

18b JOB

Let's resume our study now in the book of Job looking at chapter 33. In my New King James, if yours is like mine, this is labeled Elihu contradicts Job. So far we haven't really seen so much a contradiction as an explanation.

He says here is where you're not right. I will answer you and then his answer begins in the very next line. For God is greater than man.

And his illustration of that is look at God's Word. God doesn't hold himself accountable. Man doesn't hold God accountable for his word.

We take God's Word as it comes. And the same should be true for what God does. And now he's going to elaborate on this theme.

It's chapter 32 is pretty clear in what Elihu says and how he introduces himself and he's kind of getting wound up for the pitch. And in chapter 33 he pitches. And in chapter 34, if you read the commentators, and believe me, I've been scouring the earth.

I feel like I've read everything anybody's ever written on Job. And everybody kind of bogs down in chapter 34. And it's kind of like Job winds up in chapter 32.

He pitches in chapter 33. And there's a swing and a miss in chapter 34. And everybody's scratching their head saying, well, the catcher didn't even see the ball arrive at the plate.

And the umpire's scratching his head. And nobody knows what happened in chapter 34. And even the kindest of the commentators say things like, well, Elihu is not as clear in chapter 34 as he was in chapter 33 and in chapter 32.

But I think if you can follow the track of the windup and the pitch and see the direction the ball is flying, then you can see. When you're building things and you're trying to put a screw in, I was up putting in a ceiling fan here a couple of days ago. And you know how it is inevitably.

You're working over your head. You've got all these little tiny screws and things. And the light's not good.

And the angle's bad. And I was trying to put this little top most piece, the cover piece, that goes over the whole little assembly. And it's got these little short, tiny black screws that go into some hole that there's no way you can possibly see.

You don't know if you have it lined up or not. You're doing it all by feel. And you finally think you have it in there.

And you put the screwdriver up there. And as soon as you push and twist, it goes ping. And you

hear it go pop.

And it bounces off the ceiling blade fan. And then you hear it go tonk, tonk, tonk, tonk, tonk across the floor. And you look and you say, well, now, where did that go? And I had Patty helping me.

We were scouring the earth down there trying to find this little screw. Because there are no others like it. It's got a unique, you know, you have to have it.

Well, I kind of get this impression when we get, I'm preparing the ground for Chapter 34. Because it's kind of like that, that lost piece. And you heard the sound.

And you know it's somewhere. But you just can't find it. Well, a big part of understanding Chapter 34 is getting Chapter 33 right.

And I think there are two keys. The first is from our perspective, recognizing that God is greater than man gives us a point of application. Because God is greater than man, God can write things 3,000, 3,500, 4,000 years ago in the book of Job for our instruction.

He can put things in there that are going to be great for the church. It's going to be great for Israel. It's going to be great for the fellow Uzzites who might have read and heard about this in Job's day and in the generations after.

It's wonderful for Israel. It's had great application. It's had great meaning.

It's had great substantive power. Job, even in secular circles, is recognized as a wonderful example of ancient literature. It's recognized worldwide.

It's been recognized for centuries as a truly wonderful piece of literature. It has had impact all along. But as I have told you before, I completely reject the notion that was taught to me in seminary that scripture cannot contain any meaning that was not perspicacious to the original audience.

If you see anything beyond what the original recipients would have understood, you're reading something into the text. This is nutty to me. It's just nutty.

It's as though God is restricted to it. You're basically taking God's literature and applying human rules to it and saying, well, if I was writing something as a human being, I couldn't put something in it for somebody in the future. I could only put something in it for people that are going to read it right now.

I didn't understand it in school. I didn't understand it in the class. I didn't understand it on the test.

I haven't understood it in 20 years since. Why they would make this rule up, that's not the only thing I didn't agree with in seminary. But it's one of the major things that really made me think

about the nature of hermeneutics, the nature of Bible interpretation.

This is a pretty fundamental thing. But on the basis of this, the president of Western Conservative Baptist Seminary came to a pastor's conference that I attended and said, Satan is not in the book of Ezekiel. The king of Tyre is not Satan.

This is all just the local king and his local religion and these are all local references. This is the sort of limitation that you can place on your understanding if you don't recognize what Elihu says here. God is greater than man.

Next week when you think back, oh, Job, what did we study? If you don't remember anything else from this pair of lessons, remember this. God is greater than man. That's the point.

That's the issue here. God can put things in the book of Job for the post-cross generations that are going to live and breathe spiritual truth, spiritual vitality, spiritual energy into our souls because we can look at this and see Christ. Some of the great scholars of the 19th century or even the 18th century and the end of the 17th century, take a look at Adam Clarke and his commentaries which were written in the real early 1800s.

Some of it even in the late 1700s. Adam Clarke in his commentary, I went and checked. What does Adam Clarke say about Job 33? Adam Clarke, all he talks about is look at the Savior.

I just checked him this evening. We've been looking at the Savior in this passage for two weeks. I went back and checked Adam Clarke just before class.

I was very gratified to see because Adam Clarke is a great guy to check. Many times he'll have an insight that transcends all of the modern guys. Go back to the old Methodist.

Go back to the old Adam Clarke and he's got it figured out way beyond all of your 20th century, 21st century, 20th century computer enabled text critics and so on. Adam Clarke, when he translates this, when he puts a paraphrase in, when it says mediator, he puts the Lord Jesus Christ right in there. That's what we have here.

This is what Elihu represents. Elihu says, I'm the guy. I'm made out of the same clay you are.

I'll be your mediator. You don't have to fear me. You can speak.

I will speak the truth of God to you. I am full of the Holy Spirit. You've got to get that right or you're going to absolutely fall off the edge of the earth in chapter 34.

We made that assumption last week and everything held up beautifully in chapter 32. It continues to hold up in chapter 33. The question then becomes, as Elihu speaks to Job, in what way does that reflect Christ? Now in his speaking about himself and his role for Job, we can say, okay, so for a believer who's on the ball and is upright, honoring God and his life and so on, and these are

your remnant believers.

Bob Thame used to call them the pivot, the 7,000 that haven't bowed the knee to Baal out of the generations of Israel. This is even pre-Israel. Israel's not even a nation yet.

But these men represent those who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness. And don't give Eliphaz and Bildad and Zophar too short a shrift. They are the wisest doctrinal men in the area.

That's why God recorded all of their words in this book. What they say is golden. It's beautiful doctrinal truth and it's recorded here and it's quoted in the New Testament and alluded to in the New Testament, but it's been misapplied.

So often you can have a discussion with somebody and they will cite facts and they're perfectly good facts, but they're not pertinent. They're not applicable. Doesn't mean the facts are bad.

It just means you've taken a set of bricks and instead of building your house, you've built a barbecue. You're not supposed to be building a barbecue. You're supposed to be building a house.

You've stacked your bricks the wrong way. Nothing wrong with the bricks. Well, that's what we have here.

So now Elihu is the one who is speaking not from some dark spirit whispering in his ear in the middle of the night. He talks about messengers from God coming in the night. He talks about dreams and visions.

But when Job talks about dreams and visions, he's scared. It terrifies him. When Eliphaz talked about it, this was the dark spirit whispering and hissing in his ear and he came up with all of this strange conclusion that he presents to Job.

Elihu takes these valid communications from God and he's making a point about them. He says, look, God has different kinds of words that he delivers. The first kind is a dream, a vision of the night when deep sleep falls upon men.

They're slumbering in their bed. God opens the ears of men and he seals their instruction. Now, there's some other translation of that seals their instruction.

I forget what it is, but seals their instruction is right. I don't even remember what the other one is. He terrifies their minds or something.

I don't remember what it is. It's in, I think, the NIV or the New American Standard. But seals their instruction is good.

Why else would you open someone's ears and turn them from their deeds, wipe out pride from

the picture, conceal it, get pride off the map, out of the room, keep back his soul from the pit? All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. So that the man of God may be mature, complete, perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. This is the Old Testament version of that 2 Timothy passage.

God opens the ears of men and seals their instruction to turn man from his deed, conceal pride from man, keep back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword. Doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness. Now, a second kind of word.

Remember up in verse 14, God may speak in one way or in another. It says man does not perceive it. Of course man perceives it.

If God opens your ears and speaks instruction, you're perceiving it. He wouldn't be wasting his breath. And we're going to see why.

I mean, there are those who hearing they hear and don't perceive, seeing they see and don't get it. That's not the issue here. A second kind of word in verse 19.

Man is also chastised with pain on his bed and with strong pain in many of his bones. So word number one is the kind you get in the night seasons. Jacob, classic example at Bethel.

We've talked about this in connection with our John 1 study where Jesus, just before he goes to Cana, he tells his new disciples, specifically Nathanael, he says, you're impressed because I said something about the fig tree. You will see angels ascending and descending on the son of man. And so much of John chapter 1 harks back to Genesis.

And that's a classic passage. Jacob is fleeing from his brother. He's in distress.

He's probably not been away from home. Certainly not in these circumstances. And he's heading into the unknown.

He's in this weird landscape with these sheets of rock and he lays his head down on a pillow he made out of rocks. He tells you how little he was carrying. He doesn't even have something to wad up and stick under his head.

He lays his head on rocks. And then he sees this vision in the night. And God is standing at the top.

Yahweh Elohim speaks to Jacob in the night via this dream, this vision, and communicates something to him for these very purposes. Now, here's a second kind. Man is also chastened with pain.

This is a very profound thing that Elihu is saying here. God speaks through difficulties. God

speaks through the things that cause us not just discomfort, not just challenge, but pain.

And in this case, physical pain. Strong pain in many of his bones so that his life abhors bread and his soul abhors succulent food. His flesh wastes away from sight and his bones stick out, which once were not seen.

Yes, once again, his soul draws near the pit. And his life draws near to the executioners. This is a close parallel to verse 18.

Now, what's the difference? In verse 18, God speaks in this wonderful night vision to open a man's ears to keep him back from the pit and to keep his life from perishing by the sword. But here is a man who is chastened. The first one didn't say anything about chastening, they didn't.

This one does. Here is someone who has erred, who has goofed, who has sinned, who has gone astray and is in line for chastening. So, the first one was an instructing word, doctrinal word.

This second one, the pain on the bed, is a reproofing word, a chastening word. And this makes life not worth the living. His soul draws near the pit and his life to the executioners.

Now, what is the perspective here? This is what the man himself sees. When he is experiencing this pain, when we get a real severe form of disease, you have people going through cancer or cancer treatment and things of this nature, there are times when people say, you know, I'm sitting on a quadriplegic in the wheelchair, just give me the thumb button and I can roll myself into the swimming pool and drown. Or, you know, out the window or somebody give me a shot.

Life is not worth living. This is from the perspective of the person. Now, by disobedience and pursuing a life of apathy, indifference, evil, whatever it may be, so that you come in line for chastening, you're already approaching the pit, you're already approaching the sin unto death, you just don't pay attention.

It reminds me of the recklessness of some drivers who have never really had anything serious go wrong and they're very careless and they don't know how close they are to death, their own or causing someone else's by their weaving in and out and talking on their phones and doing other kinds of weird stuff, driving under the influence, having too many people in the car all yacking and talking and the poor, you know, the teenage driver loses control. You can be close to death, you can be fruitless, functionless and neutralized and not really have an awareness of it, not have the reality of it sinking in. God puts pain into the people picture to communicate that truth.

That's what this 19-22 is talking about. God will put pain in there so that your actual experience of life reflects what your spiritual life is. And there is, especially here, remember the context, we're looking at the Old Testament, we're looking at pre-Mosaic Law, pre-Canon, this is what God would do to wake somebody up and I'm not saying that he still does or does not do this, but certainly in these days he did.

He would put physical pain in to give someone a word, this is a communication from God. I'm going to make you feel what you're actually doing spiritually. Did God do this with the nation of Israel? Brought them into the land of promise, flowing with milk and honey, peace from their enemies, rest and so on, kingdom of Solomon and they were apathetic, they got into idolatry, they didn't obey God and purge out the last of the Canaanite peoples and they began to do syncretism, they began to worship many gods, got into heavy idolatry and even went into the Molech thing, worshipping Baal and all that.

What did God do? God brought famine, God brought pestilence, God brought disease. Read those five cycles of discipline. God says, if you still will not turn up my reproof, I will turn your sky to brass and your fields to iron and all the rest of it.

I will make you experience in your physical circumstances what your spiritual situation is. If you are bereft, if you are in famine and poverty spiritually, I will put it into your physical circumstances. That's 19 through 22.

Now, third kind of word from God. God may speak in one way or in another. Personally, I'm already wanting to be in category one.

I want God to come into night visions and open my ear and pour in instructions so that I don't get anywhere near the pit and I don't get anywhere near the sword. But for people who don't pay attention, why then you have the stronger version in 19 through 22. Now 23, if there is a messenger for him, a mediator, one among a thousand to show man his uprightness, then he is gracious to him and says, deliver him from going down to the pit.

I have found a ransom. His flesh shall be young like a child. He shall return to the days of his youth.

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. Then he looks at men and says, I have sinned and perverted what was right and it did not profit me.

He will redeem his soul from going down to the pit and his life shall see the light. Once again, look at the first 28. You have the same two things.

He will redeem his soul from going down to the pit and his life shall see the light. He is not going to experience the sword. He is not going to give his life to the executioners.

So this is stage two of what we saw in 19 through 22. After the pain comes, if there is a messenger for him, this is the man that God has sent pain. So pain is phase one.

The mediator is phase two. Now, we begin to think, well, is this going to be another version of the argument of Elihu and Bildad and Zophar saying, Job, you have sinned because isn't this Job?

Job has experienced strong pain in many of his bones so that his life abhors bread. Job has said as much over and over again.

He has talked about how his skin is turning black and how his bones ache and he can't get any sleep at night and so on. And he says, I can't eat. I have lost my appetite.

And he says, my bones are sticking out. Well, that is what Elihu has described here. And he says, this is chastening from God.

That comes first and then there will be a messenger for him who will come and say, look, it is not too late. I can mediate this difficulty between you and God and show that man God's uprightness. What is the very first thing in this book? There was a man in the land of Uz.

His name is Job. A perfect man and upright. Upright.

This book begins by talking about uprightness. And this is the very same word. To show man his uprightness.

Where does uprightness come from? It comes from God. It comes by claiming his grace. Recognizing his provision.

So, this pain has brought this unresponsive person to the point of listening to the messenger. Listening to the mediator. What is the message of the messenger mediator? God is upright.

God can make you upright. God is gracious to him and says, deliver him from going to the pit. You don't have to end in this fashion.

You can recover. There is restoration available. I have found a ransom.

Now, who is speaking here? God. I have found a ransom. This, I think, is a, perhaps, veiled allusion to Abraham up on top of the mountain.

Where you could imagine Abraham, if he slew Isaac, I mean, can you imagine living the rest of your life having slit your son's throat for God? I mean, how would you reconcile that? God says, I have provided myself. Abraham said that before he ever went up there. God will provide himself a lamb.

There is a ram caught in the thicket. That is the substitute. God provides his own ransom.

Isaac is ransomed by the ram that is caught in the thicket. Job and Elihu and the assembled company know this story. How many stories of ransom are there at this point in history? You can't really say the fig tree was a ransom for Adam and Eve.

There wasn't any ransom for Abel. Was there any ransom involved between them and Noah or any ransom for Shem, Ham, and Japheth? Where is the first ransom story in the Bible? Abraham,

Mount Moriah, Isaac about to die and there is a substitute. Abraham knew it was coming.

God will provide himself a lamb. God is gracious. Deliver him from going down to the pit.

I have found a ransom. And this man who had flesh wasting away from sight, his life abhorred bread, his soul abhorred succulent food, his bones stick out that didn't used to even show, now his flesh shall be young like a child's. He shall return to the days of his youth.

You know what Adam Clarke says at this point? The man is born again. I think this man is a believer. But you think about it.

Restoration to the days of your youth. Every single one of us as we get older can think of advantages to being young. Less pain, less stiffness, less limitation in eyesight and a lot of other things.

But Adam Clarke says, his flesh shall be young like a child's. He shall return to the days of his youth. You go back to an earlier point.

You go back and you get another start. You get another chance. He shall pray to God and he will delight in him.

He shall see his face with joy. Remember the story of the prodigal. And he goes and has to experience pain and hunger to turn and return to his father who embraces him, delights in him, sees his face.

There is a joyful reunion. He restores to man his righteousness. Then he looks at men.

This now is the erstwhile ne'er do well, the recovered reversionist if you want to call him that. And he says, I have sinned and perverted what was right. There is no profit in that.

What does the returning son say to his father in Jesus' parable? Father, I have sinned. I am not worthy. Let me just join the servants.

And the father says, nonsense. Puts on the robe and the ring. Slaughters the fattened calf.

But he says, I have sinned and perverted what was right. And notice how far away now is pride from this person. Pride is hidden from him now.

And there is instead humility. It takes humility to acknowledge error. It takes humility to acknowledge that you were the problem and not the solution.

It did not profit me. He, God, will redeem his soul from going down to the pit and his life shall see the light. Now, remember I said does Elihu following in the track of the first three friends? Remember, what is his point here? These are words that God speaks.

Elihu is confirming, yes, God does do the things that Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar talked about in their dialogue. They are not wrong. That is a word that God speaks just like he speaks in visions of the night.

God does chasten with pain on the bed and there is a purpose. What is Elihu doing here? He is giving the right perspective on these truths that have been proffered as pertaining to Job. He says, these are true things.

These are words that God speaks. But he is going to go further. We are heading for chapter 34.

So Elihu is not saying, hey Job, God sent you pain so that you would straighten up and fly right and now what you need to do is, that would just be a rehash of the first three friends. You have to follow his argument. I think people in the ancient world were so much better able to keep all of these elements in their mind and follow a rather complex argument than perhaps we are.

Particularly we are trying to do it one language removed and three thousand years removed. But this is what he is saying. You just have to remember where you are.

Elihu says, look, God may speak in one way or another. The hanging question in the background is, which way is God speaking in Job's situation? Did God come to Job in the middle of the night, open his ear and give him instruction and say, stay away from that pit and don't get anywhere near the sword? Did God bring pain to Job because he was in need of chastening and in need of a mediator to come and provide the ransom so that he could be restored and say, I have sinned and I am going to tell men, and this is my testimony, this is a thing that God does. Elihu says.

Which of these words, if any, applies to Job? So in verse 29 he goes on and he says, behold, God works all these things twice, in fact three times with a man. And once again that refrain. Look at verse 30.

What is God's purpose? What is the ringing refrain through this whole chapter? To bring back his soul from the pit, that he might be enlightened with the light of life. You can't read that verse and not think about John chapter 1. That light was the life of men. Who is the light that is the life of men? It is the Lord Jesus Christ.

What is the message of Elihu through this whole chapter over and over again? You don't need to be going to the pit. You don't need to be losing your life. You don't need to be at the executioner.

You don't need the sword. This is God's purpose in speaking his word. God's purpose in communication is to make us fruitful, not pit bound.

And to give us life and give it more abundantly, not take it away in the sin unto death. So he concludes this chapter by saying, give ear Job, listen to me. Hold your peace and I will speak.

Now he says, I have only given you basically two kinds of words, sort of the positive speaking in

the night and the negative chastening and discipline for the purpose of correction and restoration. It is almost as though Job is going to say, how many times do I have to argue with this point? And Elihu holds up his hand and says, Job, hold your peace. I'm not done yet.

If you have anything to say, answer me. But you get the idea he's saying, answer me in a minute. If you have anything to say, you'll have your chance to answer.

And you can speak. I desire to justify you. But if not, listen to me.

Hold your peace and I will teach you wisdom. Now we're at chapter 34. We've seen these two basic kinds of word from God.

And so far, Elihu is still, to my perception at least, a perfect foreshadowing of the Lord Jesus Christ. What is the function of the Son of God when he comes to earth in the first advent? He reveals the Father. He says, I and my Father are one.

If you've seen me, you've seen the Father. It's the purpose of the Son to reveal the Father. That's what he's doing.

And that's what Elihu is doing. He's talking all about God. He's not talking about Job.

He's not talking about the three friends. All he's saying is, look, listen to me. I'm going to speak from the fullness of my heart.

Now we're in chapter 34. Elihu further answered and said, Hear my words, you wise. Give ear to me, you who have knowledge.

Now, all of chapter 33 was addressed to Job. And he puts a bookmark on Job. And he says, look, let me tell you this much and hold on to that.

Now I'm going to back up. You're going to get your chance to answer if you want to. But now he's going to back up and he's addressing the room.

He says, listen to me, all you wise men. And he's going to address everybody. For the ear tests words as the palate tastes food.

Let us choose justice for ourselves. Let us know among ourselves what is good. And Elihu addresses these other people in the room and he says, this is inclusive.

He's not rebuking them. He is wanting to bring them on board. Let's all see if we can't.

This is the importance of using inclusive language. It would be one thing for a pastor to stand up and say, you need to stop that sinning. It would be something else for a pastor to stand up and say, we need to stop that sinning.

There's a difference. What does Elihu say? Let us choose justice for ourselves. Now, remember, he's pretty lit up.

He is pretty passionate when he begins. Scripture tells us how passionate he is. But look at the self-control that he has.

He doesn't go into lecture mode. He doesn't say, you guys need to learn justice. You guys need to find out what's good and let me tell you what it is.

He says, let us reason together. Taste and see that the Lord is good. So he says, look, let's figure out what's right.

Let's figure out what's good. Job has said, I am righteous, but God has taken away my justice. Should I lie concerning my right? My wound is incurable, though I am without transgression.

Now, this is the second time that Elihu summarizes and quotes Job. Job said he was innocent back in chapter 9, verse 15, and in verse 20 of that chapter, and in chapter 27, in verse 6, he came flat out and said, I am innocent. I am guiltless.

Job said, God has taken away my justice. This is chapter 19, verses 6 and 7. And chapter 27, verse 2, he said, where is my justice from the Almighty? Should I lie concerning my right? My wound is incurable, though I am without transgression. And way back in chapter 6, verse 4, Job said, my wound is incurable.

And chapter 16, verse 13, he says basically the same thing. Verse 7, what man is like Job who drinks scorn like water? And what on earth does this mean? Well, you can't go for any length of time, especially in the ancient world, without drinking water. It's unavoidable that you're going to have to take in water.

You can think about the climate and the situation over there in the fringes of the Arabian desert that existed even way back in those days. Everybody, it's unavoidable. You have to get water.

And for Job, scorn is unavoidable. You think, it would seem like he would be getting pity or sympathy or head wagging or something after all of these things have befallen him. But there's just as many wicked people in the world in his generation as there is in ours.

And there are people who build their happiness on someone else's unhappiness. There are people who are jealous. There are people who feel like somebody's success is robbing them of the opportunity for success.

I can't get in business that Job is selling stuff cheaper. He's got all the good servants and he's got the best land and he's got this and he's got that. And small-minded, petty, self-centered people will rejoice when someone has a bad time.

That's just human nature. It's man's humanity to man. And so Job is getting scorn and mocking with the frequency that people drink water.

He just, many times a day, somebody is disrespecting him now because how the mighty are fallen. What man is like Job who drinks scorn like water, who goes in company with the workers of iniquity and walks with wicked men? For he has said, it profits a man nothing that he should delight in God. Now, is this what Job has done? Is Job walking with wicked men? Has Job said, it profits a man nothing? This, remember now, Elihu backed up and addressed the room, didn't he? And he's characterizing gently and respectfully, he's the younger guy, can't just go twisting the noses of your elders here.

Remember that phrase we saw, if you twist the nose, does it not bleed? Well, you've got to be careful about correcting your elders or contradicting your elders. And so, this is very tactful and yet it's still very telling. He says, let's find justice, let's find what's good.

Job says, I'm righteous but God has taken away my justice. Should I lie concerning my right? In other words, Job has said, should I lie and say, yes I have sinned and let me just go off and sacrifice and everything will be fine? He says, I'm not going to act like I've done something wrong when I haven't. My wound is incurable and I'm without transgression.

I can't figure out what's going on in my relationship with God. Now, this is the friends, he's backing up and he says, look Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, what man is like Job who's drinking up scorn like water, who is going in company with the workers of iniquity and walking with wicked men? If what you say is true, he's a worker of iniquity, he's bullied the poor and he's perverted justice and he's done some secret sin as you have been saying for the last 30 chapters, why is he scorned by those very people? If he's keeping company with the wicked, you know, a house divided against itself can't stand, why would the wicked be scorning him and repudiating him? Why wouldn't they be embracing him and say, finally, you've come around, you're one of us. What man is like Job who drinks scorn like water, who goes in company with workers of iniquity and walks with wicked men and says, it profits a man nothing that he should delight in God.

Is Job anything like these men? Is he keeping company with them? Is he accepted by them? Does he talk like them? Has Job ever said, it profits a man nothing that he should delight in God? Now, you might read that into some of his comments when he says, I don't understand what's happening to me. God has taken away my justice, but Job has not said, in fact, just the opposite. His wife said, curse God and die.

Job said what? We receive the good things from God, should we not also receive the bad? And Job says, I know my Redeemer lives. I don't know when, I don't know how, but I'm going to see him one of these days. The worms could eat my flesh, I'm still going to see him.

Job has never said, it profits a man nothing that he should delight in God. Do you think God at the

end of the book would say, Job, my servant has spoken right of me? Let him offer your sacrifice so you can get back in my good graces, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar? Not at all. So Elihu has brought this incongruity, this contradiction in the words of the three friends to a point.

He says, look, if what you say is true, why is Job drinking scorn like water and why doesn't Job say what these evil men say, that it doesn't profit somebody to worship God? Well, we're right in the middle of chapter 34 and we're going to have to break off, we're out of time for tonight. But the wisdom and the on-point nature of each of Elihu's comments is just remarkable. He's the youngest, he has the least in terms of credentials, and yet he is straightening out this 30-chapter mess that we went through in those dialogue cycles.

He foreshadows that great mediator who is made out of our clay, who makes the God of heaven perspicacious, who reveals unto us, he's our righteousness, he's our peace, he's our sanctification. And that's what we're seeing in foreshadowing terms in Elihu. We'll pick it up right here next week.

Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for this beautiful picture of the Lord Jesus Christ in this great Old Testament book. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these truths in our hearts.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.