

August 30th

## Chapter 32, Introduction of Elihu, (Learn, Read, Discuss)

Job has cried out dramatically on 4 occasions (9:33, 16:19, 19:25, and 31:35) for a mediator to come to arbitrate his case with God. Now, finally, comically, Elihu enters the action to serve as just that. Elihu may have been present the whole time, but is not named until now because he does not speak until now. Elihu's speeches bridge the gap between Job's final speech from chapters 29-31, and God's response. Elihu introduces himself with an impression opposite of the one he wants to create. He wants to show himself as wise, but by angrily dismissing the teachings of his elders, he shows himself to be a fool.

Elihu has been restraining himself through the previous 30 chapters because all of his elder companions had answers for Job. Now that they have given up responding to him because he is unswerving in his understanding of his own righteousness, Elihu has become angry and responds in anger. Elihu states that his authority to state his opinion is none other than the breath of the Almighty within him. He dismisses the value of his elders' years. Elihu describes the anger within his heart like new wine getting ready to burst from the wineskin.

## Chapter 33-34, Elihu's 1st and 2nd speeches (Learn, Read, Discuss)

Elihu says that Job said he was clean in an absolute sense, but this is not true. Job merely maintained that he was innocent of anything that would cause the kind of suffering he'd endured. No person is absolutely clean. Elihu says that God does infact answer human beings, though we often neglect to perceive God's answer. God speaks to us through dreams and visions, and also God speaks to human beings through their suffering. God does not spare us from suffering, but does listen to the words of the redeemer and spares mortals from the Pit, and they experience the "light of life." Ironically, what Elihu is describing as how God speaks to us and redeems us from suffering is what happens to Job.

Beginning in chapter 34, Elihu urges us to "discern" (which is a hallmark of wisdom) his words, just as the ear hears and the palate tastes. Elihu recalls Job's legal argument (that he is innocent), but in verse 12 asserts a basic principle about God: God will not do wickedly, nor will God pervert justice. Verse 13, Elihu foreshadows the style of God's own later speech. Without

God, all flesh would perish. Beginning in verse 23, Elihu responds to Job's insistence on a trial with God, saying that NO ONE (not even the most evil) are given time for an investigation, rather God searches out their ways and judges. Human beings cannot force God into court, for God's governance and judgments are faultless and beyond questioning. Elihu states (as the other friends have before) that Job adds insult to injury by not accepting his punishment and now rebelling against God by demanding justice.