to hear me! (Here is my signature! Let the Almighty answer me!) Oh, that I had the indictment written by my adversary! ³⁶Surely I would carry it on my shoulder; I would bind it on me as a crown; ³⁷I would give him an account of all my steps; like a prince I would approach him. ³⁸“If my land has cried out against me and its furrows have wept together, ³⁹if I have eaten its yield without payment and made its owners breathe their last, ⁴⁰let thorns grow instead of wheat, and foul weeds instead of barley.” The words of Job are ended. 32.1 So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. ²Then Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, burned with anger. He burned with anger at Job because he justified himself rather than God. ³He burned with anger also at Job’s three friends because they had found no answer, although they had declared Job to be in the wrong. ⁴Now Elihu had waited to speak to Job because they were older than he. ⁵And when Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, he burned with anger. ⁶And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said: “I am young in years, and you are aged; therefore I was timid and afraid to declare my opinion to you. ⁷I said, ‘Let days speak, and many years teach wisdom.’ ⁸But it is the spirit in man, the breath of the Almighty, that makes him understand. ⁹It is not the old who are wise, nor the aged who understand what is right. ¹⁰Therefore I say, ‘Listen to me; let me also declare my opinion.’

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Job 33.1-12
¹“But now, hear my speech, O Job, and listen to all my words. ²Behold, I open my mouth; the tongue in my mouth speaks. ³My words declare the uprightness of my heart, and what my lips know they speak sincerely. ⁴The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life. ⁵Answer me, if you can; set your words in order before me; take your stand. ⁶Behold, I am toward God as you are; I too was pinched off from a piece of clay. ⁷Behold, no fear of me need terrify you; my pressure will not be heavy upon you. ⁸“Surely you have spoken in my ears, and I have heard the sound of your words. ⁹You say, ‘I am pure, without transgression; I am clean, and there is no iniquity in me. ¹⁰Behold, he finds occasions against me, he counts me as his enemy, ¹¹he puts my feet in the stocks and watches all my paths.’ ¹²“Behold, in this you are not right. I will answer you, for God is greater than man.

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Job 33.31-33
³¹Pay attention, O Job, listen to me; be silent, and I will speak. ³²If you have any words, answer me; speak, for I desire to justify you. ³³If not, listen to me; be silent, and I will teach you wisdom.”

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Job 36.1-7
¹And Elihu continued, and said: ²“Bear with me a little, and I will show you, for I have yet something to say on God’s behalf. ³I will get my knowledge from afar and ascribe righteousness to my Maker. ⁴For truly my words are not false; one who is perfect in knowledge is with you. ⁵“Behold, God is mighty, and does not despise any; he is mighty in strength of understanding. ⁶He does not keep the wicked alive, but gives the afflicted their right. ⁷He does not withdraw his eyes from the righteous, but with kings on the throne he sets them forever, and they are exalted.

SORTING THROUGH THE QUESTIONS – NOT ALL QUESTIONS ARE CREATED EQUAL

- questions directed to God only make sense from the standpoint of conviction

JOB BUILDS HIS LEGAL CASE ON GOD’S WORD OF WISDOM (28.28)

- 29.1-8 ... my life as it should be
- 30.11-14 ... my life is not as it should be
- 31.7a, 9, 13, 16a, 19, 24 ... my character exemplifies wisdom
- 31.35-37 ... let the Almighty answer me, bring forth the charge
- 31.40 ... The words of Job are ended & Satan’s question is answered

GOD HASN’T ANSWERED BUT ELIHU IS “HAPPY” TO FILL THAT SPACE

- 32.2-3 ... angry
- 36.2 ... arrogant
- 32.8, 33.4, 36.2, 36.4 ... self made spirit wisdom
- true spiritual wisdom is word & spirit - 1 Cor 2.12-13

HOW DO STORIES TEACH US, HOW DOES THIS STORY TEACH US?

ARE YOU LIKE JOB?

- have you got unanswered questions?
- are they questions seeking to understand what God has promised and what he has said?
- learning perseverance

ARE YOU LIKE SATAN?

- Accuses people of having faith grounded in something other than honouring God
 - isn’t it just for what they get out of it?
 - isn’t it a crutch?
 - Isn’t it a fairytale for dreamers?
- if you are, or have been like Satan don’t worry you are in good company

ARE YOU LIKE ELIHU?

- prosecuting & speaking on God’s behalf
- angry & arrogant
- two recommendations - “humble orthodoxy” - “word & spirit”

WE KNOW MORE: JESUS IS LIKE JOB BUT BETTER

- Job & Jesus the righteous sufferer who asked God a question?

WE KNOW MORE: JESUS IS BETTER THAN ELIHU BUT LIKE HIM

- Elihu and Jesus as prosecutors
- Elihu and Jesus both “speak” for God – John 14.8-10