

KEY

Archer = A Survey of Old Testament Introduction (Gleason Archer). Chicago: Moody Press, 2007.

Ash = Job: The Wisdom of the Cross (Christopher Ash). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014.

BBC = The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament. Edited by John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews and Mark W. Chavalas. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

Frame = John Frame, Systematic Theology, P&R Publishing, 2013.

Grudem = Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, Zondervan, 1994.

Harrison = Introduction to the Old Testament (R.K. Harrison). Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969.

K&D = Keil, C.F. and Delitzsch, F. in the Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, Vol 2. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989.

Swindoll = A Man of Heroic Endurance: Job (Charles Swindoll). Nashville, TN. W Publishing Group, 2004.

Talbert = *Beyond Suffering: Discovering the Message of Job* (Layton Talbert). Bob Jones University Press, 2007.

TWOT = The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (R. Laird Harris; Gleason L. Archer, Jr.; Bruce Waltke). Chicago: Moody Press, 1980. Two Volumes.

Walton = Old Testament Today. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004.

Basic English Diagram / Structure

Here I simply broke down the passage and worked on an outline . . .

I. Elihu is Introduced (Job 32)

A. Elihu's Ambition (1-5, 16-22)

1. Elihu is Angry (1-5)

1 Then these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. 2 But the anger of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram burned; against Job his anger burned because he justified himself before God. 3 And his anger burned against his three friends because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job. 4 Now Elihu had waited to speak to Job because they were years older than he. 5 And when Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of the three men his anger burned.

2. Elihu is Anxious (16-22)

16 "Shall I wait, because they do not speak, Because they stop and no longer answer? 17 "I too will answer my share, I also will tell my opinion. 18 "For I am full of words; The spirit within me constrains me. 19 "Behold, my belly is like unvented wine, Like new wineskins it is about to burst. 20 "Let me speak that I may get relief; Let me open my lips and answer. 21 "Let me now be partial to no one, Nor flatter any man. 22 "For I do not know how to flatter, Else my Maker would soon take me away.

B. Elihu's Awareness (6-12)

6 So Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite spoke out and said, "I am young in years and you are old; Therefore I was shy and afraid to tell you what I think. 7 "I thought age should speak, And increased years should teach wisdom. 8 "But it is a spirit in man, And the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding. 9 "The abundant in years may not be wise, Nor may elders understand justice. 10 "So I say, 'Listen to me, I too will tell what I think.' 11 "Behold, I waited for your words, I listened to your reasonings, While you pondered what to say. 12 "I even paid close attention to you; Indeed, there was no one who refuted Job, Not one of you who answered his words.

C. Friend's Arguments (13-15)

13 "Do not say, 'We have found wisdom; God will rout him, not man.' 14 "For he has not arranged his words against me, Nor will I reply to him with your arguments. 15 "They are dismayed, they no longer answer; Words have failed them.

II. Elihu Gives His First Speech (Job 33)

A. Allegations Made by Job (33:1-11)

1. Listen Up Job! (1-5)

1 "However now, Job, please hear my speech, And listen to all my words. 2 "Behold now, I open my mouth, My tongue in my mouth speaks. 3 "My words are from the uprightness of my heart,

And my lips speak knowledge sincerely. 4 “The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life. 5 “Refute me if you can; Array yourselves before me, take your stand.

2. We are Equals!

6 “Behold, I belong to God like you; I too have been formed out of the clay. 7 “Behold, no fear of me should terrify you, Nor should my pressure weigh heavily on you.

3. Allegations By Job Against God (8-11)

8 “Surely you have spoken in my hearing, And I have heard the sound of your words: 9 ‘I am pure, without transgression; I am innocent and there is no guilt in me. 10 ‘Behold, He invents pretexts against me; He counts me as His enemy. 11 ‘He puts my feet in the stocks; He watches all my paths.’

B. Answers Given by Elihu (12-33)

1. God is Answerable to No One (12-22)

12 “Behold, let me tell you, you are not right in this, For God is greater than man. 13 “Why do you complain against Him That He does not give an account of all His doings? 14 “Indeed God speaks once, Or twice, yet no one notices it. 15 “In a dream, a vision of the night, When sound sleep falls on men, While they slumber in their beds, 16 Then He opens the ears of men, And seals their instruction, 17 That He may turn man aside from his conduct, And keep man from pride; 18 He keeps back his soul from the pit, And his life from passing over into Sheol. 19 “Man is also chastened with pain on his bed, And with unceasing complaint in his bones; 20 So that his life loathes bread, And his soul favorite food. 21 “His flesh wastes away from sight, And his bones which were not seen stick out. 22 “Then his soul draws near to the pit, And his life to those who bring death.

2. God May Send An Angelic Mediator (23-30)

23 “If there is an angel as mediator for him, One out of a thousand, To remind a man what is right for him, 24 Then let him be gracious to him, and say, ‘Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom’; 25 Let his flesh become fresher than in youth, Let him return to the days of his youthful vigor; 26 Then he will pray to God, and He will accept him, That he may see His face with joy, And He may restore His righteousness to man. 27 “He will sing to men and say, ‘I have sinned and perverted what is right, And it is not proper for me. 28 ‘He has redeemed my soul from going to the pit, And my life shall see the light.’ 29 “Behold, God does all these oftentimes with men, 30 To bring back his soul from the pit, That he may be enlightened with the light of life.

C. Appeal for Job to Listen to Wisdom (31-33)

31 “Pay attention, O Job, listen to me; Keep silent, and let me speak. 32 “Then if you have anything to say, answer me; Speak, for I desire to justify you. 33 “If not, listen to me; Keep silent, and I will teach you wisdom.”

TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

ENGLISH TRANSLATION (NASB95):

Job 32 1 Then these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. 2 But the anger of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram burned; against Job his anger burned because he justified himself before God. 3 And his anger burned against his three friends because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job. 4 Now Elihu had waited to speak to Job because they were years older than he. 5 And when Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of the three men his anger burned. 6 So Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite spoke out and said, "I am young in years and you are old; Therefore I was shy and afraid to tell you what I think. 7 "I thought age should speak, And increased years should teach wisdom. 8 "But it is a spirit in man, And the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding. 9 "The abundant in years may not be wise, Nor may elders understand justice. 10 "So I say, 'Listen to me, I too will tell what I think.' 11 "Behold, I waited for your words, I listened to your reasonings, While you pondered what to say. 12 "I even paid close attention to you; Indeed, there was no one who refuted Job, Not one of you who answered his words. 13 "Do not say, 'We have found wisdom; God will rout him, not man.' 14 "For he has not arranged his words against me, Nor will I reply to him with your arguments. 15 "They are dismayed, they no longer answer; Words have failed them. 16 "Shall I wait, because they do not speak, Because they stop and no longer answer? 17 "I too will answer my share, I also will tell my opinion. 18 "For I am full of words; The spirit within me constrains me. 19 "Behold, my belly is like unvented wine, Like new wineskins it is about to burst. 20 "Let me speak that I may get relief; Let me open my lips and answer. 21 "Let me now be partial to no one, Nor flatter any man. 22 "For I do not know how to flatter, Else my Maker would soon take me away.

Job 33 1 "However now, Job, please hear my speech, And listen to all my words. 2 "Behold now, I open my mouth, My tongue in my mouth speaks. 3 "My words are from the uprightness of my heart, And my lips speak knowledge sincerely. 4 "The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life. 5 "Refute me if you can; Array yourselves before me, take your stand. 6 "Behold, I belong to God like you; I too have been formed out of the clay. 7 "Behold, no fear of me should terrify you, Nor should my pressure weigh heavily on you. 8 "Surely you have spoken in my hearing, And I have heard the sound of your words: 9 'I am pure, without transgression; I am innocent and there is no guilt in me. 10 'Behold, He invents pretexts against me; He counts me as His enemy. 11 'He puts my feet in the stocks; He watches all my paths.' 12 "Behold, let me tell you, you are not right in this, For God is greater than man. 13 "Why do you complain against Him That He does not give an account of all His doings? 14 "Indeed God speaks once, Or twice, yet no one notices it. 15 "In a dream, a vision of the night, When sound sleep falls on men, While they slumber in their beds, 16 Then He opens the ears of men, And seals their instruction, 17 That He may turn man aside from his conduct, And keep man from pride; 18 He keeps back his soul from the pit, And his life from passing over into Sheol. 19 "Man is also chastened with pain on his bed, And with unceasing complaint in his bones; 20 So that his life loathes bread, And his soul favorite food. 21 "His flesh wastes away from sight, And his bones which were not seen stick out. 22 "Then his soul draws near to the pit, And his life to those who bring death. 23 "If there is an angel as mediator for him, One out of a thousand, To remind a man what is right for him, 24 Then let him be gracious to him, and say,

‘Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom’; 25 Let his flesh become fresher than in youth, Let him return to the days of his youthful vigor; 26 Then he will pray to God, and He will accept him, That he may see His face with joy, And He may restore His righteousness to man. 27 “He will sing to men and say, ‘I have sinned and perverted what is right, And it is not proper for me. 28 ‘He has redeemed my soul from going to the pit, And my life shall see the light.’ 29 “Behold, God does all these oftentimes with men, 30 To bring back his soul from the pit, That he may be enlightened with the light of life. 31 “Pay attention, O Job, listen to me; Keep silent, and let me speak. 32 “Then if you have anything to say, answer me; Speak, for I desire to justify you. 33 “If not, listen to me; Keep silent, and I will teach you wisdom.”

PASSAGE OUTLINE:

Bible Knowledge Commentary

- I. ELIHU’S FIRST SPEECH (CHAPS. 32–33)
 - A. Introduction to Elihu (32:1–5)
 - B. Elihu’s introduction of himself (32:6–22)
 - C. Elihu’s defense of his wisdom (32:6–9)
 - D. Elihu’s disappointment with the three (32:10–14)
 - E. Elihu’s desire to speak out (32:15–22)
 - F. Elihu’s first answer to Job (chap. 33)
 - 1. Elihu’s request that Job listen (33:1–7)
 - 2. Elihu’s summary of Job’s charges against God (33:8–11)
 - 3. Elihu’s refutation of Job’s claim that God was silent (33:12–33)

UBS Handbook Series

- I. Prose Introduction Job 32:1–6a
- II. Elihu’s First Speech Job 32:6b–33:33
 - A. Elihu Maintains His Right to Speak Job 32:6b–10
 - B. Elihu Accuses the Friends of Failing to Answer Job Job 32:11–14
 - C. Elihu Says He Must Speak or He Will Burst Job 32:15–22
 - D. Elihu Challenges Job to Argue with Him Job 33:1–7
 - E. Elihu Restates Job’s Argument of His Innocence Job 33:8–11
 - F. Elihu Refutes Job’s Claim Job 33:12–14
 - G. Elihu Says God Warns Men in Their Dreams to Stop Sinning Job 33:15–18
 - H. Elihu Says God Sends Sickness as a Warning Job 33:19–22
 - I. Elihu Says God Sends an Angel to Save Men Job 33:23–30
 - J. Elihu Asks Job to Be Silent and Learn Job 33:31–33

The New American Commentary: Job (Robert L. Alden)

- 1. Elihu’s First Speech (32:1–33:33)
 - A. His Entrance (32:1–5)
 - 1. ANGER WITH JOB (32:1–2)
 - 2. ANGER WITH THE FRIENDS (32:3–5)

- B. His Pompous Self-introduction (32:6–33:7)
 - 1. YOUTH VERSUS AGE (32:6–9)
 - 2. INADEQUACY OF THE THREE FRIENDS (32:10–16)
 - 3. HIS COMPULSION TO SPEAK (32:17–22)
 - 4. JOB’S REQUIREMENT TO LISTEN (33:1–7)
- C. His Statement of Job’s Argument (33:8–11)
- D. His Answers to Job’s Argument (33:12–30)
- E. HOW GOD DEALS WITH PEOPLE (33:12–22)
 - 1. Introduction (33:12–14)
 - 2. He Speaks through Dreams (33:15–18)
 - 3. He Speaks through Suffering (33:19–22)
- F. EXCEPTION ONE: AN ANGEL (33:23–25)
- G. EXCEPTION TWO: REPENTANCE (33:26–28)
- H. GOD’S PURPOSES (33:29–30)
- I. Challenge to Job (33:31–33)

Be Patient: Job (Warren W. Wiersbe)

- I. God is speaking through me (Job 32; note v. 8)
 - A. He was indignant (Job 32:1–3, 5)
 - B. He was inspired (Job 32:8–10)
 - C. He was impartial (Job 32:14, 21–22)
 - D. He was impelled (Job 32:16–20)
- II. God is gracious (Job 33; note v. 24)
 - A. Elihu said that Job had claimed to be sinless (v. 9)
 - B. Elihu quoted Job as saying that God was unjust and was treating him like an enemy (33:10–11)
 - C. First, he stated his thesis in verses 12–14
 - D. Dreams and visions (Job 33:15–18).
 - E. Suffering (Job 33:19–22)
 - F. The ministry of the mediating angel (Job 33:23–33)
- III. God is just (Job 34–35; note 34:10–12)
- IV. God is great (Job 36–37; note 36:5, 26)

Job (Charles Swindoll)

- I. Observing Elihu’s Approach
- II. Analyzing Elihu’s Mistakes
 - A. He Took Too Long to Get Started
 - B. He Comes Across as Pompous
 - C. He States What Job Knows
 - D. He Never Acknowledges that He Doesn’t Know for Sure
- III. Analyzing Elihu’s Speeches
 - A. His First Speech
 - B. His Second Speech
 - C. His Third Speech

D. His Fourth Speech

Job: The Wisdom of the Cross (Christopher Ash)

I. Elihu's First Speech: The God Who Speaks (32:6-33:33)

A. True Religion Makes Prophecy an Urgent Matter (32:1-22)

1. Prophecy is Possible (6-10)
2. Prophecy is Necessary (11-16)
3. Prophecy is Urgent (17-22)

B. The Prophet Appeals to the Suffering Seeker (33:1-33)

1. The Prophet's Vows Must Be Heeded (1-7)
2. Job's Accusations Must Be Answered (8-13)
3. God Does Speak (14-30)
 - a. God Speaks Through the Voice of Conscience (15-18)
 - b. God Speaks Through Suffering (19-28)
 - c. Conclusion: God Does Speak (29-30)

C. The Prophet's Voice Must Be Heeded (31-33)

Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary (Robert L. Alden)

1. Elihu Contradicts the Friends and Job (32:1–33:33)

- (1) His Entrance (32:1–5)
Anger with Job (32:1–2)
Anger with the Friends (32:3–5)
- (2) His Pompous Self-introduction (32:6–33:7)
Youth Versus Age (32:6–9)
Inadequacy of the Three Friends (32:10–16)
His Compulsion to Speak (32:17–22)
Job's Requirement to Listen (33:1–7)
- (3) His Statement of Job's Argument (33:8–11)
- (4) His Answers to Job's Argument (33:12–30)
How God Deals with People (33:12–22)
Introduction (33:12–14)
He Speaks through Dreams (33:15–18)
He Speaks through Suffering (33:19–22)
Exception One: An Angel (33:23–25)
Exception Two: Repentance (33:26–28)
God's Purposes (33:29–30)

(5) Challenge to Job (33:31–33)

2. Elihu Proclaims God's Justice (34:1–37)

- (1) Introduction (34:1–4)
- (2) His Statement of Job's Argument (34:5–9)
- (3) His Answers to Job's Argument (34:10–30)
God's Unchanging Ways (34:10–15)
God's Sovereign Justice (34:16–20)
God's Punishment (34:21–30)

- (4) His Challenge to Job to Repent (34:31–33)
- (5) He Condemns Job for not Repenting (34:34–37)
3. Elihu Condemns Self-righteousness (35:1–16)
 - (1) His Statement of Job’s Argument (35:1–3)
 - (2) His Answers to Job’s Argument (35:4–15)
 - God and Human Good Behavior (35:4–8)
 - God is Detached from Human Woe (35:9–15)
 - (3) His Insult to Job (35:16)
4. Elihu Declares God’s Goodness and Power (36:1–37:18)
 - (1) Introduction of a New Tack (36:1–4)
 - (2) God’s Retribution to the Good and the Bad (36:5–15)
 - (3) God’s Discipline to Job (36:16–21)
 - (4) Introduction to Anticipated Theophany (36:22–26)
 - (5) Anticipated Theophany (36:27–37:13)
 - (6) Application to Job (37:14–18)
5. His Inconclusive Conclusion (37:19–24)

BASIC OUTLINE:

- I. Elihu is Introduced (Job 32)
 - A. Ambition of Elihu (1-5, 16-22)
 - B. Awareness of Elihu (6-12)
 - C. Arguments of the Three (13-15)
- II. Elihu Gives His First Speech (Job 33)
 - A. Allegations Made by Job (33:1-11)
 - B. Answers Given by Elihu (12-33)
 - C. Appeal for Job to Listen to Wisdom (31-33)

SEE TALBERT PAGE 177 FOR ALL FOUR SPEECHES

PASSAGE OUTLINE:

- I. Elihu's Introduction (Job 32)
 - A. Ambition of Elihu (1-5, 16-22)
 - 1. Elihu is Angry (1-5)
 - 2. Elihu is Anxious (16-22)
 - B. Awareness of Elihu (6-12)
 - C. Arguments of the Three (13-15)
- II. Elihu's First Speech (Job 33)
 - A. Allegations Made by Job (33:1-11)
 - 1. A Call to Listen as Equals (1-10)
 - 2. A Reminder of Job's Allegations (8-11)
 - B. Answers Given by Elihu (12-33)
 - 1. God's Answerable to None (12-22)
 - 2. God's Angelic Mediator (23-30)
 - C. Appeal for Job to Listen to Wisdom (31-33)

SERMON OUTLINE:

- I. Elihu's Introduction (Job 32)
 - A. Ambition of Elihu (1-5, 16-22)
 - 1. Elihu is Angry (1-5)
 - 2. Elihu is Anxious (16-22)
 - B. Awareness of Elihu (6-12)
 - 1. He's aware of the age gap (vv. 6-7)
 - C. Argument of the Three (13-15)
- II. Elihu's First Speech (Job 33)
 - A. Allegations Made by Job (33:1-11)
 - 1. A Call to Listen as Equals (1-10)
 - 2. A Reminder of Job's Allegations (8-11)
 - a. Job is faultless
 - b. God is unfair
 - c. God is aloof

B. Answers Given by Elihu (12-30)

1. As to Job's first contention — that he's faultless
 - a. Elihu points out: God is the standard of righteousness (12)
2. As to Job's second contention — that God is unfair
 - a. Elihu points out: God answers to no one
3. As to Job's third contention — that God is aloof
 - a. Elihu points out: God provides (14-30)
 - (1) He guides through revelation — dreams and visions (14-18)
 - (2) He guides through affliction — pain and suffering (19-22)
 - (3) God provides a mediator (23-30)

C. Appeals for Job to Listen to Wisdom (31-33)

Closing Points:

1. For the Believer Suffering is Not Punitive
Teaching of Job's Three Friends—Not True of Us
2. For the Believer Suffering May be Corrective
Teaching of Elihu—Might Be True for Us
3. For the Believer Suffering is Always Instructive
Teaching of Elihu—Always True for Us

PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what is the passage talking about): Elihu's First Confrontation of Job

PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what is the passage saying about what it's talking about): consists of a long introduction followed by a defense of God's sovereignty

PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text): The Creator-Creature Distinction Remains Even When Life Seems Unfair

CENTRAL PROPOSITION (OR IDEA) OF THE SERMON: When Life Hurts Keep Trusting Your Sovereign and Good God

SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE: The First Speech of Elihu: God Is The Sovereign

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

Overview of Elihu's Speeches

Job's Complaint

1. God is silent; He does not respond to me (33:13; cf. 33:13).

Elihu's Answer

1a. First speech: God does speak—through dreams and pain (chap. 33).

Job's Complaint

2. God is unjust; He does not relieve me of my suffering (19:6–7, 27:2; cf. 34:5–6).

Elihu's Answer

2a. Second speech: God is just (chap. 34).

Job's Complaint

3. God is unconcerned; He does not reward me for my innocence (10:7; cf. 35:3).

Elihu's Answer

3a. Third Speech: God is sovereign (chap. 35).

Elihu's Quotations of Job

In Elihu's First Speech

33:9a "I am pure" (cf. 6:10; 9:21; 10:7; 12:4; 16:17; 31:6).

33:9b "Without sin" (cf. 13:23; 23:11).

33:9c "I am clean and free from guilt" (cf. 9:20–21; 10:7; 27:6).

33:10a "God has found fault with me" (cf. 10:6).

33:10b "He considers me His enemy" (cf. 13:24; 19:11).

33:11a "He fastens my feet in shackles" (cf. 13:27).

33:11b "He keeps close watch on all my paths" (cf. 7:17–20; 10:14; 13:27).

In Elihu's Second Speech

34:5a "I am innocent [righteous]" (cf. 9:15, 20; 27:6).

34:5b "God denies me justice" (cf. 19:6–7; 27:2).

34:6a "I am right" (cf. 27:5–6).

34:6b "I am guiltless" (cf. 10:7; chap. 31).

34:6d "His arrow inflicts an incurable wound" (cf. 6:4; 16:13).

34:9 "It profits a man nothing when he tries to please God" (cf. 21:15).

In Elihu's Third Speech

35:2 "I will be cleared by God" (cf. 13:18; 23:7).

35:3 "What profit is it to me, and what do I gain by not sinning?" (cf. 21:15).

In Elihu's Fourth Speech

36:23 "You [God] have done wrong" (cf. 19:6–7).

Though verbose, Elihu was less arrogant and presumptuous than the other spokesmen. [BKC]

For Elihu, suffering, though related to sin (v. 27), was more protective than punitive. The first three speakers said God afflicts in order to punish; Elihu said God afflicts in order to teach. He emphasized that suffering can help divert one from sin and resultant death, whereas the three older men felt that unrequited sin would surely lead to death.

All four counselors were wrong about Job's case, however, for all assumed a sin-results-in-suffering viewpoint. When God spoke (chaps. 38–41), He did so directly, not through an angel. And Job's experience did result in his enjoying a deeper relationship with God (42:2, 5–6, 9) and he did enjoy a long and full life (42:10, 12, 16). [Roy B. Zuck, "Job," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 760]

Chapter 32 marks the beginning of a series of speeches by Elihu, a discourse that continues through chapter 37. Elihu is presented to the reader, as were the other friends, in a brief prose introduction. Elihu has not previously been mentioned, and when his speech is completed he will not be mentioned again. Job does not reply to his long speech, and Elihu's words add little of substance to the book. He is introduced as a man younger than the friends, and one who is angry with the friends because they could not give Job a reply, and angry with Job because he justifies himself before God. [William David Reayburn, *A Handbook on the Book of Job*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 589]

Note the contention by some scholars that this section is a redacted addition. However, there is no good reason for this. Support of the integrity of the book runs deep into the Hebrew tradition. Furthermore, there is a reason for Elihu's speeches as they form a transition to God's in chapter 38.

Elihu is speaking to the three friends and does not address Job directly, not until 33:1.

The four speeches of the last major human participant fill the next six chapters. After a prose introduction that corresponds to 2:11–13, Elihu himself spouted an inordinately long introduction of himself, his frustrations, and his plan that he expected would put an end to the debate by satisfying both Job and his friends. In the long run he made little difference. Though he was somewhat kinder than the others and did put greater emphasis on seeing life and its troubles from a divine perspective, he ultimately also subscribed to the theology of retribution, saw Job as guilty, and therefore blamed him for the grief he was experiencing. [Robert L. Alden, *Job*, vol. 11, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 313–314]

Mainly for these reasons many consider these speeches a nonoriginal part of the book. But they are in the text, and in many ways they link to and echo other speeches.² The very fact that they are long, repetitive, and even boring points to the quandary human

beings face when confronted by unresolvable propositions. The fact that no one answers Elihu points to the frustrating fact that there are no human answers to the dilemma Job and many subsequent sufferers have faced. [Robert L. Alden, 313–314]

Elihu gives a long (“pompous,” so Alden?) introduction of himself that begins in 32:6 and runs all the way to verse 7 of chapter 33. Sometimes youth equates to windiness:

Elihu is neither praised nor condemned by God at the close of the book. He is, seemingly, ignored. Why?

Different attitudes by commentators on Elihu . . . Swindoll “Another Long-Winded Monologue” Older commentators tended to be harsh with Elihu. More modern scholarship has softened. However, note UBS Handbook (excerpt from above quote): “Job does not reply to his long speech, and Elihu’s words add little of substance to the book.” Henry Morris calls him “a braggart spoiling for a theological fight, a tool of Satan, even a false Messiah.” [cited by Talbert, 165]

Matthew Henry sees Elihu as “a man of great modesty and humility . . . of great sense and courage.” Another: “Elihu is the “most courteous speech of the debate, and undoubtedly surpasses all the preceding speeches in spiritual grasp.” Elmer Smick: “We find a more balanced theology than that of the [three] counselors . . . a warmer personal response to the greatness of God.” [above cited by Talbert, 165]

Is he a pompous, arrogant young up-start who lends little to the debate, or is he a prophetic voice of truth? I started out seeing him as Swindoll does . . . But . . .

Positive: 1) God doesn’t rebuke him (cf. 42:7). 2) Elihu is given 6 chapters in the book. 3) Elihu is more sensitive and addresses Job’s words rather than his actions. 4) Much of what Elihu says is later repeated by God. 5) Elihu speaks not from experience or tradition, but from wisdom. 6) The author of the book doesn’t criticize Elihu (i.e. vv. 1-2). 7) Elihu’s 6 chapters are longer than 12 O.T. books & 17 N.T.

Similarities between Elihu’s speeches and God’s afterward [adapted from Talbert, 172 ff.]:

1. Elihu focuses on Job’s words rather than his deeds (32:12-14; 33:8-13; 34:5-9,31-37; 35:1-4,13-16). God does the same (38:2-5,18; 40:2,7-8).
2. Elihu is critical of Job for defending his righteousness at the expense of God’s (33:8-13; 34:5-12,17-19,31-37; 35:2-7). So does God in 40:2,8.
3. Elihu stresses the indescribable glory of God in creation (36:22-37:24). So does God (40:9-14; 42:3-6).
4. Elihu questions Job about his knowledge of creation in relation to God’s (37:14-18). God does the same as he asks Job some 80 questions about this.

5. Elihu accuses Job of speaking “words without knowledge,” which stands parallel to God’s opening statement to Job in 38:2). Cf. 34:35; 35:16.

See also chart on page 174 in Talbert. For a thorough defense of Elihu, see Talbert 164ff.

“The major theme of all that Elihu has to say can be stated in three words; God is sovereign. He is not only good all the time, He is in control all the time. . . . God is never shocked or surprised. Our lives, therefore, are never out of God’s control. And furthermore, God doesn’t feel obligated to explain Himself.” [Swindoll, 251]

There is a difference between suffering because of your sin and sinning because of your suffering. Job does the latter. Cf. “Windy words” and my own experience.

Jesus suffered truly and sinlessly.

“Where does Elihu fit? He really does not qualify as either a protagonist or antagonist. Elihu occupies a middle-ground, sharpening our focus on Job’s real problem and transitioning us from the off-base accusations of the friends to the on-target assessment of the Lord.” [Talbert, 175]

VERSES 32:1-5

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

1 Then these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. 2 But the anger of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram burned; against Job his anger burned because he justified himself before God. 3 And his anger burned against his three friends because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job. 4 Now Elihu had waited to speak to Job because they were years older than he. 5 And when Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of the three men his anger burned.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

1 So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. 2 Then Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, burned with anger. He burned with anger at Job because he justified himself rather than God. 3 He burned with anger also at Job's three friends because they had found no answer, although they had declared Job to be in the wrong. 4 Now Elihu had waited to speak to Job because they were older than he. 5 And when Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, he burned with anger.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

1 So these three men quit answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. 2 Then Elihu son of Barachel the Buzite from the family of Ram became angry. He was angry at Job because he had justified himself rather than God. 3 He was also angry at Job's three friends because they had failed to refute him and yet had condemned him. 4 Now Elihu had waited to speak to Job because they were all older than he. 5 But when he saw that the three men could not answer Job, he became angry.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

1 So these three men stopped answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. 2 But Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, became very angry with Job for justifying himself rather than God. 3 He was also angry with the three friends, because they had found no way to refute Job, and yet had condemned him. 4 Now Elihu had waited before speaking to Job because they were older than he. 5 But when he saw that the three men had nothing more to say, his anger was aroused.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

1 Then these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

Because he was righteous in his own eyes: righteous translates the Hebrew TsaDiq. In the context it refers to being right in a legal suit, or being innocent of charges made against one. So the author is saying that Job's insistence on being right or being innocent has caused the friends to give up arguing with him. In his own eyes means "in his own mind,

opinion, heart,” or as TEV says, “convinced.” [William David Reayburn, A Handbook on the Book of Job, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 591]

“Righteous” — Different meanings and two levels . . .

I’m going to suggest that Job’s use of t/word “righteous” differs some from our understanding.

It may have more in common with goodness w/the exception that righteousness always apprehends God in His holiness.

I’m going to also suggest to you that words like “righteous” and “good” w/i a biblical context have two levels.

1) Our Practice. This is how others see us in our lives. Do we behave righteously (not “S.R.”)? Are we good? Are we X-like?

That is our practice.

2) Our Position. This is where we stand B4 G. as it relates to our sin. We can never be fully righteous B4 G. as it relates to sin.

2 Cor. 5:21 21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Romans 5:19 For as through the one man’s disobedience [Adam] the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One [X] the many will be made righteous.

Specif. we are justified, declared righteous, by faith. True b4 t/Cross (Romans 4 - Abraham. Same true of Job, contemp. of A). True this side of t/Cross. (Rom. 5:1).

Two levels of righteousness:

- 1) Our practice. Fruit. Sanctification.
- 2) Our Position. Forensic. Justification.

[v] What about Job?

12 times Job refers to himself as righteous (tsadiq).

Job is largely looking at righteous behavior that is in keeping w/one who believes in G.

Righteousness in sense of rightness; not sinlessness.

Integrity.

Job in 13:16 “This also will be my salvation, For a godless man may not come before His presence.

2 But the anger of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram burned; against Job his anger burned because he justified himself before God.

Elihu's father Barakel was a Buzite, likely a descendant of Abraham's nephew Buz (Gen. 22:20–21). He was one of perhaps many bystanders.

Elihu means "he is my God." The same name is found in 1 Samuel 1:1; 1 Chronicles 27:18. Barachel, which means "God has blessed," is not recorded elsewhere in the Old Testament. The names of the father of Job and the fathers of the three friends are never mentioned. The Buzite means a member of the clan called Buz, who was the brother of Uz (Genesis 22:21). In 1:1 Job is said to be from the land of Uz. [UBS Handbook]

The place name Buz, on the other hand, is more significant. While it is attested in Gen 22:21 as the personal name of a cousin of Abraham, and brother of Uz, more to the point it appears in Jer 25:23 as a place name associated with Dedan and Tema (the land of Uz has appeared in v 20). These are names that we found also in Jer 49:7–8, in an oracle about Edom, and the Edomite Tema has already occurred in Job as the home of Eliphaz (cf. on 2:11; it is not a matter of northwest Arabia, as many claim). So it would seem that Elihu too, like the other three friends of Job, is being portrayed as an Edomite. [David J. A. Clines, Job 21–37, vol. 18a, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), 713]

Elihu, like the others, had roots in the desert country east of Palestine proper.

Four times "burned" is used (2x in verse 2, 1x in verse 3, 1x in verse 5).

Justified himself translates the verb form of the same word rendered "righteous" in verse 1; that is, "he claimed he was right" or "he said he was innocent." [UBS Handbook]

Job did fail here. He defended his righteousness while seemingly ignoring or belittling God's.

On the broader issue of Elihu's character, it makes something of a difference whether we think he is offering to display his knowledge (as NEB has it) or merely proffering his opinion (as RSV has it; see further Note 32:6.e). Are we to find in him an opinionated and patronizing bore, or a hesitant and cautious thinker whose language is long-winded because he is lacking in confidence? Unfortunately, we really cannot tell. Many commentators think they can, picking up on phrases that sound insensitive and arrogant. Some rabbis spoke of him as "Balaam in disguise," while many of the Fathers scorned him as a type of the false wisdom. Herder called him "a pert braggart boy," "a mere shadow." Among the modern commentators we read, for example, of "a combination of deference and coxsureness" (Andersen), or that "[h]is professed modesty is belied by his self-importance and pomposity" (Rowley). Good finds Elihu a "pompous, insensitive bore: an opaque thinker and an unattractively self-important character." But it might be better to recognize that Elihu's character may be much more indecipherable, and to keep an open mind about his motivation as well as his theology until we have heard him out. Terrien finds him a remarkable mixture of timidity and boldness, and it will be important to savor the contradictions in his portraiture. It is probably true that ancient Hebrews spoke not of holding opinions but of "knowing" things; if that is so, it would be hard to

blame Elihu for not speaking more reservedly than anyone in his social world. [David J. A. Clines, Job 21–37, vol. 18a, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), 716–717]

3 And his anger burned against his three friends because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.

Modern translations are divided between those that translate Job and those that translate “God.” According to Jewish tradition Job in this passage is another of the eighteen scribal corrections where the original text of the Hebrew Bible was altered out of reverence to God. To write a clause saying that “God was in the wrong” would seem to be blasphemy, and they could not read it aloud; therefore the text was changed to read “Job.” (The only other such scribal correction in the Book of Job occurs at 7:20.) The text that reads “God” implies that, by giving up the argument, the three friends were declaring Job right and God wrong.

Although many scholars prefer to take the text to be as in TEV, “God was in the wrong,” others argue that giving up the argument does not imply putting God in the wrong, and so the present Hebrew text should be kept. Rowley would keep RSV but translate “and so (that is, by finding an answer) shown Job to be in the wrong.” Tur-Sinai translates “because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.” HOTTP, which classifies the Hebrew text here as a “B” reading, suggests a rendering which may be reworded to say “Although the friends found no answer to give Job, they still found him unfaithful to God.” Since it is not possible to rule out either possibility, translators are free to follow either TEV or one of the adaptations of RSV. Therefore we may translate, for example, “Elihu was also angry at the three friends because they could not show Job that he was wrong and so had let God appear to be wrong” or “... they could not refute Job, but still they condemned him.” Some translations provide a footnote to say “The Hebrew reads ‘thus leaving Job in the wrong.’” [UBS Handbook]

But why is Elihu angry with Job? Presumably because Job has argued in his own defense instead of immediately adopting what is apparently God’s point of view, that Job is a sinner. . . . Elihu is angry with the friends because “they did not find an answer.” They of course thought that they had found perfectly adequate answers to Job’s accusations against God. But because they had not silenced Job, still less had brought him to admit the error of his ways, they had in Elihu’s eyes failed to find an answer. He is angry also because, apparently, “they condemned Job” or “put Job in the wrong.” But why exactly should that make him angry? It is not that he is so attracted to the rightness of Job’s cause that he resents their condemnation of a righteous man (it will not be until Yahweh speaks in 42:7–8 that they are compelled to accept the rightness of the way Job has spoken about God, as Habel notes). Nor is it that he is such a reasonable fellow that he dislikes their condemning him without finding good reasons for doing so (against Hölscher). It seems rather that he is angry because they have not been able to find such good reasons as to be able to overcome him with the condemnation he deserves (so Davidson), and thus “had

not shown Job to be in the wrong.” [David J. A. Clines, Job 21–37, vol. 18a, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), 714]

4 times it says that Elihu’s “wrath was kindled” / “anger burned.” The only other use of this expression is of God in 42:7. Elihu’s anger foreshadows God’s.

4 Now Elihu had waited to speak to Job because they were years older than he.

Cf. verse 6. ANE custom that’s in practice today in many cultures.

5 And when Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of the three men his anger burned.

Elihu was angry and both parties involved, for different reasons (vv. 2b, 3).

The custom in the ancient Near East was to defer to age (cf. 29:8a, 21; 32:6–7, 11–12a). Strong “geriatric patriarchy.”

. . . we might find an answer in the procedures of law. It is often thought that a Hebrew lawsuit was won when one side or the other admitted defeat by not speaking again; so perhaps the fact that the three friends have not silenced Job or brought him to acknowledge defeat means that Elihu believes that, unless he intervenes, Job has won the debate. [David J. A. Clines, 715] Cf. v. 1.

Zophar opted out.

VERSES 32:6-10

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

6 So Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite spoke out and said, "I am young in years and you are old; Therefore I was shy and afraid to tell you what I think. 7 "I thought age should speak, And increased years should teach wisdom. 8 "But it is a spirit in man, And the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding. 9 "The abundant in years may not be wise, Nor may elders understand justice. 10 "So I say, 'Listen to me, I too will tell what I think.'

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

6 And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said: "I am young in years, and you are aged; therefore I was timid and afraid to declare my opinion to you. 7 I said, 'Let days speak, and many years teach wisdom.' 8 But it is the spirit in man, the breath of the Almighty, that makes him understand. 9 It is not the old who are wise, nor the aged who understand what is right. 10 Therefore I say, 'Listen to me; let me also declare my opinion.'

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

6 So Elihu son of Barachel the Buzite replied: I am young in years, while you are old; therefore I was timid and afraid to tell you what I know. 7 I thought that age should speak and maturity should teach wisdom. 8 But it is a spirit in man and the breath of the Almighty that give him understanding. 9 It is not only the old who are wise or the elderly who understand how to judge. 10 Therefore I say, "Listen to me. I too will declare what I know."

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

6 So Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite said: "I am young in years, and you are old; that is why I was fearful, not daring to tell you what I know. 7 I thought, 'Age should speak; advanced years should teach wisdom.' 8 But it is the spirit in a person, the breath of the Almighty, that gives them understanding. 9 It is not only the old who are wise, not only the aged who understand what is right. 10 "Therefore I say: Listen to me; I too will tell you what I know.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

vv. 6–22 In this first phase of Elihu's first speech (32:6b–33:33) he offers three justifications for joining the conversation. In vv 6b–10 he argues that he is entitled to speak, in vv 11–14 that he needs to speak, and in vv 15–22 that he must speak. (Fohrer labels the strophes somewhat differently: I want to speak, I can speak, I must speak.) He is entitled to speak because as a human being he has all the wisdom necessary to have an opinion, even though he is young; he needs to speak because the friends have so obviously failed to refute Job; and he must speak because he finds silence in the face of such a situation intolerable. [David J. A. Clines, 716]

6 So Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite spoke out and said, “I am young in years and you are old; therefore I was shy and afraid to tell you what I think.

I am younger in years translates the Hebrew for “I am younger in days,” similar to 30:1, where the expression is “I am smaller in days” and has the same meaning as the expression here. [UBS Handbook]

See vv. 10, 17. Age and youth from my experience.

7 “I thought age should speak, and increased years should teach wisdom.

In 12:12 Job said “wisdom is with the aged.” Elihu, however, does not consider age as a proof of wisdom. Job 12:12 “Wisdom is with aged men, With long life is understanding. Cf. v. 9.

Discourse on youth and growing old . . .

8 “But it is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding.

The spirit in a man may refer to the Spirit of God (cf. NIV marg.), who is often associated with wisdom as its source (Gen. 41:38–39; Ex. 31:3; Num. 27:18–21; Isa. 11:2; Dan. 5:11–12). Most translations have “spirit” or “a spirit.”

. . . Elihu is saying in this verse that years alone, or having lived many years, does not give a person wisdom; it is rather the spirit which gives it. Elihu will conclude in verse 10 that he has such wisdom. [UBS Handbook]

The problem in this verse is the unclear relation between spirit in line a and breath of the Almighty in line b. There is, of course, some connection with the story of man’s creation, Genesis 2:7, but that does not clarify this verse completely. One way to resolve the problem here is to make spirit refer to “the spirit of God,” as in NEB, “But the spirit of God himself is in man and the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding,” so that the two lines are then fully parallel. TEV accepts the parallelism but for clarity brings the two terms together: “It is the spirit of the Almighty God.” However, some feel that parallelism should not be imposed here, and take spirit in a man to refer to his “intelligence” which he receives from God’s spirit. [UBS Handbook]

Some (Jansen) see Elihu claiming divine inspiration here in v. 8 (cf. v. 18, 33:4).

9 “The abundant in years may not be wise, nor may elders understand justice. 10 “So I say, ‘Listen to me, I too will tell what I think.’

The “abundant in years” is lit., “many,” meaning those who have lived many years. No guarantee that age will produce wisdom; many older people are fools while some younger are wise.

VERSES 32:11-14

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

11 “Behold, I waited for your words, I listened to your reasonings, While you pondered what to say. 12 “I even paid close attention to you; Indeed, there was no one who refuted Job, Not one of you who answered his words. 13 “Do not say, ‘We have found wisdom; God will rout him, not man.’ 14 “For he has not arranged his words against me, Nor will I reply to him with your arguments.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

11 “Behold, I waited for your words, I listened for your wise sayings, while you searched out what to say. 12 I gave you my attention, and, behold, there was none among you who refuted Job or who answered his words. 13 Beware lest you say, ‘We have found wisdom; God may vanquish him, not a man.’ 14 He has not directed his words against me, and I will not answer him with your speeches.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

11 Look, I waited for your conclusions; I listened to your insights as you sought for words. 12 I paid close attention to you. Yet no one proved Job wrong; not one of you refuted his arguments. 13 So do not claim, “We have found wisdom; let God deal with him, not man.” 14 But Job has not directed his argument to me, and I will not respond to him with your arguments.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

11 I waited while you spoke, I listened to your reasoning; while you were searching for words, 12 I gave you my full attention. But not one of you has proved Job wrong; none of you has answered his arguments. 13 Do not say, ‘We have found wisdom; let God, not a man, refute him.’ 14 But Job has not marshaled his words against me, and I will not answer him with your arguments.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

11 “Behold, I waited for your words, I listened to your reasonings, while you pondered what to say. 12 “I even paid close attention to you; indeed, there was no one who refuted Job, not one of you who answered his words.

We are not told when Elihu came upon the scene; sometime after chapter 2 or 3.

None of the friends ever calls Job by his name. In contrast Elihu does so nine times.

13 “Do not say, ‘We have found wisdom; God will rout him, not man.’

Difficult.

The second line of verse 13 could be understood, however, as Elihu's own suggestion, rather than as part of his quotation of the three. If so, then his point was that they should let God defeat Job's arguments, since man could not do it. [Roy B. Zuck, "Job," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 756]

Compare HCSB and the NIV:

13 So do not claim, "We have found wisdom; let God deal with him, not man." [HCSB]
13 Do not say, 'We have found wisdom; let God, not a man, refute him.' [NIV]

But is the line after the ";" Elihu's suggestion? Seems plausible. Except Elihu (a man) does "deal with him" (Job). Note that God gets the final word at the end.

TEV expresses line a as a rhetorical question: "How can you claim you have discovered wisdom?" Cf. 15:10.

In some languages this kind of construction is best handled as a negative followed by a positive statement; for example, "A man will not answer him; God will answer him." [UBS Handbook]

Epexegetical? As in NIV?

"But a better interpretation seems to be that they are disconcerted by having found wisdom in Job." [David J. A. Clines, 720]

14 "For he has not arranged his words against me, nor will I reply to him with your arguments."

Elihu argues that Job has yet to find a formidable opponent (like him). He would not resort to the argument of the three, even though he does so at points.

He has not directed his words against me: He refers to Job, who has not directed ..., an expression meaning "to marshal" or "to line up in rows." HOTTTP suggests "And he has not lined up (his arguments) against me." TEV "Job was speaking to you, not to me" gives the sense but loses the feeling of the original. We can translate "Job was not aiming his arguments at me" or "I was not the target of Job's words."

And I will not answer him with your speeches: Elihu is saying that he will not reply to Job with the poor arguments of the friends, or as TEV says, "but I would never answer the way you did." [UBS Handbook]

With a touch of arrogance Elihu suggested that Job had yet to confront a formidable logician. He was persuaded that his arguments were different and better than those of the three friends. Elihu demonstrated a greater sensitivity, a better grasp of what Job was saying, and a perspective closer to God's, but in the final analysis he resorted to the same

line of reasoning and so likewise failed to convince Job to abandon his claim to innocence. [Robert L. Alden]

VERSES 32:15-22

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

15 “They are dismayed, they no longer answer; Words have failed them. 16 “Shall I wait, because they do not speak, Because they stop and no longer answer? 17 “I too will answer my share, I also will tell my opinion. 18 “For I am full of words; The spirit within me constrains me. 19 “Behold, my belly is like unvented wine, Like new wineskins it is about to burst. 20 “Let me speak that I may get relief; Let me open my lips and answer. 21 “Let me now be partial to no one, Nor flatter any man. 22 “For I do not know how to flatter, Else my Maker would soon take me away.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

15 “They are dismayed; they answer no more; they have not a word to say. 16 And shall I wait, because they do not speak, because they stand there, and answer no more? 17 I also will answer with my share; I also will declare my opinion. 18 For I am full of words; the spirit within me constrains me. 19 Behold, my belly is like wine that has no vent; like new wineskins ready to burst. 20 I must speak, that I may find relief; I must open my lips and answer. 21 I will not show partiality to any man or use flattery toward any person. 22 For I do not know how to flatter, else my Maker would soon take me away.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

15 Job’s friends are dismayed and can no longer answer; words have left them. 16 Should I continue to wait now that they are silent, now that they stand there and no longer answer? 17 I too will answer; yes, I will tell what I know. 18 For I am full of words, and my spirit compels me to speak. 19 My heart is like unvented wine; it is about to burst like new wineskins. 20 I must speak so that I can find relief; I must open my lips and respond. 21 I will be partial to no one, and I will not give anyone an undeserved title. 22 For I do not know how to give such titles; otherwise, my Maker would remove me in an instant.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

15 “They are dismayed and have no more to say; words have failed them. 16 Must I wait, now that they are silent, now that they stand there with no reply? 17 I too will have my say; I too will tell what I know. 18 For I am full of words, and the spirit within me compels me; 19 inside I am like bottled-up wine, like new wineskins ready to burst. 20 I must speak and find relief; I must open my lips and reply. 21 I will show no partiality, nor will I flatter anyone; 22 for if I were skilled in flattery, my Maker would soon take me away.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

15 “They are dismayed, they no longer answer; words have failed them.

Verse 15 marks a change in the dialogue:

Elihu Says He Must Speak or He Will Burst Job 32:15–22. With verse 15 Elihu seems to direct his speech to Job; at least he no longer speaks to the friends, but about them. [UBS Handbook]

However,

The NIV and others make a stanza break at this point because Elihu now spoke of the friends in the third person instead of the second as in the preceding verses. I prefer to keep them together because the three friends are still the subjects of these four lines. It is as if Elihu turned from speaking to them to speaking about them to Job. [Robert L. Alden]

“They” = Job’s 3 friends who have ceased answering Job (v. 1). “They have lost the debate.”

16 “Shall I wait, because they do not speak, because they stop and no longer answer? 17 “I too will answer my share, I also will tell my opinion. 18 “For I am full of words; the spirit within me constrains me. 19 “Behold, my belly is like unvented wine, like new wineskins it is about to burst. 20 “Let me speak that I may get relief; let me open my lips and answer.

Since the three had run out of words (cf. vv. 1, 5), Elihu felt his time to speak had come. He would tell what he knew (cf. vv. 6, 10; 33:3), for he was full of words. And verbose he was! The verses of his speeches (32:6–37:24, excluding 34:1; 35:1; 36:1) total 157, about the same as Job’s final speech (chaps. 26–31, excluding 26:1; 27:1; 29:1) of 158 verses, and longer than the combined speeches of any of the three alleged friends (cf. Eliphaz’s 110 verses, Bildad’s 46, and Zophar’s 47). [Bible Knowledge Commentary]

Wineskins (animal skins used to hold wine) expand and burst if they have no hole for venting the fermenting gases from the wine. Elihu said he felt that way, about to burst from being filled with ideas and not having the opportunity till then to voice them. [BKC]

And he says that his belly will burst like new wineskins, when he means like wineskins (probably old wineskins) with new wine in them. New wineskins are of course the least likely to burst from the fermenting new wine (Matt 9:17). [David J. A. Clines, 722]

The spirit within me constrains me is literally “the ruax presses in my belly,” where ruax can mean “wind,” “breath,” or “spirit.” It is most likely that Elihu is being satirized by the poet, and so the ruax pressing in his belly is the equivalent of calling himself a “windbag,” someone who talks endlessly and says nothing important. TEV keeps the focus on “words” from line a with “I can’t hold back the words.” This line may also be expressed as “I am bursting with words,” “I am stuffed with words,” or “I can’t hold back the words that are in me.” [UBS Handbook]

21 **“Let me now be partial to no one, nor flatter any man.** 22 **“For I do not know how to flatter, else my Maker would soon take me away.**

I will not show partiality is literally “I will not lift up the face.” The expression is used in Leviticus 19:15, where the judges are told to treat the great and the poor alike. So Elihu is claiming that he will not show favors to anyone but will be impartial. [UBS Handbook]

Why does Elihu imagine that his Maker would be so very interested if he bestowed flattering titles on people—even to the extent of bringing Elihu to an untimely end? There must be more here than meets the eye. Duhm thought he meant that he is so important a person that he stands under the very gaze of God. [David J. A. Clines, 723]

VERSES 33:1-7

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

1 “However now, Job, please hear my speech, And listen to all my words. 2 “Behold now, I open my mouth, My tongue in my mouth speaks. 3 “My words are from the uprightness of my heart, And my lips speak knowledge sincerely. 4 “The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life. 5 “Refute me if you can; Array yourselves before me, take your stand. 6 “Behold, I belong to God like you; I too have been formed out of the clay. 7 “Behold, no fear of me should terrify you, Nor should my pressure weigh heavily on you.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

1 “But now, hear my speech, O Job, and listen to all my words. 2 Behold, I open my mouth; the tongue in my mouth speaks. 3 My words declare the uprightness of my heart, and what my lips know they speak sincerely. 4 The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life. 5 Answer me, if you can; set your words in order before me; take your stand. 6 Behold, I am toward God as you are; I too was pinched off from a piece of clay. 7 Behold, no fear of me need terrify you; my pressure will not be heavy upon you.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

1 But now, Job, pay attention to my speech, and listen to all my words. 2 I am going to open my mouth; my tongue will form words on my palate. 3 My words come from my upright heart, and my lips speak with sincerity what they know. 4 The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life. 5 Refute me if you can. Prepare your case against me; take your stand. 6 I am just like you before God; I was also pinched off from a piece of clay. 7 Fear of me should not terrify you; the pressure I exert against you will be light.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

1 “But now, Job, listen to my words; pay attention to everything I say. 2 I am about to open my mouth; my words are on the tip of my tongue. 3 My words come from an upright heart; my lips sincerely speak what I know. 4 The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life. 5 Answer me then, if you can; stand up and argue your case before me. 6 I am the same as you in God’s sight; I too am a piece of clay. 7 No fear of me should alarm you, nor should my hand be heavy on you.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

33:1–7 Elihu has in all probability turned from the friends at 32:15 and begun to address himself to Job. So it would perhaps have been better to have begun chap. 33 with that verse. At any rate, by the time we reach the present verse, there can be no doubt that Elihu’s attention is toward Job. Here he embarks on a rather elaborated proem, inviting Job to listen to him (vv 1–3) and to respond if he can. He does his best to assure Job that

he speaks to him on equal terms and that Job need have no fear of what he is about to say (vv 6–7, and perhaps this is also the import of v 4). [David J. A. Clines, 724]

1 “However now, Job, please hear my speech, and listen to all my words.

Elihu moves from directing his speech to the friends, to Job directly. Only Elihu of all the friends actually uses Job’s name (also at 33:31; 37:14; cf. also on 32:12).

2 “Behold now, I open my mouth, my tongue in my mouth speaks. 3 “My words are from the uprightness of my heart, and my lips speak knowledge sincerely.

Three times Elihu addressed Job by name (vv. 1, 31; 37:14), and seven other times mentioned Job’s name (32:12, 14; 34:5, 7, 35–36; 36:16). In contrast, the three older speakers never once mentioned Job’s name either directly or indirectly. [BKC]

Commentators quickly lose patience with Elihu. Bickell deletes the verse as “too prosaic even for Elihu.” Dhorme, allowing the authenticity of the verse, can only explain that the banality of it must have been intended by the author as signaling a man who talks for the sake of talking; he is un phraseur intarissible, a tireless speechmaker, while Rowley speaks of his “interminable prolixity.” De Wilde calls the verse the height of banality. There is no denying that lines like this are not very interesting, but even much finer Hebrew poetry can contain ballast lines, especially in a poem like this (cf. Deut 32:1–2; Ps 49:2–5). [David J. A. Clines, 725]

4 “The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

An invitation to debate.

Verses 4-7 connect back to v. 4 where Elihu establishes the equality of man (from creation).

Spirit and breath are parallel.

Elihu expresses his equality with the four men. “Maker” cf. 4:17.

5 “Refute me if you can; array yourselves before me, take your stand. 6 “Behold, I belong to God like you; I too have been formed out of the clay.

Elihu uses an expressive word for the creation of humans from clay. They have been “pinched off” (צָרַק) from a lump of clay, as a potter nips off with the fingers the piece of clay to be worked into a pot or plate. The verb is elsewhere used in Prov 16:30 of pursing the lips and in Prov 6:13; 10:10; Ps 35:19 of winking the eyes, and, more to the point, in Mishnaic Hebrew of the baker nipping off dough (m. Kelim 15:2). [David J. A. Clines]

6 Behold, I am toward God as you are; I too was pinched off from a piece of clay. [ESV]

7 “Behold, no fear of me should terrify you, nor should my pressure weigh heavily on you.

Behold, no fear of me need terrify you [v. 7]: This is the third time in seven verses that Elihu opens his sentence with Behold, calling attention to what he is saying, since the content itself is apparently insufficient to do this. [UBS Handbook]

“The two unusual words “fear” and “alarm” also occur in 9:34; 13:21, one of the indications that the same author is responsible for all parts of Job.” [Robert L. Alden]

VERSES 33:8-11

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

8 “Surely you have spoken in my hearing, And I have heard the sound of your words: 9 ‘I am pure, without transgression; I am innocent and there is no guilt in me. 10 ‘Behold, He invents pretexts against me; He counts me as His enemy. 11 ‘He puts my feet in the stocks; He watches all my paths.’

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

8 “Surely you have spoken in my ears, and I have heard the sound of your words. 9 You say, ‘I am pure, without transgression; I am clean, and there is no iniquity in me. 10 Behold, he finds occasions against me, he counts me as his enemy, 11 he puts my feet in the stocks and watches all my paths.’

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

8 Surely you have spoken in my hearing, and I have heard these very words: 9 “I am pure, without transgression; I am clean and have no guilt. 10 But He finds reasons to oppose me; He regards me as His enemy. 11 He puts my feet in the stocks; He stands watch over all my paths.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

8 “But you have said in my hearing— I heard the very words— 9 ‘I am pure, I have done no wrong; I am clean and free from sin. 10 Yet God has found fault with me; he considers me his enemy. 11 He fastens my feet in shackles; he keeps close watch on all my paths.’

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Introduction to vv. 8-33:

Elihu sets about his task in polite (Duhm) but businesslike fashion. He is going to state Job’s position as he understands it, and then offer his arguments against it. Of course, this is poetry, and this is rhetoric, so nothing will be precise or strictly logical or sequential enough to satisfy a legalist.

According to Elihu, Job’s position is that (1) he is faultless (v 9), and that (2) God’s afflictions of him are therefore expressions of groundless hatred and enmity (vv 10–11), and that (3) God refuses to answer his complaints of unjust treatment (v 13). Any response Elihu makes to the first two points are made very indirectly; his attention is concentrated on the third issue. Even here his reply is not a direct one, for he responds to Job’s complaint that God does not answer him by showing how God does indeed speak to humans generally.

Elihu's argument will be that God has various ways of speaking to humans (and, implicitly, that therefore it is wrong to accuse him of not responding). One such mode is the dream, when God puts warnings into human minds (vv 15–17), and another is suffering (vv 19–28), which can be accepted as sent from God to bring people to their senses, acknowledging their sin. By either means, God's intention is not to punish but to rescue humans from their sin. [David J. A. Clines]

8 “Surely you have spoken in my hearing, and I have heard the sound of your words:

This is the first of Elihu's several quotations of Job's arguments, whether verbatim or more general; others are at 34:5–6, 9; 35:2–3. Free and summary quotation, rather than exact citation, is the accepted norm in the OT; we should not often conclude that a variation in wording is intentional. [David J. A. Clines]

9 ‘I am pure, without transgression; I am innocent and there is no guilt in me.

Note that Job never claimed to be sinless:

Job did say that he did not lie (6:30), that he was not wicked (10:7), that he was just and upright (12:4), and that he had not disobeyed God (23:11–12); but he never said he was sinless. He consistently maintained his integrity (2:3; 27:4–5), but never said he was perfect. In fact, he denied perfection (9:20–21). [Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Patient, “Be” Commentary Series* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 126]

Above reproach (1 Tim. 3:1ff.) or blameless is not the same thing as perfect or sinless. However, see 40:8.

10 ‘Behold, He invents pretexts against me; He counts me as His enemy. 11 ‘He puts my feet in the stocks; He watches all my paths.’

In vv. 9-11 Elihu quotes Job (cf. v. 8 which introduces the content of 9-11).

Elihu now begins to pick up words from Job's speech in 9:21, where he said “I am blameless.” In 10:6–7 Job said “thou dost seek out my iniquity and search for my sin, although thou knowest that I am not guilty.” In 16:17 Job said “There is no violence in my hands and my prayer is pure.” . . . In fact the words which Elihu quotes in verse 9 are closer to the words of Eliphaz in 11:4, in which Eliphaz is paraphrasing Job. Job acknowledges his faults in 7:21 and 13:26, and has not claimed to be sinless, but Elihu has chosen to pay no attention to this. For discussion of clean see 11:4; on transgressions see 7:21. [UBS Handbook]

See Job's words here:

10:13–17 13 ‘Yet these things You have concealed in Your heart; I know that this is within You: 14 If I sin, then You would take note of me, And would not acquit me of my guilt. 15 ‘If I am wicked, woe to me! And if I am righteous, I dare not lift up my head. I

am sated with disgrace and conscious of my misery. 16 'Should my head be lifted up, You would hunt me like a lion; And again You would show Your power against me. 17 'You renew Your witnesses against me And increase Your anger toward me; Hardship after hardship is with me.

And here (cf. v. 11):

13:27 "You put my feet in the stocks And watch all my paths; You set a limit for the soles of my feet,

More:

13:24 "Why do You hide Your face And consider me Your enemy?

16:9–14 9 "His anger has torn me and hunted me down, He has gnashed at me with His teeth; My adversary glares at me. 10 "They have gaped at me with their mouth, They have slapped me on the cheek with contempt; They have massed themselves against me. 11 "God hands me over to ruffians And tosses me into the hands of the wicked. 12 "I was at ease, but He shattered me, And He has grasped me by the neck and shaken me to pieces; He has also set me up as His target. 13 "His arrows surround me. Without mercy He splits my kidneys open; He pours out my gall on the ground. 14 "He breaks through me with breach after breach; He runs at me like a warrior.

19:6–12 6 Know then that God has wronged me And has closed His net around me. 7 "Behold, I cry, 'Violence!' but I get no answer; I shout for help, but there is no justice. 8 "He has walled up my way so that I cannot pass, And He has put darkness on my paths. 9 "He has stripped my honor from me And removed the crown from my head. 10 "He breaks me down on every side, and I am gone; And He has uprooted my hope like a tree. 11 "He has also kindled His anger against me And considered me as His enemy. 12 "His troops come together, And build up their way against me And camp around my tent.

30:21 "You have become cruel to me; With the might of Your hand You persecute me.

7:8 "The eye of him who sees me will behold me no longer; Your eyes will be on me, but I will not be.

7:20 "Have I sinned? What have I done to You, O watcher of men? Why have You set me as Your target, So that I am a burden to myself?

9:21 "I am guiltless; I do not take notice of myself; I despise my life.

10:7 'According to Your knowledge I am indeed not guilty, Yet there is no deliverance from Your hand.

13:18 "Behold now, I have prepared my case; I know that I will be vindicated.

16:17 Although there is no violence in my hands, And my prayer is pure.

23:7 “There the upright would reason with Him; And I would be delivered forever from my Judge.

23:10–12 10 “But He knows the way I take; When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold. 11 “My foot has held fast to His path; I have kept His way and not turned aside. 12 “I have not departed from the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.

27:4–6 4 My lips certainly will not speak unjustly, Nor will my tongue mutter deceit. 5 “Far be it from me that I should declare you right; Till I die I will not put away my integrity from me. 6 “I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go. My heart does not reproach any of my days.

VERSES 33:12-14

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

12 “Behold, let me tell you, you are not right in this, For God is greater than man. 13 “Why do you complain against Him That He does not give an account of all His doings? 14 “Indeed God speaks once, Or twice, yet no one notices it.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

12 “Behold, in this you are not right. I will answer you, for God is greater than man. 13 Why do you contend against him, saying, ‘He will answer none of man’s words’? 14 For God speaks in one way, and in two, though man does not perceive it.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

12 But I tell you that you are wrong in this matter, since God is greater than man. 13 Why do you take Him to court for not answering anything a person asks? 14 For God speaks time and again, but a person may not notice it.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

12 “But I tell you, in this you are not right, for God is greater than any mortal. 13 Why do you complain to him that he responds to no one’s words? 14 For God does speak—now one way, now another— though no one perceives it.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

12 **“Behold, let me tell you, you are not right in this, for God is greater than man.**

“This” probably refers to Job’s accusing God of injustice (vv. 10–11). The reason Job should not charge God with wrongdoing is that “God is greater than man.”

“Behold” cf. verses 7 and 10.

God is greater than man, note the Creator / creature distinction. Romans 9 comes to mind.

Elihu is very fond of the thought that God is greater than humans (cf. also 36:5, 26)—his God is always a God of power (Fedrizzi)—and for him this is an explanation of practically everything. [David J. A. Clines]

13 **“Why do you complain against Him that He does not give an account of all His doings?**

. . . in 9:2–3 Job recognizes that “if one wished to contend with him, one could not answer him once in a thousand times.” Contend means “to argue a legal case, accuse, complain.” Elihu’s question is based on his observation in verse 12b, which Job himself

has repeated, that if God is greater than a man, why should Job argue with him? [UBS Handbook]

Complain is also translated as “contend.” On that point see God in 40:2. Same word.
40:2 “Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer it.”

14 **“Indeed God speaks once, or twice, yet no one notices it.**

God does speak, Elihu maintained. God does so in various ways—now one way, now another. One means is through dreams (vv. 14–18) and another is through illness and pain (vv. 19–22). The problem is that often man does not sense that God is communicating. [BKC]

Elihu is here using a common poetic device in which the second of two numbers is always greater than the first. The device is used in order to express the thought of doing something over and over, “again and again,” as TEV says. We may also translate, for example, “God says something, then he says it over and over.” [UBS Handbook]

When heaven is silent. But is it?

Examples follow . . .

VERSES 33:15-18

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

15 “In a dream, a vision of the night, When sound sleep falls on men, While they slumber in their beds, 16 Then He opens the ears of men, And seals their instruction, 17 That He may turn man aside from his conduct, And keep man from pride; 18 He keeps back his soul from the pit, And his life from passing over into Sheol.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

15 In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on men, while they slumber on their beds, 16 then he opens the ears of men and terrifies them with warnings, 17 that he may turn man aside from his deed and conceal pride from a man; 18 he keeps back his soul from the pit, his life from perishing by the sword.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

15 In a dream, a vision in the night, when deep sleep falls on people as they slumber on their beds, 16 He uncovers their ears at that time and terrifies them with warnings, 17 in order to turn a person from his actions and suppress his pride. 18 God spares his soul from the Pit, his life from crossing the river of death.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

15 In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on people as they slumber in their beds, 16 he may speak in their ears and terrify them with warnings, 17 to turn them from wrongdoing and keep them from pride, 18 to preserve them from the pit, their lives from perishing by the sword.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

15 “In a dream, a vision of the night, when sound sleep falls on men, while they slumber in their beds, 16 then He opens the ears of men, and seals their instruction,

The words terrify them with warnings is one possible translation of the Hebrew. Another possible rendering is “seals their instruction” (NASB; cf. KJV) and another is “seals their discipline.” If the NIV rendering is correct, Elihu’s point is that dreams can terrify a person (cf. Eliphaz’s similar response, 4:12–17), to warn him. If the second or third suggested rendering is right then Elihu’s idea may be that God makes certain that the dreams will lead one to a more informed or disciplined life. [BKC]

Verse 15 recalls Eliphaz’s dream in 4:12 and nearly repeats it.

Dreams; note the warnings in Jude and Colossians. Examples of special revelation from a different dispensation. (But note the dreams that Muslims are having.)

. . . “dreams” and “visions” are mentioned by Job in 7:14 as the means by which God terrifies him. There is no attempt here to distinguish between a dream and a vision, as there was none in 7:14, where they are in parallel position. [UBS Handbook]

And terrifies them with warnings is literally “and seals their bond.” . . . In this context Elihu is making the point that God does speak clearly to people over and over, and the Hebrew expresses the image of placing the seal on someone as meaning he stamps his warning on them. Thus the warning is clearly seen. We may then retain the Hebrew and translate, for example, “Then he tells people what he wants and makes his warnings as clear as a seal” or “He causes people to listen to what he says, and he leaves his mark to warn them.” [UBS Handbook]

Both Old and New Testaments report valid revelations by this means: Abimelech (Gen 20:3), Jacob (Gen 31:11), Laban (Gen 31:24), Solomon (1 Kgs 3:5), Isaiah (6:1), Daniel (7:1), Joseph (Matt 1:20; 2:13), Ananias (Acts 9:10), Peter (Acts 10:9–16), and Paul (Acts 16:9–10). . . . The prophets (Deut 13:1–5; Jer 23:25–32; Zech 10:2) and Jude (8) warn of false and filthy dreamers (KJV). [Robert L. Alden]

Job already has some experience of God’s use of dreams. He has been terrified by dreams sent from God and frightened by visions (7:14). For revelations of God (or his angel) in dreams, cf. Gen 20:3, 6; 28:11–15; 31:11, 24; 41:25–32; 46:2–4; Num 12:6; 1 Kgs 3:5.

The reason for these dreams / warning is seen in vv. 17-18.

17 that He may turn man aside from his conduct, and keep man from pride; 18 He keeps back his soul from the pit, and his life from passing over into Sheol.

. . . (pit, referring to the grave, is used five times in chapter 33; vv. 18, 22, 24, 28, 30). Yet Job had said that when God terrified him with dreams (7:14), he wanted to die (7:15). Whereas in Old Testament times God often spoke in dreams as well as through other media (Heb. 1:1), He now communicates to people through Christ, the Living Word (Heb. 1:2), and the Bible, the written Word (2 Tim. 3:16). [BKC]

We now have the WOG that thus warns man.

Accordingly some scholars identify the Hebrew word translated sword with a “canal” or “river,” as in Nehemiah 3:15 and Isaiah 8:6, and associated in ancient mythology with the underground river on which the soul travels to its destination. Others, like TEV, understand sword not as the instrument of violent death, but of death generally, and so TEV “He saves them from death itself,” which gives the same thought without the appeal to the mythological image of crossing the river to death. Some translators may feel that this line repeats line a so fully that to translate it will be repetitious. Parallelism may best be retained in the translation by following the thought of crossing the river, and

translating similarly to NEB, “and stops him from crossing the river of death.” [UBS Handbook]

Here is a chastening use of suffering that may be independent of some particular sin. Its purpose may be preventative: it can stop a person from slithering down the slope to destruction.” [D.A. Carson, How Long O 149]

Cf. Gen. 20:1-10, 31:29; Matt. 27:19.

Sheol is a bad translation. The Hebrew word is *shelach*, meaning weapon. Word is used of a: battering ram; sword; spear; sling; missile; club; bow.

“Sword” may be best. Cf. HCSB?

VERSES 33:19-22

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

19 “Man is also chastened with pain on his bed, And with unceasing complaint in his bones; 20 So that his life loathes bread, And his soul favorite food. 21 “His flesh wastes away from sight, And his bones which were not seen stick out. 22 “Then his soul draws near to the pit, And his life to those who bring death.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

19 “Man is also rebuked with pain on his bed and with continual strife in his bones, 20 so that his life loathes bread, and his appetite the choicest food. 21 His flesh is so wasted away that it cannot be seen, and his bones that were not seen stick out. 22 His soul draws near the pit, and his life to those who bring death.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

19 A person may be disciplined on his bed with pain and constant distress in his bones, 20 so that he detests bread, and his soul despises his favorite food. 21 His flesh wastes away to nothing, and his unseen bones stick out. 22 He draws near to the Pit, and his life to the executioners.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

19 “Or someone may be chastened on a bed of pain with constant distress in their bones, 20 so that their body finds food repulsive and their soul loathes the choicest meal. 21 Their flesh wastes away to nothing, and their bones, once hidden, now stick out. 22 They draw near to the pit, and their life to the messengers of death.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

19 “Man is also chastened with pain on his bed, and with unceasing complaint in his bones; 20 so that his life loathes bread, and his soul favorite food. 21 “His flesh wastes away from sight, and his bones which were not seen stick out. 22 “Then his soul draws near to the pit, and his life to those who bring death.

Another way God speaks is through suffering.

“Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world.” [C.S. Lewis in *The Problem of Pain*]

Another way God gets people’s attention, Elihu suggested, is by causing them pain. A serious illness (with distress in one’s bones, i.e., intense inner pain; cf. 30:17) can steal one’s appetite and cause him to lose weight (cf. Job’s appetite loss and emaciation, 3:24; 6:7; 19:20) so that his bones protrude. Such a sickness can bring a man close to death (the

pit; cf. comments on 33:18). The messengers of death may refer to angels who bring (or announce) death (cf. Ps. 78:49). [BKC]

For other depictions of loss of appetite, cf. Pss 102:4 (5); 107:18.

VERSES 33:23-30

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

23 “If there is an angel as mediator for him, One out of a thousand, To remind a man what is right for him, 24 Then let him be gracious to him, and say, ‘Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom’; 25 Let his flesh become fresher than in youth, Let him return to the days of his youthful vigor; 26 Then he will pray to God, and He will accept him, That he may see His face with joy, And He may restore His righteousness to man. 27 “He will sing to men and say, ‘I have sinned and perverted what is right, And it is not proper for me. 28 ‘He has redeemed my soul from going to the pit, And my life shall see the light.’ 29 “Behold, God does all these oftentimes with men, 30 To bring back his soul from the pit, that he may be enlightened with the light of life.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

23 If there be for him an angel, a mediator, one of the thousand, to declare to man what is right for him, 24 and he is merciful to him, and says, ‘Deliver him from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom; 25 let his flesh become fresh with youth; let him return to the days of his youthful vigor’; 26 then man prays to God, and he accepts him; he sees his face with a shout of joy, and he restores to man his righteousness. 27 He sings before men and says: ‘I sinned and perverted what was right, and it was not repaid to me. 28 He has redeemed my soul from going down into the pit, and my life shall look upon the light.’ 29 “Behold, God does all these things, twice, three times, with a man, 30 to bring back his soul from the pit, that he may be lighted with the light of life.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

23 If there is an angel on his side, one mediator out of a thousand, to tell a person what is right for him 24 and to be gracious to him and say, “Spare him from going down to the Pit; I have found a ransom,” 25 then his flesh will be healthier than in his youth, and he will return to the days of his youthful vigor. 26 He will pray to God, and God will delight in him. That man will see His face with a shout of joy, and God will restore his righteousness to him. 27 He will look at men and say, “I have sinned and perverted what was right; yet I did not get what I deserved. 28 He redeemed my soul from going down to the Pit, and I will continue to see the light.” 29 God certainly does all these things two or three times to a man 30 in order to turn him back from the Pit, so he may shine with the light of life.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

23 Yet if there is an angel at their side, a messenger, one out of a thousand, sent to tell them how to be upright, 24 and he is gracious to that person and says to God, ‘Spare them from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom for them— 25 let their flesh be renewed like a child’s; let them be restored as in the days of their youth’— 26 then that person can pray to God and find favor with him, they will see God’s face and shout for joy; he will restore them to full well-being. 27 And they will go to others and say, ‘I have sinned, I have perverted what is right, but I did not get

what I deserved. 28 God has delivered me from going down to the pit, and I shall live to enjoy the light of life.’ 29 “God does all these things to a person— twice, even three times— 30 to turn them back from the pit, that the light of life may shine on them.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

23 “If there is an angel as mediator for him, one out of a thousand, to remind a man what is right for him, 24 then let him be gracious to him, and say, ‘Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom’;

Cf. the NIV — “23 Yet if there is an angel at their side, a messenger, one out of a thousand, sent to tell them how to be upright, 24 and he is gracious to that person and says to God, ‘Spare them from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom for them.’”

In sickness God may send an angel (*mal’āk*) as a mediator (*mēlīṣ*) to: (a) remind a person of the proper conduct and attitudes he should maintain in his life (what is right) and to (b) intercede with God to keep him from dying (going down to the pit). Elihu disagreed with Eliphaz, who had said that no angels could assist Job (5:1). Elihu was also disagreeing with Job, who felt he had no intercessor to arbitrate his case (9:33). By the words one out of a thousand (cf. Job’s use of that phrase in 9:3) Elihu meant that such intervening angels are plentiful, or, perhaps better, that they are rare (cf. Ecc. 7:28). [BKC]

When the sick are at death’s door, an angel may take up the cause of the sufferers and beg God to spare them from death. The sufferers would then be restored to their youthful health and strength, turn to God in prayer, and publicly acknowledge both their wrongdoing and their thankfulness for deliverance. It seems clear (as Duhm stresses) that those in view here are basically good people, not the thoroughly godless, who are presumably beyond redemption. [David J. A. Clines]

On the protective angel, see Ps 34:6–7. In Dan 7:10 there are 10,000 times 10,000 (100 million) angels before the divine throne.

It may be better to understand this clause as describing the usual function of the mediating angels, representing them as essentially conveying God’s will to humans, like prophets. The angel would then be described as “one whose function is to inform humans of their duty.” Like prophets also, they may sometimes represent humans before God. [David J. A. Clines]

Alden has a different take:

“‘Angel’” is best pictured not as a feminine figure with gossamer wings but as a close friend or relative who agrees to do the duty of kinsman redeemer and stand by the plaintiff’s side.” [Robert L. Alden, 329]

Bunyan sees a preacher here (cf. Talbert quote of Pilgrim’s Progress on p. 180).

Yet another interpretation:

It seems likely that this interceding angel is the Angel of the Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Mediator who gave His life as a ransom for sinners (1 Tim. 2:5; Mark 10:45). As the Angel of the Lord, the Son of God visited the earth in Old Testament times to deliver special messages and accomplish important tasks (Gen. 16:9; 22:11; Ex. 3:2; Jud. 6:11). But Elihu saw this Angel not only as a Mediator between God and men, but also as the Provider of the ransom for sinners.

This is the heavenly “mediator” that Job has been asking for throughout the debate! Job wanted an “umpire” to bring him and God together for a trial (Job 9:33), a heavenly “witness” to argue his case before God (16:19), a “redeemer” who would vindicate him even after his death (19:25). The ministry of this Angel is purely an act of God’s grace (33:24). “Spare him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom for him” (v. 24, NIV). That sounds like our Lord Jesus Christ, who is both our Mediator and our Ransom (1 Tim. 2:5–6). [Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Patient*]

Wiersbe’s take fits with Alden’s contention that “one in a thousand” means “rare,” like our saying “one in a million.”

Another!

Questions arise as to whether the messenger (NIV “angel”) is an angelic mediator or a human one, whether the intercession involves communication to God or to the sufferer, and whether the “ransom” (33:24) is something specific or general. The procedure involves actions by all three parties: the messenger (33:23–24), God (33:25), and the sufferer (33:26–28). The messenger is identified specifically as a mediator (*melis*), a term used in 16:20 for someone who intercedes with God on the behalf of someone who is suffering. Outside of Job the word is used only three times; in each it refers to humans (a human interpreter, Gen. 42:23; human envoys, 2 Chron. 32:31; most likely prophets in Isa. 43:27). In Job, “angel” (*mal’ak*) occurs only two other times, once referring to a human messenger (1:14) and once to supernatural beings (4:18). In this context, the messenger/mediator speaks both to the sufferer (“to tell a man what is right for him”) and to God (“spare him”)¹⁰ regarding the situation and contributes to the solution by finding a “ransom.” None of these dictates whether the messenger/mediator is human. In Job “ransom” (*koper*) is used as a monetary sum to be paid on one’s behalf.¹¹

Sorting through all of these variables, I would agree with those who believe that Elihu is referring to his own role.¹² He views himself as the messenger/mediator who is going to interpret Job’s situation and advise him what he needs to do (“tell him what is right,” as he does beginning in 34:4). He intercedes with God to spare Job’s life (his intention as stated in 33:32),¹³ and he provides a ransom, if that can be understood as a portion of the wealth of his wisdom. In that case, the ransom provides the reasoning that would allow Job to make progress toward a solution. The ransom is a strategy that would satisfy all parties. That is what diplomats (mediators) do when they attempt to bring two sides together. [John H. Walton and Kelly Lemon Vizcaino, *The NIV Application*

Commentary: Job, ed. Terry Muck et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 355–356.]

Waltke (*Majesty of God in the Midst of Innocent Suffering*, 184) claims that this may be a Christophany.

Cf. 9:33; 16:20; 19:25. Also the mediatorial role of Christ. The “ransom” has been debated. Could this be a prophetic glimpse into the role of Christ?

“Ransom” is *kōper*, related to verb and noun “atone(ment)” whose even more basic meaning is “cover(ing)” (cf. *Yom Kippur*, Day of Atonement). Many of the words in these two verses become theologically freighted in the New Testament: angel, mediator, grace, ransom. For the Christian, Christ is the gracious mediator who ransoms the believer’s soul from everlasting death. [Robert L. Alden]

The concept of “the ransom” is woven into the fabric of biblical theology. The Hebrew word means “to atone for sin by the offering of a substitute.” The condemned sinner can’t be set free by the paying of some cheap price such as money (Ps. 49:7–9), good works, or good intentions. It must be a ransom that God will accept, and God asks for the shedding of blood (Lev. 16–17). Job didn’t ask his three friends to ransom him because he knew they couldn’t (Job 6:21–23). Only God can provide the ransom, and He did. If God has provided a ransom for lost sinners about to go down into the pit, how foolish of them not to receive it! [Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Patient*]

25 let his flesh become fresher than in youth, let him return to the days of his youthful vigor; 26 then he will pray to God, and He will accept him, that he may see His face with joy, and He may restore His righteousness to man.

The language is reminiscent of the healing of Naaman, whose “flesh returned like the flesh of a little child” 2 Kgs 5:14.

Restoration described. Note that Elihu may be alluding to Job’s physical distress here. Theologically, restoration is not necessarily connected to physical suffering (such suffering is not the necessary result of sin, etc.).

27 “He will sing to men and say, ‘I have sinned and perverted what is right, and it is not proper for me. 28 ‘He has redeemed my soul from going to the pit, and my life shall see the light.’ 29 “Behold, God does all these oftentimes with men, 30 To bring back his soul from the pit, that he may be enlightened with the light of life.

As a result of the angelic intercessor, the sufferer is restored to health and enjoys spiritual strength as well, including prayerful communion with God, acceptance by God, fellowship with God, joy in God’s presence (cf. Eliphaz’s similar words in 22:26 and Bildad’s in 8:21), and restoration to his former righteous state (cf. Bildad’s words in 8:6). In addition he tells others: (a) that he sinned but that his punishment of illness was less

than his sin called for (cf. 11:6), and (b) that God diverted him from death (the pit; cf. comments on 33:18) and restored him to life (to enjoy the light, i.e., of the sun, which means to enjoy life; cf. v. 30; Ecc. 11:7). Thus out of his affliction comes a deeper walk with God and a ready witness before others. [BKC]

VERSES 33:31-33

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

31 “Pay attention, O Job, listen to me; Keep silent, and let me speak. 32 “Then if you have anything to say, answer me; Speak, for I desire to justify you. 33 “If not, listen to me; Keep silent, and I will teach you wisdom.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

31 Pay attention, O Job, listen to me; be silent, and I will speak. 32 If you have any words, answer me; speak, for I desire to justify you. 33 If not, listen to me; be silent, and I will teach you wisdom.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

31 Pay attention, Job, and listen to me. Be quiet, and I will speak. 32 But if you have something to say, answer me; speak, for I would like to justify you. 33 If not, then listen to me; be quiet, and I will teach you wisdom.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

31 “Pay attention, Job, and listen to me; be silent, and I will speak. 32 If you have anything to say, answer me; speak up, for I want to vindicate you. 33 But if not, then listen to me; be silent, and I will teach you wisdom.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

31 “Pay attention, O Job, listen to me; keep silent, and let me speak. 32 “Then if you have anything to say, answer me; speak, for I desire to justify you. 33 “If not, listen to me; keep silent, and I will teach you wisdom.”

This concludes Elihu’s first speech.

The second stich evidences a tender spirit in Elihu, something that is hard to find in the other three. He really desired Job’s vindication. He was hoping, of course, that Job would confess some transgression, thus clearing the way for reconciliation with God. But even to this gentler, less confrontational approach Job did not yield by compromising his own integrity. [Robert L. Alden]