

The Book of Job
Class Notes
Session 19

Job 31.33-40 Job continues with his summary attempts to defend his integrity.

Once again, using the imagery of a court trial, Job puts himself under oath before God and asks for judgment to fall if God can prove him wrong (vs.35-37).

Job knew his *only hope* was God—that God would hear him and vindicate his name!

In vs.33–37...Job is asking God to give him three things...

*A hearing so that he could give his “defense.” *God’s response to Job’s concerns... *A “document” that describe his innocence.

If God says “No”... Job was then prepared to receive the curses Job himself offered.

[Martin Luther]: “Job did not deserve such punishments by his life; for he was God-fearing, guileless, and virtuous.... It tends to instruct and comfort us when we learn that God often causes even the innocent to experience the most serious misfortunes and punishments, merely in order to test them. When faint hearts feel the punishments, they immediately think of sin, and believe that these are punishments for sin. But one must maintain that the godly experience many evils, solely in order that they may be tested.”¹

Job 32.1-5 In chapter 32 a new speaker enters the dialogue...Elihu....Elihu’s name means, “God is Jehovah.”

Some scholars believe that Elihu foreshadows Jesus as his name and character indicate he is a messenger between God and Job.

Elihu was convinced that Job was wrong and likewise irritated that Job’s three friends could not prove that point.

“Perhaps Elihu’s speeches can be understood as offering a middle way between the position of Job and his friends. The friends have argued that God is just and that Job’s suffering proves he has sinned and that God is punishing him for it. Job denies both arguments, insisting that his suffering is not the result of sin, and that therefore God is unjust. Elihu says he is against both Job and the friends (32:10–12; 33:1–12; cf. 32:2–3), and he argues that suffering is discipline. That means that suffering need not be the penalty for sin already committed but may be a warning, given in advance, to keep a person back from sin.”²

Job 33.5-8 Elihu continues his insistence that he knows the truth...While he is a mere human...Elihu knows the power of God and God’s mercy!

“Elihu is talking about redemption and forgiveness, in contrast to the others. Despite what Job sees and experiences in the suffering around him, Elihu is recommending that Job still trust in God. He cannot believe that Job’s suffering implies divine wrath. [Luther]: ‘This is the constant course of the church at all times, namely, that promises are made and that then those who believe the promises are treated in such a way that they are compelled to wait for things that are invisible, to believe what they do not see, and to hope for what does not appear. He who does not do this is not a Christian. For Christ Himself entered into His glory only by first descending into hell. When He is about to reign, He is crucified. When He is to be glorified, He is spit on. For He must suffer first and then at length be glorified.’”³

¹ Martin Luther. *Luther’s Works*: 2:319. Quoted in, *Lutheran Study Bible*.

² D.A. Carson, R.T. France, J.A. Motyer, and G.J. Wenham Eds. *New Bible Commentary* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994).

³ *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

Job 34.1-9, 35.9-11 In *Chapters 34 and 35*, Elihu affirms God's justice and sovereignty.

While the injustice of God was one of Job's major laments, Elihu countered with three arguments to prove that there is *no injustice* with God...

...If God is unjust, then He is not God (34.10–15).

... If God is truly God, then He is perfect; and if He is perfect, then He cannot do wrong.

...If God were unjust, then He must not see what is going on in the world (*Job 34.21–30*). But God is omniscient and sees all things!

“An unjust God would be as unthinkable as a square circle or a round triangle... *if God were unjust, there could be no just government on earth* (*Job 34:16–20*). As a respected elder, Job had participated in local government and had helped to bring justice to the afflicted (29:7–17)...”⁴

Chapter 35 is Elihu's condemnation of Job. God and God's ways are so far beyond what humans can know and understand.

Elihu's concern was that Job could not be “restored” by God (35.2) as long as he questioned the value of serving Him (v. 3)

Elihu tells Job and his friends that the cry for God often arises out of the pain of suffering of life, not out of genuine desire for God. In other words, according to Elihu, Job's heart is wrong.

“Elihu believes that Job has added unbelief to his sin by complaining so bitterly. In doing so, Elihu fails to consider some understandable human emotion on Job's part. Not all lamenting represents unbelief. Yet our own complaints about the conditions of our lives, though humanly understandable, can betray a weakness of faith. God may use affliction to strengthen our faith and to refocus our lives on the affliction endured by His Son for our salvation.”⁵

Job 36.1-5; 37.1-5 Elihu now turns to proclaim the greatness of God...In *Ch. 36*...Elihu is defending the justice and sovereignty of God!

Finally, in *Ch. 37*...Elihu continues to extol the majesty, greatness, power, and sovereignty of God through descriptions of the natural world...Thunderstorms and its effects....snow, rain, whirlwind, frost, etc.

Elihu makes one last appeal to Job that he recognize his weakness (Sins?) and God's perfection *and* strength.

[Commenting on *Ch. 37*]: “The awesome power of a storm reminds us how truly small we are. Elihu tells Job to abandon obstinacy and, with proper fear and trust, to submit to God as his Lord, thereby preparing Job for God's visit in the whirlwind (38:1). All of the days of our lives are spent in such preparation. Though we may become distracted by many things in this life, both bane and blessing, God prepares us for His visitation, when all that will matter will be our confidence in His grace through Jesus Christ, our Lord...”⁶

⁴ W.W. Wiersbe, *Be Patient*.

⁵ *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

⁶ *Ibid*.