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Job 32 - 37



Job - Steve Gregg

In this segment, Steve Gregg discusses Elihu's speeches in Job chapters 32-37. Elihu is presented as a young man with a fresh perspective, who becomes indignant when the other three men present fail to refute Job's claims of innocence. Elihu speaks of God as the giver of life and understanding, and argues that God's justice is inherent in the world, rather than being imposed from above. He also encourages Job to turn to God and acknowledge His righteousness.

Transcript

Alright, let's read the speeches of Elihu, which begin in chapter 32, and continue through chapter 37. Six whole chapters. So these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

That is, they had done all they could to tell him he was not righteous, but he remained righteous in his own estimation, and they had made no progress, so they gave up. Then the wrath of Elihu, the son of Barakai, the Buzite of the family of Ram, was aroused against Job. His wrath was aroused because he justified himself rather than God.

Also against his three friends, his wrath was aroused because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job. So he was not happy with either side of this debate. He felt that Job, in seeing that there appeared to be some contradiction between Job and God, some kind of conflict, that Job had made himself out to be the one who's innocent rather than God.

And also the three friends had nonetheless condemned Job, though they couldn't find anything wrong with him. They couldn't really prove him wrong. Now, Elihu is the only man in the book who has a Jewish name.

That doesn't tell us very much, because we don't know his, we have some of his ancestry here given, but we don't know who these people were necessarily. Barakai, the Buzite. Buzite probably are the descendants of Buz.

Now remember that Job was from the land of Uz, and this man was from apparently the

land of Buz, and Uz and Buz were both sons of Nahor by Milchah, which we saw back in Genesis, I think it was chapter 22, that talked about the sons of Nahor. Uz and Buz were the first two, and apparently one of them became the one who founded the land that Job was from, and the other one, the tribe that Elihu was from. But apart from that, we don't know much.

Elihu had a Jewish name, a Hebrew name, but if he was a Buzite, he wasn't an Israelite. He was a remote relative of the Israelites. He's the only man also for whom any genealogy is given.

We don't know anything about Job's parents' names or anything, or his tribe, nor very much about his friends. We know what tribes they came from, but we don't know what their fathers' names were, and that's pretty unusual to mention a man and not mention his father. But Elihu's the only one who we have that information about, and it doesn't help much because we don't know anything about Barakai.

The Buzite, his father. But one thing we can say, this kind of rules out the possibility that some people have thought maybe he was a theophany. Maybe Elihu was Christ coming to speak to Job.

He speaks as if he thinks his words are the final word, and as if he's perfect in knowledge. And if these things are quite true, then he would have to be hardly anyone less than God. And so the thought of him being a theophany, like Melchizedek, or like the man who wrestles with Jacob, perhaps, has arisen people's minds.

But the fact that he comes from a certain tribe and a certain family proves that he's a mere man. He's not a theophany. But he is a man who's apparently listened somewhat objectively and seen defects in both sides of the argument.

And it says, verse four, now, because they, meaning Job and his friends, were years older than he. Elihu had waited to speak to Job. When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, his wrath was aroused.

So Elihu, the son of Barakai, the Buzite, answered and said, I am young in years and you were very old. Therefore, I was afraid and dared not to declare my opinion to you. I said, age should speak and the multitude of years should teach wisdom.

But there is a spirit in man and the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding. Great men are not always wise, nor do the aged always understand justice. So he said, my assumption was that old men would be wise.

And I'd hear something worth hearing from these older guys who spent a lot of years. And that is basically the conventional wisdom. Older people will know more.

But he says, it's not always the case because wisdom comes from God, really. And

there's a spirit in all men. The breath of the Almighty gives everyone life and gives everyone understanding.

And it's possible that he's saying that a man can receive inspiration from God when he says the breath of the Almighty, that'd be the spirit of the Lord, because breath and spirit are the same, gives a man understanding. He is saying, I'm not old, but I'm a man and the spirit of God can give me understanding, too. And it's not always the case that great men and aged men always understand things.

And so I'm going to venture to come and correct you guys. Even though I'm not old, I don't have that going for me. But, you know, God can speak to anyone, including a young man.

Therefore, I say, listen to me. I also will declare my opinion. Indeed, I waited for your words.

I listened to your reasoning while you searched out what to say. I paid close attention to you. And surely not one of you convinced Job or answered his words.

He points out that Job had made some points that they ignored. They didn't answer his words. And that seems pretty clear as you read those speeches, because it seems like they just like Job might as well not have spoken.

These guys almost sound like they had their speeches prepared before anyone started speaking because they just talked right over his points without really answering them. And that's something that a point that was not lost on Ali, who, as he observed carefully, what was going on. He said, lest you say we have found wisdom, God will vanquish him, not man.

Now he has not directed his words against me, so I will not answer him with your words. They are dismayed and answered no more words escaped them. And I have waited because they did not speak because they stood still and answered no more.

Apparently, he thought there was more that these men should have said. To answer Job, but they had run out of thoughts to say. And so since they didn't speak anymore, he felt like it was not inappropriate for him to jump in where there is a vacuum in the conversation.

I also will answer my part. I, too, will declare my opinion, for I am full of words. And that is a fact.

He's he's actually is the most verbose of them all. The spirit within me compels me. Indeed, my belly is like wine that has no vent and is ready to burst like new wine.

He feels like all my emotions as I listen to you guys and all the things I think need to be

said and no one is saying them. It's all like like it's all pent up inside me, ready to burst out. I feel like a wine skin with the wine expanding and it ready to burst open.

There's no vent and I'm about ready to create one. I'm going to ventilate. I will speak that I may find relief.

I must open my lips and answer. Let me not, I pray, show partiality to anyone, nor let me flatter any man. For I do not know how to flatter, else my maker should soon take me away.

So in other words, I will not speak anything other than the straight truth. I will not defer to somebody to flatter them. I'll just try to please God, not man with what I say.

Chapter thirty three. But please, Job, hear my speech and listen to all my words. Now I open my mouth.

My tongue speaks in my mouth. My words come from my upright heart. My lips utter pure knowledge.

The spirit of God has made me and the breath of the Almighty gives me life. If you can answer me, set your words in order before me. Take your stand.

Truly, I am as your spokesman before God. I also have been formed out of clay. Surely no fear of me will terrify you for my nor will my hand be heavy on you.

He's saying, OK, Job, you've taken a lot of heat from these other guys. And I'm not I'm not wanting to add to your burden. I'll try to be light handed with you.

I'm actually on your side more than, you know, I'm like your spokesman before God. I don't know what that means. He didn't say he's God's spokesman before Job.

If he's saying that, he'd be claiming to be something like a prophet. But he says, I'm your spokesman before God. It's almost like I'm I'm interceding for you before God.

I'm you know, I'm on your side. I'm I'm trying to convince God to come over and and help you. But he says my words are not coming from some kind of an agenda or any kind of pride on my part.

That is coming from my upright heart. My lips will utter pure knowledge and pure knowledge doesn't necessarily mean perfectly unassailable arguments, but it does mean my knowledge is not tainted by any particular agenda here. I'm not trying to I'm not trying to gain some advantage over one or the other of you folks.

Surely you have spoken in my hearing and I have heard the sound of your words saying I am pure without transgression. I'm innocent and there is no iniquity in me. Yet he finds occasion against me.

He counts me as his enemy. He puts my feet in the stock. He watches all my paths.

Look, in this you are not righteous. Now, you see what he's saying? It I can't say whether you were righteous before your troubles came or not. I'm not accusing you of that.

But in this response that you've made, it's not righteous of you. Your responses to your suffering should not have brought up points against God as if God is doing the wrong thing in this. You're not righteous.

I will answer you for God is greater than man. Why do you contend with him? For he does not give an accounting of any of his words, for God may speak in one way or in another. Yet man does not perceive it in a dream, in a vision of the night when deep sleep falls upon men while slumbering on their beds.

Then he opens the ears of men and steals their instruction in order to turn man from his deed and conceal pride from men. He keeps back his soul from the pit and his life from perishing by the sword. Man is also chastened with pain on his bed.

And with strong pain in many of his bones, so that his life abhors bread and his soul, succulent food, his flesh wastes away from sight and his bones stick out with which once were not seen. Yes, his soul draws near to the pit and his life to the executioners. Now, what he's saying here is that God speaks to us in many ways.

Perhaps one way that we all would recognize is in dreams when God speaks to a man in his sleep through a verse 15, a dream or in a vision of the night. God speaks one way or another, and if he speaks through a vision or a dream, no one is complaining about God speaking that way. We accept that reasonably enough, but he also speaks through our pain.

He chastens us with pain in our bed, not chastening means training. So I think what he's saying is. The time was, Job, that you had the friendly counsel of God in your tent, God spoke to you in ways that you enjoyed hearing from him, but now he's speaking in another way through your trials, through the pains you're experiencing.

This, too, is a means of God teaching things. And there were certainly things for Job to learn. He may have been a blameless man who eschewed evil and so forth and feared God.

That didn't mean he had nothing to learn. And many times a man learns more in his sufferings than he learns through any other way. In fact, a man does learn some things through suffering that he can't learn any other way.

Including like compassion and empathy for others, including his own weakness, his own helplessness. People can have doctrines about these things before they suffer, but they really learn them when they suffer. When your life seems to be more or less under your

control, you can have a doctrine that says, well, God is in control.

I'm not. I'm just a man. I'm feeble.

But you don't know that any time as much as when you're in circumstances that you have no control over and which are painful, which you would do anything to get out of what you can. There are things, lessons to be learned. Humility is learned through suffering, at least it is supposed to be.

In Job's case, his sufferings had led him to not so much be humble as to protest his innocence. But the point is, there are lessons that God wants a man to learn and he chastens a man through his pains, as well as speaking through things like dreams and other more desirable ways to hear from God. Verse 23, if there is a messenger for him, a mediator, one among a thousand to show the man his uprightness, then he is gracious to him and says, deliver him from going down to the pit.

I have found a ransom. That is, it seems he's saying that if a man is under scrutiny from God and obviously is imperfect, then it would seem that he would be destined to go to the pit unless there's someone there who can speak as a mediator, somebody there who can convince God. Of this man's uprightness to show God.

To show man his uprightness, God's uprightness, I guess he says when there is such a mediator, that's a gracious thing. Not many men have that one man in a thousand might be such a mediator, but he says that allows God to deliver the man because there's an advocate for him. His flesh shall be young like a child.

He shall return to the days of his youth. He shall pray to God. He will delight in him.

He sees he shall see his face with joy for he restores to man his righteousness. And he looks at men and says, I have sinned. I have perverted what is right.

And I did. It did not profit me. He will redeem his soul from going down to the pit and his life shall see the light.

Now, what I see, Elihu saying here is that we need to be open to God speaking to us through many ways. He may speak through conventional supernatural ways like dreams and visions. He may speak through our sufferings.

He may even speak through a mediator who comes to us and shows us God's uprightness and brings us around to the point where we acknowledge that God was right in this matter. God can speak through a person, maybe like Elihu. I think that's what's implied here.

You know, you can learn from your sufferings. You can even learn what I have to say to you. There's various ways that God tries to speak to you.

And the main thing God's doing is trying to speak to you. He's trying to teach you things. And it would be well for you to be tuned in rather than just thrashing about in resistance to everything that's going on here.

And he says, then you'll be returned to your normal state. And things go well with you. Verse 31, give your Job, listen to me, hold your peace and I will speak.

If you have anything to say, answer me, speak for I desire to justify you. If not, listen to me, hold your peace and I will teach you wisdom. Now, this doesn't sound very humble, but on the other hand, it doesn't you know, it depends on his tone of voice and what his attitude really was.

He could be quite meek. He could be saying, Job, I'm willing to hear anything you have to say. But if you can't say if there's nothing more to say, then just listen, I might have something you can learn from.

Chapter 34, Ali, who further answered and said, hear my words, you wise men, give ear to me, you who have knowledge for the ear tests words and the palate tastes food. Let us choose justice for ourselves, let us know among ourselves what is good for Job has said, I am righteous, but God has taken away my justice. Should I lie concerning my right? My wound is incurable, though I'm without transgression.

Now, here it would appear that Ali, who is addressing at least the three counselors, because he's addressing who he calls wise men, it may be he's addressing the crowd. If there's a crowd around there, he may be, you know, speaking to the crowd about Job, including the including his wise counselors. He says, now we've all heard what Job says, let's test just like our mouth can taste food.

Our heart should be able to test wisdom. We should be able to test knowledge and choose what's right. We've heard Job say, I'm righteous.

Justice has been taken away from me. Should I lie? I'm not going to confess I've done something wrong when I haven't. And he says, that's what Job has said, then he says, what man is like Job who drinks scorn like water and goes in company with the workers of iniquity and walks with wicked men, for he has said it profits a man nothing that he should delight in God.

Now, this in this Ali, who is not fair, Job has not necessarily said it profits a man nothing to delight in God, although his words could be extrapolated to mean that he said, I have lived in a way that pleases God and look what I get for it. There's a sense in which that could be taken to mean God is ruling out any benefit that Job is ruling out any benefit in following God. He hasn't said it in so many words.

That's what Ali, who is taking him to say, therefore, listen to me, you men of understanding. Far be it from God to do wickedness and from the Almighty to commit

iniquity, for he repays man according to his work and makes man to find a reward according to his way. Surely, God will never do wickedly, nor will the Almighty pervert justice who gave him charge over the earth or who appointed him over the whole world.

If he should set his heart on it, if he should gather himself, his spirit and his breath, all flesh would perish together and man would return to the dust. Now, in this, he's speaking almost just like Job's friends did, just saying, you know, God punishes the wicked and so forth, and this is something that Job himself acknowledges. And Ali, who might not be agreeing with Job's friends any more than Job was agreeing with them when he acknowledges everyone knows that God punishes wicked men and he doesn't commit iniquity.

But the mystery here is why is this happening to Job? When he says of God who gave him charge over the earth or who appointed him over the whole world. I've actually heard skeptics say things like that in defiance of God. That's not what Ali who's doing.

I've heard people say, well, who, you know, who elected God to be our ruler? But what Ali who is saying, well, who did elect God? No one did. He didn't need to be elected. He is self-appointed and he's the one who has the right to appoint himself because he made everything.

So he's self-existent, sovereign, answerable to none. No one put him in office so no one can remove him from office and no one can criticize how he conducts himself in office. The office was created by himself and he put himself in it rather than anyone else doing that.

If somebody else puts God in office, of course, they can trust him from office. If somebody else puts God in his office, then they can complain about the way he conducts himself in it because he's answerable to them. The point here is he's not answerable to anyone.

No one gave him the charge of the earth. He has it by nature. No one appointed him over the whole world.

He didn't have to be appointed. He by nature is over the world because he created it all. Verse 16, if you have understanding, hear this.

Listen to the sound of my words. Should one who hates justice govern? Will you condemn him who is most just? That is, God is the one who's governing. Certainly he's not one who hates justice.

It's unthinkable that the world would be governed by someone who hates justice. Why is that unthinkable? Why couldn't we believe there's a devil instead of a God that rules the world? Well, one reason is because if there was, where would we get the concept of justice? Obviously, man's concept of good and of evil comes from something higher than

man himself. We can't just say, well, we just developed the idea of good because that's the way we are.

But we're not. Our concepts of good actually condemn the way we are. Where do we get these ideas of good? It's not as though man is a just creature and therefore defines justice by his own behavior.

Man understands justice despite the fact that it condemns his own behavior. Where did we get this idea of justice if it doesn't come from somewhere above us? It's obviously something that everyone intuitively knows. Some things are right and some are wrong.

And also the things we do are sometimes the things we know are wrong. So the concept of justice is not a human construct, some self-justifying philosophy that men came up with. Justice came from the ultimate ruler of the universe.

It's unthinkable, therefore, that the ruler of the universe would despise justice. Should one who hates justice govern? Will you condemn him who is most just? Is it fitting to say to a king, you are worthless and to nobles, you're wicked? Yet he is not partial to princes, nor does he regard rich more than the poor, for they are all the work of his hands. In a moment, they die in the middle of the night.

The people are shaken and pass away. The mighty are taken away without a hand. They just die in their sleep.

No one even has to kill them. They're that weak. Humans are that frail.

God takes their life away. It doesn't even require human intervention to kill somebody. For his eyes are on the ways of man and he sees all his steps.

There is no darkness or shadow of death where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves. For he need not further consider man that he should go before God in judgment. He breaks in pieces mighty men without inquiry and sets others in their place.

Now, he's not saying that God does severe things to people without considering whether it's a just thing to do or not. He's saying that God already knows what men deserve without making further inquiry. Men have to conduct a trial.

Men have to seek evidence. Men have to get testimony to figure out who's right and who's wrong. God doesn't have to do any of that.

He knows all that stuff already. He can just move. He can just judge.

He doesn't have to gather evidence. He's you know, he knows all that stuff. And he says in verse 23, he need not further consider a man that he should go before God in judgment.

This is probably referring to Job's request. Job was saying, if I could just stand before God and plead my case, I'm sure things would turn out better for me. And Elia was saying, no, God doesn't have to have you come present your case before him.

He doesn't have to make any inquiries. He knows all the facts already. It's not needful for him to further consider a man that that man should go before God in judgment.

No trial is needed. He strikes them as wicked men in the open sight of others because they turned back from him and would not consider any of his ways so that they caused the cry of the poor to come to him, for he hears the cry of the afflicted. When he gives quietness, who can make trouble? And when he hides his face, who then can see him, whether it is against a nation or against a man alone? That the hypocrite should not reign, lest the people be ensnared.

Now, many of these things are wisdom sayings, but it's hard to know exactly how they how they move in the direction of presenting a specific case. And I think a lot of times these wisdom speeches, they kind of go off on flights of fancy, just enjoying the sound of their own voice and their own ability to make wise observations about things. And sometimes I don't know.

I don't know if these wise men are always thinking like we do in a linear way, you know, in a court of law or in a debate. Western thinkers, they want one argument to follow the next logically and make an airtight case, you know, leading to an unavoidable conclusion. These guys from the East, they don't think linearly.

They don't have any influence from Greek philosophy and they don't have Western civilization as their backdrop for deciding how to make a case. They kind of go for making impressions, you know, that's why they speak in poetry, because it's impressionistic. It's not so much that they're making a case logically so much, although it's not entirely without logic.

It's just not a seamless logic. It's not an airtight case. It's just basically saying things which are supposed to give a general impression as in a lot of things he's saying don't have a direct bearing that we can see on Job's case, except that they are generally expanding the idea that God is great.

God judges. God knows enough. You can't really fault God.

You can't say you need to give God more evidence that he has and so forth. Verse 31, for has anyone said to God, I am born chastening, I will offend no more. Teach me what I do not see.

If I have done iniquity, I will do no more. Now, has anyone said that? Well, that's apparently what Elihu thinks people should say when they're suffering. Say, God, if I've done something wrong, show me I'll quit doing it.

And, you know, I've born you chastening. I've learned my lesson. That's what he thinks Job needs to do, of course, he thinks Job needs to learn his lessons from what God has done in his life.

And no doubt he's right. Should he repay it according to your terms just because you disavow it? You must choose and not I. Therefore, speak what you know. That's not clear what he's saying, but he's saying that apparently saying something like, OK, Job, you think that God is repaying you? Not really what you deserve, but you're setting the terms of what of what's just and what is deserved.

And should he repay you according to your terms just because you disavow any guilt? Well, the way you reckon, maybe you're not seeing things as he does. Just because you disavow any responsibility for anything, that doesn't mean that there's not some thing that God sees, some standard that God uses to judge by that you're not taking into consideration. He doesn't have to go by your terms.

He says, men of understanding say to me, wise men who listen to me, Job speaks without knowledge. His words are without wisdom. Oh, that Job were tried to the utmost because his answers are like those of wicked men, for he adds rebellion to his sin.

He claps his hands among us and multiplies his words against God. Now, the quotation marks on this, I think you see that there's a quotation mark beginning at verse thirty five, because in verse thirty four, he says, men of understanding say to me. Wise men who listen to me.

I think what he's saying is this is what those so-called wise men, Eliphaz and Zophar and Bildad have been saying about Job. But the New King James only encloses verse thirty five in the in the internal quotation marks as the quotation. I think the whole thirty five to thirty seven is the quotation marks.

I don't think that Elihu is affirming that Job is wicked necessarily. But he's saying that's what these wise men have claimed about Job. Now, chapter thirty five.

Moreover, Elihu answered and said, do you think it is right? Do you think this is right? Do you say my righteousness is more than God's for you say, what advantage will it be to you? What profit shall I have more than if I had sinned? So, again, he's sort of representing Job's position the same way he was representing it back in chapter thirty four, verse nine, where he said, Job has said it profits man nothing that he should delight in God. Here it's put the other way. What profit is it to have avoided sin? What advantage is it for me that I what profit do I have more than if I had sinned? If I had sinned, I'd still have the same consequences I have now.

So what advantage was it to be righteous? This is how Job's position is being summarized by Elihu and Elihu says, I will answer you and your companions with you. Look to the

heavens and see and behold the clouds which are higher than you. If you sin, what do you accomplish against him? Or if your transgressions are multiplied, what do you do to him? If you are righteous, what do you give him or what does he receive from your hand? Your wickedness affects a man such as you and your righteousness, a son of man.

Now, what he's saying is that and he's wrong. He's basically saying if you do wickedness, it hardly could have any impact on God. And if you do righteousness, he couldn't care less.

You're just a puny man. What's it matter to him what you do? At least it sounds like that's what Elihu is saying. And if he is, he's mistaken.

On one level, he may be correct if he says, you know, God's governing of the universe is not threatened by you doing wrong or by you doing right. That is to say, the actions of one man, whether good or bad, are not really going to topple God's position or God's throne. It sounds like you think God doesn't really care, doesn't take notice of what you do, good or bad.

But that's not true if that's what he's saying. If he is saying what you do, good or bad, it's not going to. It's not going to, you know, cause the universe to fly into pieces and God to lose his position of sovereignty.

I'm not sure exactly how Elihu means those words to be taken because of the multitude of oppressions they cry out. They cry out for help because of the arm of the mighty. But no one says, where is God, my maker who gives me songs and nights, who teaches us more than the beast of the earth and makes us wiser than the birds of heaven.

There they cry out, but he does not answer because of the pride of evil men. Surely God will not listen to empty talk, nor will the almighty be regarded. Although you say you do not see him, yet justice is before him and you must wait for him.

Now, this is pretty good counsel to Job right here. And it is again addressing the point that Job is not handling his trials as well as he needs to. That if Job has not sinned before the trials came, he at least has not done the right thing since they came and he needs to learn how to wait patiently on God.

You say you don't see him. Well, of course, you don't see him, his ways are invisible to you, can't figure out what God's up to. However, his justice is before him.

That is, God still what he can see, he sees what justice is. His just character has not, you know, you know, ceased to be guiding him and therefore you just need to wait for him. And that is true.

If Job had just waited a little longer, his trials would have turned around in all likelihood because they eventually did. But, of course, he didn't know that. And we never know that

when we're in our trials.

Our trials can last for weeks or months, even years in some cases, maybe even some of them are a lifetime of difficulty. But we still need to wait on God because eventually he will, his justice is still before him. He will still right the wrongs at some point.

And the sufferer needs to just learn to wait on God. That's what Elihu says to Job. And that would have been, that's good counsel, really.

That's a corrective to Job's complaining. And now, because he is not punished in his anger nor taken much notice of folly, therefore, Job opens his mouth in vain. He multiplies words without knowledge.

Now, what's that mean? I think it's because God's harshness with Job is not a punishment that reflects God's anger. God has not punished in his anger, Job. Because he's not angry against Job.

And therefore, what's happened to Job is not punishment, nor has God taken much notice of folly. That is to say, he's not punishing Job because of some folly that he noticed in Job. He's acknowledging this, Job has said this too.

Job has said, you know, God can't be punishing me because he's angry at me because I've done nothing to make him angry. And Elihu says, OK, fair enough. Nonetheless, Job, you should have kept your mouth quiet, should have just waited on God.

It may be true that God is not afflicting you in anger, but you don't know what he is doing, and therefore you would be better off not speaking because you're multiplying words without knowledge. Chapter 36, Elihu also proceeded and said, bear with me a little and I will show you that there are yet words to speak on God's behalf. I will fetch my knowledge from afar.

I will ascribe righteousness to my maker, for truly my words are not false. One who is perfect in knowledge is with you. And as some of you mentioned in your study questions, it's not clear whether one who is perfect in knowledge is a reference to Elihu or to God.

He could be saying God is with you, but on the other hand, he could just be saying I am with you and I'm perfect in knowledge. Now, for someone to say he's perfect in knowledge is, of course, sounds arrogant. But in the context, you know, there's a lot of hyperbole being used in these speeches and all he may be simply saying.

I'm not speaking from limited my own limited experience or anything, I'm fetching my knowledge from afar, that is, you know, I've listened to reports from people all over the place from far and wide. And my knowledge is not narrow, it's comprehensive. It's not just limited to what I have thought about in my own private speculations.

And since I am here only to ascribe righteousness to God, my maker, certainly my words can't be discredited. How can it be wrong to ascribe righteousness to God? Behold, God is mighty, but despises no one. He might, but he doesn't.

God could look down on people and just say, oh, you who are you that I should pay attention to you, you're just a bug. But that's not how God is. He's mighty, but he still regards puny man.

He is mighty in strength and understanding. He does not preserve the life of the wicked, but gives justice to the oppressed. Eventually, he does not withdraw his eyes from the righteous, but they are on the throne with kings, for he has seated them forever and they are exalted.

And if they are bound in fetters, held in the cords of affliction, then he tells them their work and their transgressions that they have acted defiantly. Now, here he's saying that righteous men, of course, in general, God exalts them. Thrones is where you expect to find them, and that's where they are in many cases.

But he says the times that they are found in fetters and in afflictions, which he acknowledges can be true. These are times when God is trying to tell them they've done something that they need to correct. Now, in a sense.

Again, he's a little bit like Job's other counselors, Elihu is saying that Job's done something wrong and God is trying to correct him this way. And Elihu may be not entirely correct. Because he seems to be assuming that these trials came on Job partly because God needed to correct him for something that was wrong before in him.

And the Bible is very clear. He didn't receive these trials because of something that was incorrect in him. Nonetheless, the trials did bring out of Job things that were not as right as they needed to be.

And and these afflictions were corrected. It was God speaking, God telling these men of their work, the men when good men are cast down into dungeons, that's God speaking to them, saying that they have acted in a way that they need to repent of. Now, the difference here between Elihu and Job's friends is that they never suggested that this that the sufferings could be corrected.

That they're just punishment. You're suffering because you did wrong and God's angry and he's punishing you. Elihu says, well, you've done something wrong and God is not punishing you.

He's trying to correct you. He's actually offering you, you know, improvement, the road to improvement of your behavior. That was never in the speeches of the others.

He also opens their ear to instruction and commands that they turn from iniquity. If they

obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity and their years and pleasures. But if they do not obey, they shall perish by the sword and shall die without knowledge.

So righteous men are not perfectly righteous. And when God brings them low, it's for their instruction so that they can be returned to their prosperity. If they don't learn from this instruction, it could go worse for them.

They could even die. But the hypocrites in heart store up wrath. They do not cry for help when he binds them.

They die in youth and their life ends among the perverted persons. He delivers the poor in their affliction and he opens their ears at oppression. Indeed, he would have brought you out of your dire distress into a broad place where there is no restraint.

And what is set on your table would be full of riches, richness. But you are filled with the judgment. Do the wicked judgment and justice take hold of you because there is wrath.

Beware, lest he take you away with one blow for a man for a large ransom would not help you avoid it. Will your riches or all the mighty forces keep you from distress? Do not do not desire the night when people are cut off in their place. Take heed.

Do not turn to iniquity. For you have chosen this rather than affliction. Behold, God is exalted by his power who teaches like him, who has assigned him his way, who has said you have done wrong.

That is who who does God answer to? Nobody. Now, what he seems to be saying in in these verses. Especially verses five and following is that righteous men are usually on the throne.

Sometimes they're not. Sometimes they're an affliction. They're in shackles and so forth.

But that's because although they're righteous men, they haven't been perfectly righteous. And God's trying to improve something about them. And they can repent and be restored or not.

If they reject that, then they're like hypocrites. In verse 13, who do not cry for help when he binds them, they find themselves in the shackles. But instead of crying out and repenting, they don't they don't repent.

And so it gets worse for them. And he's saying, Job, this is what you've done. God has had you in the shackles.

You've been kind of in the dungeon, so to speak. And there is something he's hoping to get out of you, some kind of repentance that is due for something or at least humility, at least silence, at least acquiescence and acceptance of the blows that God has inflicted.

And if you had responded that way to them, you would by now have been brought out of your dire distress.

You would have things better now. But. But the implication is you didn't respond to the discipline well, and that's why you're still in it.

Remember to magnify his work of which men have some. Everyone has seen it. Man looks on it from afar.

Behold, God is great and we do not know him, nor can the number of his years be discovered, for he draws up drops of water which distill as rain from the mist. Now, this is pretty interesting that in ancient times, a man would know this, that that the rain clouds are the distillation of water that was on the ground at one time. And the reason it's interesting they know that is because you can't really see that.

You can't really see the evaporation. You can see water disappear. Maybe some could deduce it must have gone in the sky, must be up in the clouds now.

But that's not something one could actually see. It's a deduction that someone who contemplates it might come up with. But there's actually, I'm really amazed at a lot of the natural knowledge about the things of nature that many of these guys in the Old Testament in Job actually had.

A lot of the speeches call upon facts of nature. Laws of nature, which they had deduced, some of them were not exactly scientific, of course, because they lived in pre-scientific times, like when Job said that a man is conceived when he's poured out like milk and he curdles and then skin and bones are added to him in the womb. Well, I mean, actually, that's not too bad.

And I mean, without knowing anything about microbiology, it's not too terrible a description. It's not entirely up to date with our modern scientific descriptions, but they did pay attention. These guys did pay attention to nature and learned what lessons they could.

And they seem to know a lot for ancient people who live in a pre-scientific time. It says God draws up drops of water, which distill as rain from the mist. Which the clouds drop down and pour abundantly on man.

Indeed, can anyone understand the spreading of the clouds, the thunder from his canopy? Look, he scatters his light upon it and covers the depths of the sea for by these he judges the people. He gives food in abundance. He covers his hands with lightning.

He commands it to strike his thunder, declares it. The cattle also concerning the rising storm. Now, a lot of this language is just obscure.

It's interesting that he mentioned something about the thunder and the cattle. I don't know if he's referring to Job's cattle that were killed by lightning. Remember, a lot of his sheep were killed because of a lightning strike.

And he may be referring to that, though it's not clear exactly in what way he is. It may be that he's not referring to that at all. Then one more chapter of his speeches, Chapter 37.

At this, also, my heart trembles and leaps from its place. Hear attentively the thunder of his voice and the rumbling that comes from his mouth. He sends forth under the whole heaven his lightnings to the ends of the earth.

After it, a voice roars that his thunder comes after the lightning. He thunders with his majestic voice and he does not restrain them when his voice is heard. God thunders marvelously with his voice.

He does great things which we cannot comprehend. For he says to the snow, be on the earth. Likewise, to the gentle rain and the heavy rain of his strength.

He seals the hand of every man that all men may know his work. The animals enter dens and remain in their lairs. From the chambers of the south comes the whirlwind and cold from the scattered scattering winds of the north.

By the breath of God, ice is given and the broad waters are frozen. Also, with moisture, he saturates the thick clouds. He scatters his bright clouds and they swirl about being turned by his guidance.

That they may do whatever he commands them on the face of the whole earth. He causes it to come, whether for correction or for his land or for mercy. Now, here he's simply talking, of course, about God's governing of nature, which is a common theme in these in many of the speeches.

Just a way of saying how great God is more than us. Why this point has to be made again or why he thinks this point has not been adequately made. I'm not sure.

But he's in that respect, following the course that even Job and the other counselors have made. Just giving examples in nature of things that are so so demonstrative of God's power that they make us. They intimidate us because we don't understand them.

Listen to this, O Job, stand still and consider the wondrous works of God. Do you know when God dispatches them and causes the light of his cloud to shine? Do you know the balance of clouds whose wondrous works of him, those wondrous works of him who is perfect in knowledge? Why are your garments hot when he quiets the earth by the south wind? With him, have you spread out the skies strong as cast metal mirror? These are in some ways questions similar to what God's going to be asking Job. You know, do you

know these things that God knows? Do you know where the light comes from? Do you know how were you there when he spread the skies out? Did you help him do that? Teach us what we should say to him, for we can prepare nothing because of the darkness.

Should he be told that I wish to speak? If a man were to speak, surely he would be swallowed up. Now, apparently what he's saying here as he closes his speech is that Job has been out of line and saying, I just want to have an audience with God. I just want a chance to speak with God and plead my cause.

And Elihu has already said that isn't necessary. God already knows everything. He doesn't need to hear you present yourself in court with him.

Does he need to be told that you wish to speak with him? You know, if you actually did stand before God and speak, you certainly would be swallowed up. You have a lot of confidence that things would go well for you if you went to court against God. No, I don't think so.

I think I think you'd lose in a big way. Even now, men cannot look at the light when it is bright in the sky, when the wind has passed and cleared them. He comes from the north as gold and splendor with God is awesome majesty.

As for the Almighty, we cannot find him. He is excellent in power, in judgment and abundant justice. He does not oppress.

Therefore, men fear him. He shows no partiality to any who are wise in heart. Now, this isn't exactly like a totally, you know, logical conclusion to everything he said, although there's nothing wrong with these statements.

He is not like I said, he's not really introducing a lot of new ideas, but perhaps underline everything that he says is a slightly different take on on the same thing, namely, that God does deal with men. He does punish wickedness. He does elevate righteous.

He does discipline people when they go wrong. And this idea of discipline, this idea of correction is the thing that was absent from the other speeches. The other speech was just saying, you're condemned, you know, you've done bad.

God has written you off. You're going to die. You're just a bad person.

And you might as well just shrivel up and accept the fact that God is punishing you. And it is a well, no, it's not really like that. You shouldn't just give up and just say that God's given up on you.

It's not so. If God chastens you, he hasn't given up on you. If he's got some complaint and he exhibits that in his treatment of you, then you need to find out what it is he wants

you to learn, because then you can be restored.

And that Elihu is more right than the others, because we find that that's precisely true. Job does have to learn what lessons God has for him, and he's going to learn them mostly not through what Elihu said. Although Elihu may have prepared Job to be more teachable because he was somewhat more respectful to Job than the others were and held out more hope and more sympathy than the others did.

But it's really God's speeches are going to bring Job down to repentance and he is going to be restored. And it'll turn out that Elihu's thesis was actually correct about that. And so in that sense, Elihu does contribute something more than the others, although we do find a lot of what seems like just repetition in his speeches, too.

So we'll take a break here and we'll come back to God's speeches and the rest of the book. We'll be able to finish it up in our next class, I'm quite sure.