

“Behold, God...”

Job 36:1-37:24

Elihu is continuing his attack on Job, making his point that Job’s trial was because of his attitude toward God, thinking he was above anything God could do. Job’s other three friends basically said that Job’s trial was because of some hidden sin, and, while Elihu eludes to that, he took a loftier approach, pointing out that he thought Job was being disciplined and “put in his place” by God because of his self-righteous attitude.

In these two chapters, Elihu is once again making some very important points about God, imparting great truths about Him. Everything Elihu says isn’t necessarily accurate, but, in relation to his opinion of Job’s situation, what he says about God is, for the most part, correct. We can learn some truths about God from this that will help us in our trials. It’s nothing we haven’t seen before in the book of Job, and they are truths that are repeated over and over throughout Scripture – but, nonetheless, they are still worth learning – again.

This “chapter” begins differently than the previous three portions of Elihu’s initial discourse. The previous three showed a pause in the word structure to allow Job time to respond. This portion begins with no pause. “Job is to wait yet a little while, for he still has, or: there still are, words in favor of Eloah [God]; i.e., what may be said in vindication of God against Job’s complaints and accusations is not yet exhausted” (K&D).

Verse two may indicate that Elihu had, to this point, been giving more of his opinion than any clear direction of what he perceived God wanting him to

say ("I have yet to speak on God's behalf" – literally, "that there are yet words to speak of on behalf of God." And these two chapters go on to speak of who God is and what God expects from His servants.

Verse four begins in a unique way with Elihu stating that what he has said, and what he is about to say (more specifically) is not something he made up nor is it something that others haven't said. "I will fetch my knowledge from afar." This same word for "from afar" – לְמִרְחֹק - is used in Isaiah 37:26 and is translated by the words, "long ago." This is to be understood as "out of the wide realm of history and nature" (K&D). Not only has this message about the LORD been seen and heard from far-away lands, but down through history as well.

Because of this attribute of his knowledge coming from "afar" – from history and nature – Elihu makes clear that all of it had the purpose of granting the righteousness to the LORD that He is due – bound in the term "my Maker." The word used for "Maker" here – וּלְפַעֵלִי - from פָּעַל - is a simple participle (verb used as a noun or adjective) that means to do or to make. The use of this as a proper name for God shows the idea behind what Elihu was saying and perhaps why.

Verse four comes across as maybe one of the most arrogant and prideful of all of the book of Job, if not all of Scripture. Although that is how it reads in English, and that is clearly the way that Elihu stated it, it may not be as arrogant as it seems. "One sincere in his opinions and mature in his knowledge of the subject in hand – no novice or tyro [a beginner], albeit young in years" (Preacher's Homiletical). From the context and the language structure, Elihu was apparently wanting to make sure he was heard and wanted those with Job to

know that he may be young, but he was far from ignorant. In the culture of the day it was necessary for him to be arrogant – but I believe he carried it too far and that is the reason for the English word order and translation we have (which is almost universally translated the same across the most widely accepted English translations).

All of that said, the remainder of chapter 36 and chapter 37 are all about Jehovah, and what a God He is!!

I. HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS – VS. 5-21

A. Everything God does is right and holy

B. The first point Elihu makes about God is in verse 5 where he states that "God is mighty...in strength and wisdom" – in the further explanation in the following verses he shows by that is meant God shows His might in His righteous dealings with man – only a perfectly righteous God could deal with man so perfectly.

C. Verses 6-12 Elihu makes a point about God that is based on his observation of how God has dealt with man.

1. Vs. 6-7a – God will not protect the wicked but will give that "right" of protection (justice) to the poor – this, by observation of history, isn't always the case, but for the purpose of eternity it certainly is.
2. Vs. 7b we find Elihu again eluding to "kings" in a positive way, as if God only puts those on the throne that are righteous

(this is one of those areas that Elihu is not correct on, but it is his opinion, which we have found before in his discourse with Job) – “He withdraweth not his eyes from the right but they (his eyes) are with kings on the throne” is another way to read this. The principle behind the “eyes of the Lord” on man is to show His authority and His righteousness in their affairs.

Psalm 33:18

18 Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy;

Psalm 34:15

15 The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

1 Peter 3:12

12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

3. Vs. 8-12 he shows that God is merciful to even kings that have gone against Him, and if they just come back and confess and forsake their sin, God will end their suffering and make things right again – this is for Job’s sake, indicating that Job was a leader among his people, possibly considered a king. This, by the way, is the principle that is seen throughout the Old Testament in the history of Israel and her kings – both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms.

D. Vs. 13-21 are for Job's sake specifically – Elihu addresses him regarding what Elihu perceived as God's judgment and chastisement on Job for his hypocrisy and self-righteousness.

1. What Elihu says here about those that defy God is right, and is found elsewhere in Scripture, and we need to make sure we don't forget it, for it applies to the believer as well.
2. Vs. 15 is one of great comfort to those that are in need and is seen as a contrast to what preceded it.
 - a) "He [God] delivereth the poor in his affliction" – the word for "poor" here – עֲנִי – "refers to those who are suffering, in a state of poverty, oppression, misery from various causes" (Zodhiates). "The inquiry was not particularly respecting the "poor," but the "afflicted," and the sentiment which Elihu is illustrating is, that when the afflicted call upon God he will deliver them. The object is to induce Job to make such an application to God that he might be rescued from his calamities, and be permitted yet to enjoy life and happiness." (Barnes)
 - b) "And [He] openeth their ears in oppression" – or, opens their ears while they are oppressed. "[N]ot only to discipline, correction, and instruction, Job 36:10; but to hear comfortable words spoken, to them by the Lord; who, in the midst of their affliction and oppression, whispers in their ears, and tells them how he loves them, though they are rebuked and chastened by him; how he has chosen them to

everlasting life and happiness, though now in the furnace of affliction; that he is their covenant God and Father, and knows and owns their souls in adversity that he has pardoned all their sins, though he takes vengeance on their inventions; and in a little time will free them from all their afflictions and oppressions.”

3. Vs. 16 is another one of those that is not exactly accurate and according to other scripture – just because we get our lives right with God, or just because we are right with God already doesn’t mean everything is going to get better, and it doesn’t mean we will have a great life to the end – we need to be careful we don’t interpret this passage incorrectly, as many have done
4. Vs. 17-21 is Elihu continuing this line of reasoning – that all Job’s problems were because of sin and that God would continue to punish him for it.
 - a) Vs. 17 – “But with the judgment due the wicked you are filled” – Elihu speaking to Job directly and specifically. The second clause of the verse is an explanation (or restatement, parallelism) of the first.
 - b) Vs. 20 – “Desire not the night” – considering the context of the verses around this one, Elihu seems to be warning Job to not consider the night his friend for his wicked deeds.

John 3:19

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their

deeds were evil.

E. We should be thankful that God doesn't always punish us for sin – that His mercy and grace and longsuffering, His goodness, gentleness, and kindness are just as real as His chastisement – a truth that seems lost on Elihu.

II. HIS SOVEREIGNTY – VS. 22-25

A. Everything God does is to satisfy His will.

B. Vs. 22 – God “exalteth by his power” – that is, He puts those in authority by His own power, not because of who they are or because of their power.

1 Samuel 2:7-8

⁷ The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up.

⁸ He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them.

Luke 1:52

⁵² He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.

Romans 13:1

¹ Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

C. Vs. 23-25 – the sovereign will of God is seen everywhere, and it is the believer's

duty to point that out and glorify Him because of it.

III. HIS GREATNESS – 36:26-37:24

A. Everything God does is done to show His greatness.

B. These verses are pointing to one particular aspect of creation to show the greatness of God, and that is the aspect of weather – we may be able to explain it, scientifically, but that doesn't make it any less amazing.

C. If God can do that with something like rain, how truly great He really must be!!

Conclusion: Have we beheld God? Have we recognized God for who He is? He is "mighty," He "exalteth power," and He "is great" – what a God we serve!!