

Job 33: God's Dealings with Men

"Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man."
Job 33:29

Introduction:

- A. An outline or overview of the book of Job should be kept in mind before reading any chapter.
- B. Job's spirit at first was good, but accusing friends pushed him to folly (Job 1:20-22; 9:9-10).
- C. Elihu strongly opposed Job's three friends, and he promised to explain things better (Job 32).
- D. Your goal in reading or learning the chapter must be much more than the history or rhetoric.
- E. Your top goal should be to see God's methods with men and improve your reception of them.
- F. Much more could be said about its details, but such would provide only diminishing returns.
- G. For a sermon outline introducing Elihu from Job 32 ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/eliu.pdf>.
- H. A slide show summarizing Elihu's words ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/eliu-power-point.pdf>.

Outline:

- 1-7 Elihu introduced reasoning with Job on behalf of God
- 8-13 Elihu reprov'd Job by justifying God's rights over him
- 14-18 God helps man by instructing him in the night
- 19-22 God helps man by afflicting him with troubles
- 23-26 God helps man by sending him ministers with truth
- 27-28 God is merciful and will forgive men that repent
- 29-30 God often uses these ways to help and revive man
- 31-33 Elihu offered Job justifying wisdom unlike his friends

1 Wherefore, Job, I pray thee, hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words.

- A. Elihu had introduced himself in the previous chapter sufficient for Job to listen.
 - 1. He had an inspired word from Almighty God; he was angry at Job's accusers
 - 2. He had been respectful, but he did not fear men at all; Job could trust him.
- B. When an inspired messenger or message arrives, you should listen (I The 5:20).
 - 1. You must bow down your ear to hear the good words of the wise (Pr 22:17).
 - 2. The Bereans were noble for hearing Paul with ready minds (Acts 17:11).
- C. We want to embrace every word of God, for many arguments are by one word, and man shall not live by bread alone but by every word of God (Luke 4:4).
- D. For one-word arguments ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/one-word-arguments-titus.pdf>.

2 Behold, now I have opened my mouth, my tongue hath spoken in my mouth.

- A. Elihu had waited for 29 chapters (3-31), but now he began to give his opinion.
- B. Once you wait to hear your opponents, you may then present your case boldly.
- C. Do not open your mouth to begin something so important without much to say.
- D. What effeminate Christians call arrogance, the Bible treats as godly confidence.

3 My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart: and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly.

- A. Elihu, as an example for all men, was committed to honest and true discourse.
 - 1. You should have a reputation for speaking truth as accurately as possible.
 - 2. Do not spin a message or alter the truth to justify or accuse for convenience.
 - 3. Job's three friends had accused and attacked Job without any evidence for it.
- B. As Solomon taught, have certain words of truth in your mouth (Prov 22:17-21).
- C. Elihu did not speak with obscure philosophical sophistry but plain explanations.
- D. God's ministers should use great plainness of speech (II Cor 3:12; Hab 2:2).

4 The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.

- A. Job had sought a meeting with God without fear (6-7), so Elihu spoke for God.
- B. Elihu was not God Himself – he was created like all men and like Job (Ge 2:7).
- C. The four older men should allow him an opportunity, since God had sent him.
- D. Every event in your life is by the providence of God, believe it like Elihu did.
- E. Are you fulfilling the purpose and role for your existence by God's providence?

5 If thou canst answer me, set thy words in order before me, stand up.

- A. Elihu began wisely by allowing Job the liberty to attempt a refutation of him.
- B. But he would not accept some mealy-mouthed explanation, he expected a man!
- C. When teaching divine truth, there is no room for feelings or human opinions.
- D. We must give a logical reason of our hope, and we expect reason in response.
- E. Faith is very reasonable ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/reasoning-in-the-scriptures.pdf>.

6 Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead: I also am formed out of the clay.

- A. Job wished for an opportunity to debate with God (Job 16:21; 23:3-5; 31:35).
- B. As Job requested, Elihu was a created man present to represent God in debate.
- C. We are all made of clay; any anti-God ideas are potsherds striving (Is 45:9-10).
- D. Job should have covered his mouth earlier than he did (Job 40:3-5; 42:1-6).

7 Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee.

- A. You have stated fear of God, but there is nothing in me to terrorize you at all.
- B. I did not cause your evil circumstances, so you need not fear me hurting you.
- C. This ends the first section of Elihu reasoning with Job in place of God (1-7).
- D. He introduced himself with the same bold confidence he had used in Job 32.

8 Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words, saying,

- A. Job had progressively gotten more self-righteous by the debate with his friends.
- B. How could Job keep up his initial response due to three cruel, accusing friends?
- C. Elihu had heard Job's pompous claims, and now he would call his hand on it.
- D. Remember an adversary's words, for he will often give you rope to hang him.

9 I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me.

- A. Job knew he had sinned and was a sinner, but his sins did not justify his trouble.
- B. Elihu noted Job's claims (Job 9:17; 10:7; 11:4; 16:7; 23:11-12; 27:5-6; 29:14).
- C. In response and defense against three accusing friends, he got far too pompous.

10 Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy,

- A. Job charged God for punishing him without good cause like an enemy of God.
- B. Elihu summarized Job's claims (Job 10:6; 13:24; 14:16-17; 16:9; 19:11; 30:21).
- C. In the light of ordinary life circumstances, Job's situation appeared as stated.

11 He putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths.

- A. Elihu continued to note Job's claims of God picking on him (Job 13:27; 31:4).
- B. This ends Elihu's summary of Job's verbal self-justification from earlier (8-11).

12 Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man.

- A. This verse is the key to the book and has a glorious five-word summary of God.
- B. Elihu, after summarizing Job's self-justification, reproves him for irreverence.
 - 1. He made things simple for Job to understand – you are wrong in your words.
 - 2. It is wisdom to get to the bottom line and declare it to keep things simple.
- C. **Behold!** This interjection is the imperative of the verb, used to call attention!
 - 1. It is good rhetoric to identify points that should be recognized and grasped.
 - 2. Some points are more important and more summary than others. Get them.
- D. Self-justification was over for Job, as he had wanted it; he should justify God.
- E. God is greater than man, and He can do whatever He chose to Job or to you.
 - 1. The Bible makes God the Potter and you the clay (Is 45:9-10; Rom 9:20-21).
 - 2. For similar verses (Is 10:15; 29:16; 64:8; Jer 18:6; Job 10:8-9; Ps 119:73).
 - 3. No one can stop Him, and no one has the right to question Him (Dan 4:35).
- F. This one five-word explanation should forever shut your mouth at affliction.

13 Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters.

- A. Why did Job argue against God? It is wrong, fruitless, criminal, or blasphemy.
 - 1. If God is the Potter and Job clay, he can only argue with other clay (Is 45:9).
 - 2. But, under provocation of cruel friends, he justified himself rather than God.
 - 3. There is no explanation needed; man questioning God is wrong (Rom 9:20).
- B. God does not answer or explain to any man of what He does or why He does it.
 - 1. Think Nebuchadnezzar and seven years as a beast of the field (Dan 4:34-37).
 - 2. See Paul's denial and ridicule of logical questions about God (Ro 9:19-21).
 - 3. God does not answer to man, and man has no intelligence to question God.
 - 4. The secret things of God's counsel belong to him and not to you (De 29:29).
- C. Do you love this God? This sovereign ruler over all that is, including your life?
- D. There is no need or right for more explanation, but God kindly explains more.
- E. This ends the second section, Elihu reproving Job for striving with God (8-13).

14 For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not.

- A. Here is the first of four ways in which God helps men to save them (14-18).
- B. Though God does not give an account of His ways to any demanding man, yet He is faithful and kind to help men, if they will pay attention to His warnings.
 - 1. God is gracious and kind, especially to His children, in speaking to them.
 - 2. For those who bark against God's unfairness by 33:12-13, they are wrong.
- C. He repeats his message, but they are still slow of hearing and dull of sense.
 - 1. It is not just once or twice, literally and no more, for it is *oftentimes* (33:29).
 - 2. It is not just once or twice, literally and no more, for compare (Psalm 62:11).
 - 3. Every reader knows God has spoken to them by various means many times.
 - 4. His method is the same as elementary education – repetition (Is 28:9-13).
- D. Is lack of perception a conscious lack ... an unconscious lack ... or rebellion?
 - 1. If man does not perceive it consciously, then the focus is on the next verses.
 - 2. If man does not perceive it unconsciously, then he is lazy and must be open.
 - 3. If man does not perceive it by rebellion, then he must humble himself to it.
- E. Why will we not listen to God speaking? Why must we feel His chastening?
- F. God deals privately or secretly with men, apart from His ministers (33:23-26).
 - 1. This is a great kindness by a infinite sovereign to finite rebels choosing lies.
 - 2. Though man has no right to charge God about trouble, He seeks to save him.

15 In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed;

- A. God spoke often to men in dreams before His full written revelation was given.
 - 1. We believe the book of Job to have been written before Moses and the Law.

2. Moses was an exception; he communed with God face to face (Num 12:6).
 3. Consider Abraham (Gen 15:12), Abimelech (Gen 20:3-7), Jacob (Gen 28:12-16), Laban (Gen 31:24), Joseph's cellmates (Gen 40:5-11), Solomon (I Kgs 3:5), Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 2:1; 4:5), Daniel (Dan 8:18), another Joseph (Matt 1:20-24), wise men (Matt 2:12), and Pilate's wife (Matt 27:19).
 4. Dreams were already assumed and discussed in this book (Job 4:13; 7:).
- B. Men would dream dreams after Pentecost, for only the apostolic age (Ac 2:17).
1. This is the last occurrence of *dream* or *dreams* in the Bible (Acts 2:17).
 2. Who needs a dream! We have the more sure word of God (II Pet 1:16-21)!
 3. This is especially true of the dreams of men and not of God (Jer 23:28-29)!
- C. If only dreams and visions like those listed here are intended, how are they not perceived? Those men knew the dreams very vividly and were greatly moved.
- D. We do not put credence in dreams after Pentecost, as many have gone astray.
1. God no longer reveals truth that way, for such gifts of knowledge are gone.
 2. How would you distinguish His revelations from your own idiotic dreams?
- E. Is there a better time than at night to commune with God and your own spirit?
1. You are free from all distractions of any kind to talk to God most intimately.
 2. David, God's favorite, loved night (Ps 4:4; 16:7; 17:3; 63:6; 77:6; 119:55).
- F. Job's afflictions were not a dream, but real with messengers, ashes, and friends.

16 Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction,

- A. God opened men's ears and gave certain instruction to correct and help them.
- B. While you do not get dreams like Joseph or Nebuchadnezzar, you have a light.
- C. God has a candle in all men, and it is one of His lights of revelation (Pr 20:27).
1. After Pentecost, Paul taught enlightened Gentile consciences (Rom 2:12-16).
 2. Jesus and Paul convicted and taught consciences (John 8:7-11; II Cor 4:2-6).
 3. God teaches our spirits and subconscious (Ps 51:10; Ezra 1:1; Ro 1:28; 5:5).
 4. This is little different from God opening Lydia's heart (Acts 16:14; Jn 6:44).
 5. But men can sear their consciences and ruin spirits (I Tim 4:2; II Cor 7:1).
 6. For Proverbs 20:27 ... http://www.letgodbetruer.com/proverbs/commentaries/20_27.php.

17 That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.

- A. God does not answer to you for what He does, but know His kindness to help.
- B. The example dreams listed above were sometimes to hold man back from sin.
- C. If you have not experienced being held back from sin, check your pulse for life.

18 He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.

- A. The pit is the snares and trouble of destruction leading to an untimely death.
 - 1. Pits were used to trap animals too difficult to kill openly (Pr 23:27; 26:27).
 - 2. The pit in scripture clearly includes death and the grave (Pr 1:12; 28:17).
 - 3. It has already been used earlier in Job for death and the grave (Job 17:16).
 - 4. Its several uses here implies the final trouble of death (Job 33:18,24,28,30).
 - 5. Of course, after death there is the judgment that may include eternal death.
- B. The sword can be of enemies, magistrates, or the Lord Himself in chastening.
 - 1. The obvious implication by the choice of words here is the sword of death.
 - 2. Seldom was the sword of any man used for mere wounding, but rather death.
- C. Consider Solomon's frequent warnings of an untimely death (Prov 2:18; 5:5; 7:27; 8:36; 9:18; 10:2; 11:4,19; 13:14; 14:12,27; 16:14,25; 21:6; 23:14).
 - 1. There is obviously a death of joy and peace (I Tim 5:6; Ja 5:19-20; Ep 5:14).
 - 2. Sin is very serious business, and it leads to death (Acts 5:1-11; I Cor 11:30).
- D. This ends the third section, God helps man by instructing him privately (14-18).

19 He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain:

- A. Here is the second of four ways used by God to help men to save them (19-22).
- B. This is physical or circumstantial affliction for chastening to keep man back from sin, but may not at times accomplish its purpose without the minister next.
- C. The adverb *also* shows two things – private instruction and physical affliction.
- D. Many or most men know that physical afflictions have taught them repentance.
- E. If you do not know anything of this matter, then get ready to learn about it.
- F. For God's use of affliction ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/afflictions-and-suffering.pdf>.

20 So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat.

- A. When your health or situation is bad enough to hate food, then seek God's face!
- B. Think Jonah in the whale's belly, where he finally repented of foolish rebellion.
- C. Think about David and his bodily metaphors used about his guilt (Ps 51:8-12).
- D. God can easily arrange circumstances to take away your appetite (Ps 107:18).

21 His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen stick out.

- A. Elihu described a drastic loss of weight from loss of appetite of bread and meat.
- B. Spiritual or emotional fear or guilt can destroy an appetite and steal vital flesh.

22 *Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers.*

- A. Physical affliction (men dearly love their bodies) can lead to an untimely death.
- B. Consider Ananias and Sapphira and many at Corinth (Acts 5:1-11; I Cor 11:30).
- C. Hopefully you will not be so profane or stubborn to die from physical affliction.
- D. Wise Christians will consider their adversity and make diligent search for sin.
- E. Job was certainly in this condition, and he had the messenger Elihu present.
- F. The conscious fear of losing one's life is excellent for teaching him wisdom.
- G. This ends the fourth section, God helps by chastening man physically (19-22).

23 *If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness:*

- A. Here is the third of four ways by which God helps men to save them (23-26).
- B. He sends His ministers, prophets or apostles or preachers, to declare the truth.
- C. God's ministers are messengers, for they explain God's revelation (Mal 2:7).
 - 1. They are ambassadors of God and of Christ, speaking to men on their behalf.
 - 2. Faithful church members, like the Galatians, saw Paul as an angel or Christ.
 - 3. Rejecting them, when they truly speak God's word, is to reject God Himself.
- D. Pastors study the written word and declare it to men (II Tim 3:16-17; 4:1-4).
 - 1. They are interpreters of God's word and of the nature of hard circumstances.
 - 2. They are said to have beautiful feet for the wonderful news they convey.
- E. They are very rare, and have always been rare, compared to earth's population.
 - 1. They were rare with Job, for his three friends did not qualify like Elihu did.
 - 2. Though Elihu speaks of this messenger in the third person, he is one to Job.
 - 3. They are rare in perilous times like today, for there are few that understand.
- F. The precious ministers of God show to man the uprightness of God in affliction.
 - 1. Elihu intended to justify God as stated in the context (32:2,13; 33:12-13).
 - 2. Job hardly needed a lesson in his uprightness, for he was yet full of himself.
 - 3. If this is his uprightness, graciousness has already been shown, and not next.
 - 4. If this man is upright, why is righteousness rendered to him later (33:26).
 - 5. If the antecedent for *his* cannot be found, look ahead to *he* representing God.
 - 6. Though Job was more upright than his three friends allowed (32:3; 33:32).

24 *Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.*

- A. If a man humbly responds to a minister's doctrine, God will be gracious to him.
- B. *Then* connecting these two verses intends a change – a humbled patient – which is God's goal and purpose with man in the several things listed (33:29-30).
- C. Trouble leading to death can be reversed and often has been, and here with Job.

- D. How can we acknowledge truth presented? – by repenting (Job 40:3-5; 42:6).
- E. The ransom that covers sins of God's elect is Christ Jesus (Mat 20:28; I Ti 2:6).
- F. Job did not die, because Job eventually got the lesson and humbled himself.
- G. Job knew about his Ransom, for he had called Him his Redeemer (Job 19:25).

25 His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth:

- A. Repentance brings relief. Sinners can start over. Physical chastening can end.
- B. This happened to Job; he was restored and was doubled (Job 42:10; Ja 5:10-11).
- C. This is not always the case physically, but it was with Job, and it is with others.
- D. Wise men know that a restored heart is more precious than a restored body.

26 He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness.

- A. The God he felt he no longer knew and had withdrawn in wrath would reappear.
 - 1. Previous prayers had found no answer, thus his desperate condition (19-22).
 - 2. He is renewed in his faith toward God and quickly knows God's mercy.
- B. God will confirm to this now repentant man his righteous standing with Him.
 - 1. A good man's righteousness is a confidence factor (Ps 18:19-24; 112:1-10).
 - 2. It does not alter absolute legal dependence on Christ's righteousness at all.
- C. God will declare the justification of repentant men to be accepted with Him.
 - 1. In the case here, God honored Job for his repentance over the three friends.
 - 2. If the ransom be Christ, then the righteousness is also His for salvation.
- D. This ends the fifth section, God helps men by sending His ministers (23-26).

27 He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not;

- A. This is the sixth section and fourth way God helps men to save them (27-28).
- B. This may be viewed as a fourth way of dealing with men in glorious assistance.
- C. At anytime, during any of the earlier events, men can repent and be forgiven.
 - 1. This God that is not answerable to man yet is very merciful to forgive him.
 - 2. His ways and thoughts in forgiveness exceed yours (Is 55:6-9). Believe it!
- D. Proper confession that brings God's forgiveness has three clear components.
 - 1. You must say you have sinned, which is to admit you violated God's rules, for sin is the transgression of the law – the clay violating the Potter's rules.
 - 2. You must admit His rules are right, and they were in wisdom and kindness designed and given to men, but your foolish and rebel choice was to pervert.

3. You must admit your choice did not work and left you guilty and unhappy, vexed and miserable, etc., consistent with the perpetual lie of sin and Satan.

E. For more ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/repentance-factor.pdf>.

F. For more ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/pdf/starting-over.pdf>.

28 He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.

A. God will have mercy on those who humble themselves and repent. Believe it!

B. You may be sure you are a goner, but God can restore and revive like no other.

C. The abundant life is just around the corner, if you humble yourself and repent.

29 Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man,

A. All the things we can read in this context are God's common ways with men.

B. You should be familiar with them and apply yourself to maximize use of them.

C. Are you aware and receptive of His efforts to convict and perfect you in Him?

30 To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.

A. So far from God being a cruel monster, He is a loving Father that helps sinners.

B. He does not have to give account of His trials on men, but they can find relief.

C. Though He may at times try men severely, He is gracious and merciful always.

31 Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I will speak.

A. Elihu would give Job a chance to talk (33:5,32), but he wanted him to hear first.

B. If Job had considered what Elihu had taught, he could remedy his situation fast.

32 If thou hast any thing to say, answer me: speak, for I desire to justify thee.

A. Job had tried to justify himself the wrong way – that God was not fair with him.

B. Elihu encouraged him to repent, by promising no accusations like three others.

33 If not, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I shall teach thee wisdom.

A. If Job was not yet ready to repent, Elihu had more to tell him to bring him to it.

B. The truth of the Bible is glorious, if we will but hold our peace and accept it.

Conclusion:

- A. Your goal in reading or learning this chapter should be much more than the history lesson.
- B. Your goal should be to see God's methods with men and improve your reception of them.
- C. Rather than quibble about individual words or phrases here, let us condemn our coldness and dullness and rebellion against God's appointed means of correcting and perfecting us!
- D. Let us embrace His mercy in His dealings, and His great pity in the end (James 5:10-11).
- E. If you have the least conviction about a matter, properly repent and realize His prosperity!

For Further Study:

- A. For a sermon outline introducing Elihu from Job 32 ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/elihu.pdf>.
- B. A slide show summarizing Elihu's words ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/elihu-power-point.pdf>.
- C. A slide show of *R factor*, or *Repentance* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/repentance-factor.pdf>. [See links.]
- D. The sermon series, *Afflictions and Suffering* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/afflictions-and-suffering.pdf>.
- E. The sermon, *I Have Found a Ransom* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/ransom.pdf>.
- F. The sermon outline, *Starting Over* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/starting-over.pdf>.