

# “Mine Opinion”

## Job 32:1-22

According to verse one of this chapter, Job’s three friends were done speaking to him on this matter “because he was righteous in his own eyes.” So, a man named “Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram” began his discourse. All we know about him is what is said here. His name means “My God is Yahweh” and Barachel means “God blesses.” From that we can be confident in his religious upbringing and the piety he would have come to know. As to the reference to “the Buzite,” we cannot be sure to what it is referring (although Nahor, the brother of Abraham, had a son by the name of Buz, but it wasn’t an uncommon name so we can’t be sure that is who is referred to), nor can we know what is meant by “the kindred of Ram.”

In this chapter, Elihu references his “opinion” three times – vs. 6, 10 and 17 (in fact, this particular word for “opinion” – **דָּבָר** – is only used in Job: three times in the chapter, 36:3 and 37:16). This word has to do with knowledge, and one’s opinion based on his knowledge.

It’s almost like he is admitting that he can’t be dogmatic on what he is about to say, but rather is willing to admit that it’s just his opinion, albeit one based on knowledge more than simple opinion. We need to be careful in dealing with people and their problems, that we don’t give them the impression that we are absolutely right, and, especially when it comes to dealing with their spiritual situation, that we don’t tell them “God said” something unless He actually said it. Be willing to admit to those you are dealing with that if what you have said, or are about to say, is your opinion, then tell them that. Don’t

give opinion as dogma – very dangerous practice, and is, in fact, what Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar had done.

On the other hand, our opinions can be formed after years of observation and experience, or from education, or from discourse with others (which is the case with Elihu's use of this particular word). Don't be afraid to give your opinion, just be careful to state that it is opinion.

So, from this chapter, what is Elihu referencing as his opinion?

## **I. NO ONE HAD GIVEN A STRAIGHT ANSWER TO JOB YET – VS. 2-6**

### ***A. Elihu says his "wrath was kindled" – he got angry.***

1. At Job "because he justified himself rather than God" – vs. 2 – not exactly true but that's how he perceived it.
2. Against Job's three friends "because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job" – vs. 3.

### ***B. He waited until they were all done speaking to give his "opinion" on the matter because of his respect for their age – not out of respect of what they believed or said.***

### ***C. He just wanted to voice his opinion on the matter of what happened to Job because the others hadn't given a straight answer to the problem – simply because they didn't have an answer for there was no answer needed.***

## **II. OLDER PEOPLE SHOULD BE RESPECTED BUT AREN'T ALWAYS RIGHT – VS. 7-10**

**A. In verse 7 Elihu points out that those of mature age should be the ones to do the teaching, should be the ones with the answers.**

**B. Verse 8 shows that Elihu, although respecting of the others' age and standing, feels that he had a right and obligation to say something, referencing the fact that true wisdom comes from "the Almighty," from the "spirit" that "is in man" from above.**

1 Corinthians 2:10-12

<sup>10</sup> But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

<sup>11</sup> For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

<sup>12</sup> Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

**C. In verse 9 he very candidly says that "great men are not always wise" – they are not always right – and the "aged" don't always comprehend the situation to judge accordingly – a direct reference to Job's three friends.**

## **III. HE HAD A LOT TO SAY AND THEY NEEDED TO HEAR IT – VS. 11-22**

**A. In verses 11 and 12 Elihu says that he listened to them rant and rave about Job and they had nothing to offer that would help.**

**B. In verse 13-14 he says that what he was about to say was necessary "lest" they say that they were right and that all of Job's trials were God's judgment on him for sin, and that Job's answers were not directed at him because he hadn't said anything yet, and when he did say something it wasn't going to be the same old rhetoric they had given - "neither will I answer him with your speeches."**

**C. He waited until they were completely finished to speak, and when he did speak, he made sure they understood that he had something to say that they all needed to hear - vs. 16-22.**

1. Verse 18 - he was "full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me" - he knew what he wanted to say and felt very obligated to say it.
2. Verse 19 - a very vivid visual aid for us to understand just how he felt.
3. Verse 20 - a very important principle even for us today - it is very helpful to us when we can have meaningful discussions with others about spiritual things - it's a great way to make room for more, so to speak.
4. Verses 21-22 show that Elihu didn't care who they were - what he had to say he

was going to say, no matter who was there to hear it.

Conclusion: Our opinions matter (specifically, those from a foundational standpoint of knowledge and experience), but we need to be careful we don't intentionally offend others with them. Be careful to use your opinion in a way that will be constructive to others, not destructive.