

“Now Mine Eyes Seeth Thee”

Lesson 12

The Speeches of Elihu Job 32-37

Introduction

The debate between Job and “the friends” has concluded. The trio of speakers argued that Job was guilty of sin and needed to repent. Job countered with proclamations of innocence and charges against God of injustice. Neither side convinced the other. At this point, a fifth speaker enters the picture, Elihu. While he makes significant contributions to the debate, he also repeats some of the mistakes of Job’s earlier detractors.

As James E. Smith notes in his commentary, “Whereas the three friends urged Job to repent of sins committed *before* the calamity, Elihu thought Job needed to repent of pride which surfaced *during* the calamity. Whereas Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar argued that Job was suffering because he had committed sin, Elihu suggests that Job has now sinned because he has been suffering.” Elihu, though younger (32:4), displays wisdom superior to “the friends” and even Job.

1. Who begins to speak after Job and the “friends” have finished? (32:2) How does he feel about what he has heard? (32:2-3) Why did Elihu wait until now to speak? (32:4, 6-7)
2. What three things does Elihu say he did with respect to the debate? (32:11-12a) Yet, what did he find? (32:12b) What does Elihu say prompts him to speak? (32:15-17) How does he portray himself in 32:18-22?
3. Do you think Elihu, unlike “the friends,” was going to try to be fair with Job? What words and/or phrases from 33:1-7 lead you to think this? How does Elihu feel about what Job has said throughout the debate? (33:8-12)
4. What does Elihu mention as one of Job’s greatest complaints against God? (33:13; cp. 13:22; 19:7; 30:20; 31:14) In what 3 ways does Elihu say Job is wrong in this complaint? (33:14-18, 19-22, 23-28) What does Elihu give as the reason for the ways in which God speaks? (33:29-30)

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5. What charge of Job does Elihu deal with next? (34:1-9; cp. 13:18; 27:2) How does Elihu begin to defend God against Job's charges? (34:10-15)

6. What characteristics of God does Elihu mention as his proof that God would not be guilty of such injustice? (34:16-30) What do you think Elihu is saying in 34:31-37, especially vv. 31-32, 37? Who does he sound like now?

7. How does Elihu continue to rebuke Job? (35:1-8) Specifically, what do you think Elihu meant by his words to Job in 35:2b? What reasons does Elihu give as to why God sometimes does not answer the cries of those who are oppressed? (35:9-16) According to Elihu, why did God not hear Job? (35:16)

8. How does Elihu present his understanding of God's power and works among men? (36:5-16) Therefore, based on this view of God, what does Elihu encourage Job to do in 36:17-23? What is Elihu's conclusion of Job in 36:21? In what final way does Elihu appeal to Job? (36:24 - 37:13)

9. In making a personal appeal to Job in 37:14-20, what is that you think Elihu wants Job to understand? How does Elihu conclude his speeches? (37:21-24)