

## Job 32-34

Good evening and thank you for joining us! Would you please turn in your Bibles to Job 32? We only have a few more weeks left in our study of Job, and then we'll move to 1 Thessalonians.

If you've been with us through this study, you know **SHOW PIC** for the last 28 chapters Job and his 3 friends have engaged in a running argument that has basically become a virtual shouting match. **CLOSE PIC**

Job's 3 friends struggled to understand why Job suffered so much, so they assumed that Job's sin was the cause. This is that restricted theology we've talked about throughout this study. That good things happen to good people, and bad things happen to bad people.

Because of Job's terrible suffering, they assumed Job must've done something to warrant his pain. And we've seen Job emphatically deny any guilt in this regard. But as we've seen, in asking God why, Job loses his way.

So as chapter 32 kicks off, these three would-be comforters, turned accusers, have fallen silent. No longer talking was the first wise thing these men had done in a while.

Meanwhile, Job continues to suffer in his loneliness and pain.

Through these last 28 chapters no comfort was delivered – no pain relieved and no insights gained. Job was still hurt, and his obsession with the question of ‘why’ still rules him.

We’re gonna study chapters 32-34, and the title of tonight’s message is When the Light goes Dark  
Let’s pray

**1 So these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.** Job maintained his innocence throughout the book. He knows he’s done nothing specific to warrant his unimaginable pain.

**2 Then the wrath of Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, was aroused against Job; his wrath was aroused because he (Job) justified himself rather than God.** This is true. In the dialogue with the 3 friends, Job spends more time trying to prove his innocence than upholding God’s justice.

The book of Job starts out with Job perplexed and puzzled. But as time goes on, in the midst of his pain and God’s silence, Job loses perspective. Job becomes so concerned about proving his own righteousness he loses reverence for God.

Think about what we’ve seen with a once humble Job. In the last few weeks we’ve seen Job accuse God, shout at God, complain against God, and even question God’s fairness. A proud Job cops an attitude.

Elihu has been stewing as he's been listening to all of this, The more Job talked and accused God, the angrier Elihu became. Seeking to vindicate himself, Job cast doubt on God – God's goodness and His fairness... and this infuriated Elihu.

I'm sure Elihu could barely wait his turn to speak. The name "Elihu" means "my God is He" or "in God's stead."

And Job was not the only one who Elihu was angry at...

**3 Also against his three friends his wrath was aroused, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.** Elihu was also upset with Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. They lacked a single shred of evidence that Job had done anything wrong, yet they repeatedly accused him anyway. Elihu heard the last 28 chapters and was mad at everybody.

**4 Now because they were years older than he, Elihu had waited to speak to Job.**<sup>[fn]</sup> Custom was that the old guys spoke first - the young guys had to wait.

**5 When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, his wrath was aroused.** Elihu speaks straight through six chapters – 165 verses. In fact, Elihu speaks more in the book than anyone else.

6-8

**6 So Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, answered and said:**  
"I am young in years, and you are very old;  
Therefore I was afraid,

And dared not declare my opinion to you.”

7 I said, ‘Age[fn] should speak,

And multitude of years should teach wisdom.’

8 But there is a spirit in man,

And the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding. Elihu believed that just because Job and his three friends were older, it didn’t mean that they were the only ones who had received understanding from the Almighty.

9 Great men[fn] are not always wise,

Nor do the aged always understand justice. Just because a person is older doesn’t guarantee they have wisdom.

10-14

10 “Therefore I say, ‘Listen to me,

I also will declare my opinion.’

11 Indeed I waited for your words,

I listened to your reasonings, while you searched out what to say.

12 I paid close attention to you;

And surely not one of you convinced Job,

Or answered his words—

13 Lest you say,

‘We have found wisdom’;

God will vanquish him, not man.

14 Now he has not directed his words against me;

So I will not answer him with your words. Elihu was frustrated because the 3 friends didn’t put Job in his place the way Elihu thought they should.

This happens to us sometimes doesn't it-we get frustrated when someone doesn't answer a debate the way we would answer.

15-16

15 "They are dismayed and answer no more;  
Words escape them.

16 And I have waited, because they did not speak,  
Because they stood still and answered no more. Elihu reminds Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar they had 28 chapters to explain Job's situation, but they failed to present a reasonable explanation.

Now it's his turn.

17-19

17 I also will answer my part,  
I too will declare my opinion.

18 For I am full of words;  
The spirit within me compels me.

19 Indeed my belly is like wine that has no vent;  
It is ready to burst like new wineskins. Evidently throughout the four-way dialogue and Job's ending monologue - Elihu's thoughts and emotions had been fermenting. Elihu is about to pop his cork...you can picture him getting all twitchy

20 I will speak, that I may find relief;  
I must open my lips and answer. Elihu certainly was full of words; for this and the next five chapters he will drone on and on, unable to shut up and unwilling to let anyone else speak.

It's by far the longest single speech in the Book of Job, longer than even God's speech in later chapters.

21-22

21 Let me not, I pray, show partiality to anyone;  
Nor let me flatter any man.

22 For I do not know how to flatter,  
Else my Maker would soon take me away. Elihu is determined to not flatter anyone, except himself. In this obviously self-flattering introduction to the speech, Elihu has presented himself as smarter, wiser, and having more understanding than any of the four other men with him.

Chapter 33 the first several verses are continuing this wordy, windy introduction.

1-6

1 "But please, Job, hear my speech,  
And listen to all my words.

2 Now, I open my mouth;  
My tongue speaks in my mouth.

3 My words come from my upright heart;  
My lips utter pure knowledge.

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

5 If you can answer me,  
Set your words in order before me;  
Take your stand.

6 Truly I am as your spokesman<sup>[fn]</sup> before God;

I also have been formed out of clay. Well how nice of Elihu! On several occasions Job cried out for a Mediator – someone to represent him before God. Here Elihu volunteers.

7-11

7 Surely no fear of me will terrify you,  
Nor will my hand be heavy on you.

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

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

10 Yet He finds occasions against me,  
He counts me as His enemy;

11 He puts my feet in the stocks,  
He watches all my paths.’ Elihu had been listening – this was what Job had implied-that God was treating him like an enemy. Job was accusing God of torture.

Remember we saw last week that even by his own admission, Job had grown bitter. And Elihu tells Job-you were not right in this...

12 “Look, in this you are not righteous.

I will answer you,

For God is greater than man. Job, why are you bitter? What right do you have to take God to task and accuse Him of torture.

V 13 is an important verse:

13 Why do you contend with Him?

For He does not give an accounting of any of His words.

Here Elihu hits the nail on the head. God is God. He doesn't owe Job - or anyone else for that matter - an explanation for His actions.

God never needs our permission and He doesn't owe us a reason for His ways. Hey God is above His creation, nor is He accountable to it.

We exist at God's prerogative and any blessing we receive is a result of His grace. I love the saying "Where God has placed a period don't change it to a question mark."

If God refuses to offer a reason for our circumstances, we need to learn to live without one. The message of Job is clear-we need to trust God, even when we're suffering in His sovereignty.

14 For God may speak in one way, or in another,  
Yet man does not perceive it. Elihu is about to suggest to Job that God may have given him a reason for his sufferings, but Job hadn't been perceptive enough to hear God's voice.

15-18

15 In a dream, in a vision of the night,  
When deep sleep falls upon men,  
While slumbering on their beds,  
16 Then He opens the ears of men,  
And seals their instruction.  
17 In order to turn man from his deed,  
And conceal pride from man,



18 He keeps back his soul from the Pit,  
And his life from perishing by the sword. God is not limited in His  
ways to speak to us, to get our attention  
19-22

19 “Man is also chastened with pain on his bed,  
And with strong pain in many of his bones,  
20 So that his life abhors bread,  
And his soul succulent food.  
21 His flesh wastes away from sight,  
And his bones stick out which once were not seen.  
22 Yes, his soul draws near the Pit,  
And his life to the executioners. Elihu says God even speaks to  
mankind through suffering in order to save their soul from death.  
23-25

23 “If there is a messenger for him,  
A mediator, one among a thousand,  
To show man His uprightness,  
24 Then He is gracious to him, and says,  
‘Deliver him from going down to the Pit;  
I have found a ransom’;  
25 His flesh shall be young like a child’s,  
He shall return to the days of his youth. Elihu’s argument is really  
just the argument of the three friends of Job, just said in a  
different way.

The message is: “Job, the problem is that you are a sinner and  
are blaming God. If you would give glory to God and repent,  
everything would get better.”

26-27

26 He shall pray to God, and He will delight in him,  
He shall see His face with joy,  
For He restores to man His righteousness.

27 Then he looks at men and says,  
'I have sinned, and perverted what was right,  
And it did not profit me.' Elihu is saying when a man confesses his  
sin, God redeems his soul.

28 He will redeem his[fn] soul from going down to the Pit,  
And his[fn] life shall see the light. 26-28 are a wonderful  
description of a genuine conversion experience. It describes the  
person who has turned to God and has a real, joyful fellowship  
with God.

Elihu told Job that all this could be his again, if he would only start  
listening to God.

Yes these words are true, but they don't apply to Job's  
circumstances  
29-30.

29 "Behold, God works all these things,  
Twice, in fact, three times with a man,  
30 To bring back his soul from the Pit,  
That he may be enlightened with the light of life. **SHOW PIC**

Some States have a three strike policy. They're also called  
"Habitual Offender Laws." If a person commits three felonies the  
court is forced to sentence him to life in prison. It's society's  
attempt to get tough on crime. **CLOSE PIC**

But aren't we glad God doesn't say three strikes and you're out. Verse 29 says God will bring a man back from the pit even after the third strike. Nobody is beyond redemption when God is at work.

31-22

31 "Give ear, Job, listen to me;  
Hold your peace, and I will speak.

32 If you have anything to say, answer me;  
Speak, for I desire to justify you.

33 If not, listen to me;

Hold your peace, and I will teach you wisdom." In the last verses Elihu implores Job to let him speak and he'll teach him wisdom.

Just like the 3 other friends, Elihu's words are a mixed bag. His focus is God's glory – an emphasis Job needs. But he's still trapped in a restrictive theology.

Chapter 34-Elihu Proclaims God's Justice

1-3

1 Elihu further answered and said:

2 "Hear my words, you wise men;  
Give ear to me, you who have knowledge.

3 For the ear tests words

As the palate tastes food. Just as an enemy can poison food, a speaker can poison words.

Acts 17:10 Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

4-6

4 Let us choose justice for ourselves;  
Let us know among ourselves what is good.

5 “For Job has said, ‘I am righteous,  
But God has taken away my justice;

6 Should I lie concerning my right?

My wound is incurable, though I am without transgression.’ Elihu is trying to quote Job here-this was Job’s argument throughout the discourses.

7-9

7 What man is like Job,

Who drinks scorn like water,

8 Who goes in company with the workers of iniquity,

And walks with wicked men?

9 For he has said, ‘It profits a man nothing

That he should delight in God.’ Again quoting job

10-12

10 “Therefore listen to me, you men of understanding:

Far be it from God to do wickedness,

And from the Almighty to commit iniquity.

11 For He repays man according to his work,  
And makes man to find a reward according to his way.  
12 Surely God will never do wickedly,  
Nor will the Almighty pervert justice. This is of course true, and  
where Job was wrong.

13 Who gave Him charge over the earth?  
Or who appointed Him over the whole world?" No one appointed  
or elected God to office. God is no politician. It's not like He's  
accountable to His constituency back home or has to give status  
reports. God answers to no one!

14-15 He describes the power of God.

14 If He should set His heart on it,  
If He should gather to Himself His Spirit and His breath,  
15 All flesh would perish together,  
And man would return to dust. Remember in Exodus God told  
Moses no man can see Him or else they would die.

16-18

16 "If you have understanding, hear this;  
Listen to the sound of my words:  
17 Should one who hates justice govern?  
Will you condemn Him who is most just?  
18 Is it fitting to say to a king, 'You are worthless,'  
And to nobles, 'You are wicked'? Job hadn't just condemned  
some earthy prince or king – Job questioned God's  
righteousness.

19 Yet He is not partial to princes,  
Nor does He regard the rich more than the poor;  
For they are all the work of His hands. God doesn't play favorites.  
He doesn't favor the rich over the poor – or prince over pauper.

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither  
slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one  
in Christ Jesus.

20-22

20 In a moment they die, in the middle of the night;  
The people are shaken and pass away;  
The mighty are taken away without a hand.

21 "For His eyes are on the ways of man,  
And He sees all his steps.

22 There is no darkness nor shadow of death  
Where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves. Everyone on  
earth is subject to God's scrutiny.

Notice Elihu says a lot that's true and right and good. He's  
speaking of God's perfect justice.

23 For He need not further consider a man,  
That he should go before God in judgment. In other words, if you  
died tonight and stood before God, He wouldn't need to scan your  
file before He judged. He already knows you.

24-28

24 He breaks in pieces mighty men without inquiry,  
And sets others in their place.

25 Therefore He knows their works;  
He overthrows them in the night,  
And they are crushed.

26 He strikes them as wicked men  
In the open sight of others,

27 Because they turned back from Him,  
And would not consider any of His ways,

28 So that they caused the cry of the poor to come to Him;  
For He hears the cry of the afflicted. ” Jesus echoed this

statement in **Luke 8:17 For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light.**

29-32

29 When He gives quietness, who then can make trouble?  
And when He hides His face, who then can see Him,  
Whether it is against a nation or a man alone?—

30 That the hypocrite should not reign,  
Lest the people be ensnared.

31 “For has anyone said to God,  
‘I have borne chastening;  
I will offend no more;

32 Teach me what I do not see;

If I have done iniquity, I will do no more’? All men sin... Elihu is saying, “Job you shouldn’t have to look so hard to find a sin in your life...” and in one sense he was right. Job’s sin had not caused his calamity, but Job had sinned.

Lets finish the chapter

33-37

33 Should He repay it according to your terms,  
Just because you disavow it?  
You must choose, and not I;  
Therefore speak what you know.

34 “Men of understanding say to me,  
Wise men who listen to me:

35 ‘Job speaks without knowledge,  
His words are without wisdom.’

36 Oh, that Job were tried to the utmost,  
Because his answers are like those of wicked men!

37 For he adds rebellion to his sin;

He claps his hands among us,

And multiplies his words against God.” Here’s how Elihu differed from Eliphaz... He didn’t argue over whether Job had sinned. But he did say Job went too far in vindicating himself...

Even if Job had done everything right – Job’s innocence didn’t make God guilty.

Elihu points out that the real tragedy in Job’s life was not the loss of his wealth, or health, or status, or even his family... Job lost his reverence of God. Elihu is calling out Job for his bitterness against God.

When we experience deep pain we can make a lot of statements we really don’t mean... Any of these sound familiar?



“Why does God want to make my life so miserable?”

“I feel like God has forsaken me. Why won't he answer my prayers?”

“If this is how God is going to treat me – why even be a Christian?”

**SHOW PIC** After the death of his beloved wife, CS Lewis wrote in his journal, “Not that I am in much danger of ceasing to believe in God. The real danger is coming to believe such dreadful things about Him. The conclusion I dread is not, ‘So there is no God after all,’ but ‘So this is what God's really like. Deceive yourself no longer.’” **CLOSE PIC**

Pain casts doubt on God's goodness. This was Job. His confusion and hurt almost suffocated his faith.

Joe Bayly was a prolific Christian author. During his lifetime, he and his wife buried three of their kids. One at 18 days old - after surgery... One at 5 years old - from 16 leukemia... One at 18 years old - from a sledding accident... Joe experienced his share of pain.

Yet he had a saying he lived by, “Remember in the darkness what you have learned in the light.” When the lights go out don't forget what you've learned about God. Remember who He is even in the dark places.