

“God Is Greater Than Man”

Job 33:1-33

Elihu continues his discourse now, addressing Job in a way that doesn't really deal so much with Job as it does with God, and how God deals with man. Elihu does, in fact, attack Job in the next chapters, but Job never responds because he seems to respect so much of what Elihu has to say about God that he just allowed the condemnation out of respect for what was said about God.

Verse 12 of this chapter states a fact that many times we just simply take for granted that everyone already knows, and that doesn't seem to be all that terribly important to us – the simple yet wonderful fact that “God is greater than man.” Imagine if our God wasn't much better than man, wasn't much greater, was more of a man than He is God – what would we have to believe in then? But, thank God, our God is far greater, in every way, than mortal man will ever be – including even when we are in heaven. We may be perfect then, but we will still be less than our great God.

I. THE GREATNESS OF GOD NEEDS TO BE DECLARED – vs. 1-12

A. Elihu thought that he was the one sent by God to show Job what was happening – vs. 6 – although that was probably not true, what he had to say about God needed to be said.

B. We have the same need today – to declare the greatness of God.

C. Verse 4 shows the creation of man by God, and the fact that each man, saved or lost, was given life by God.

Genesis 2:7

⁷ And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Psalm 33:6

⁶ By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

D. Elihu references Job's claim that he was innocent, and that God had brought this trial upon him for reasons other than sin in his life – a truth that Elihu here refutes and one that Job's three friends had been refuting – vs. 8-11.

E. And, although Elihu makes the same statements regarding this; namely, that Job was wrong, that it had to be something he had done, he takes a different approach – he approaches the situation from the viewpoint that God is far greater than man, and that it's His greatness that is the mark, not man's perfection, as the other three had claimed.

Jeremiah 18:6

⁶ O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.

Leviticus 19:2

² Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.

1 Peter 1:15-16

¹⁵ But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

¹⁶ Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

II. THE GREATNESS OF GOD NEEDS TO BE DESCRIBED – vs. 13-30

A. The first thing that is stated regarding the greatness of God is in verse 13 where Elihu points out that there is no reason to try and reason with God (“strive against”), no reason to ask for the answer to “Why,” because God doesn’t owe anybody and explanation – He doesn’t answer to anybody.

B. Verse 14 shows that God, in His greatness, will many times show His longsuffering Spirit in dealing with man.

C. Verses 15-17 reference dreams and visions.

1. This was the method God used to speak to man in the Old Testament dispensation in order to either depart truth or direct man’s steps.
2. He doesn’t do that in the New Testament dispensation because of two reasons:

- a) The completed Scriptures – all the truth of God we need and all that He wants us to have
 - b) The indwelling Holy Spirit
3. The purpose of these dreams, according to Elihu's understanding, in part, was to keep man from falling into the sin of pride – "he (God) may withdraw man from his (man's) purpose."

D. Verse 18 shows that God will do all He can to keep man from perishing with Him.

E. Verses 19-22 are meant for Job but Job is not named by Elihu here – Elihu is just making general statements, without the direct implication of Job, although he is certainly who he had in mind – these verses are dealing with the chastisement of God upon man for sin.

Deuteronomy 8:5

⁵ Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee.

Psalms 94:12

¹² Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law;

1 Corinthians 11:32

³² But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

Revelation 3:19

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

F. Verses 23-24 are dealing with the man from the previous verses, the sick man, the one who is under the chastening of the Lord.

1. The "messenger" (מַלְאָךְ) in verse 23 can be either man, angel, or even the Messiah – the circumstances will determine which one.
 - a) When God uses a man to intervene on another man's behalf, it would be in the event of the need to help show him the way (as Elihu thought himself to be here).
 - b) When God uses an angel to intervene it would be in the event when no earthly help will do (the guardian angel aspect).
 - c) When the Messiah intervenes, the event would be the need for soul salvation from a Devil's hell.
2. He is there to interpret what God wants out of man when it comes to the event taking place in his life, and the purpose is to show that God requires man to be "upright" – to be holy, to be righteous.
3. If this man spoken of then changes from sin to righteousness, God will be gracious and will give instruction to the "messenger" to "deliver him from going down to the pit" – the pit being the grave and eternal destruction.

4. The reason for this is that God has “found a ransom” – has found some redeeming value in the man, something in his actions and attitude that would show he had changed.
5. The Messiah, the Redeemer is in view here, ultimately, but immediately, the ransom is something that the man has shown, not that Christ has done – but it all is, most assuredly, wrapped up in the Redeemer.

Matthew 20:28

28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Romans 3:24–26

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

1 Timothy 2:6

6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

1 Peter 1:18–19

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation

received by tradition from your fathers;

¹⁹ But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

G. Verses 25-28 show the results of the change that takes place in this man's life

H. Verses 29-30 shows the greatness of God in bringing man back to the "light of the living" – something He loves to do, and "oftentimes" does.

Conclusion: How have we done at declaring the greatness of God? How have we described him in our lives to others? That's really the point here.

The last three verses show us Elihu's mindset – he feels he has something to say and he wants Job to listen. He gives Job time to respond, but once he doesn't, he prepares for his next point.