

Character Study: Job
Part 4 – Job Hears from Elihu
Job 32-37

What's happening?

- Job's final defense had left his three friends speechless. However, there was another onlooker, a young man named Elihu, who had become so angry listening to their conversation that he was compelled to share his observations. He felt Job was focused more on justifying himself than justifying God. He also felt that Job's friends were wrong for continually accusing Job of sin without giving him any real answers. (32:1-10)
- Elihu did not know if Job's calamity was a result of sin, but he did point out that the calamity was bringing out sin (pride and arrogance) in Job's heart (33:17; 35:12; 36:9). Job was innocent, but in defending himself he had implied that God was in the wrong, and that God had essentially treated him unfairly and without justice (33:9-10; 34:5-6).
- Elihu emphasized that God is just (34:12) and that suffering is not meaningless (God uses it to purify and strengthen us in godliness, 33:19-30). Job's conclusion that the life of a righteous person was no better than the wicked was wrong (34:9; 35:2-3). Both may experience suffering, but there is a different outcome (destruction for the wicked, deliverance for the righteous, 36:5-12). Job was so self-focused that he was missing what God wanted to teach him (35:10-13, 16).
- Following Elihu's speech, he is never mentioned again. Job did not answer Elihu, which implies Job recognized he made some good points.

What's God doing?

> Elihu based some of his thoughts on speculation, but God did use him to set the stage for what God Himself was about to say next. God used Elihu to expose Job's arrogance and unnecessary frustration with what God was doing.

What's to learn?

- Elihu listened before he spoke (unlike Job's friends). And when God was being misrepresented, he was bold enough to say something. Though he was young, he showed the wisdom and boldness we all need!
- We may not like suffering, but such moments are acts of God's mercy by which He refines us and moves us on toward greater holiness (James 1:2-4).

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