

19b JOB

Let's resume our study now. We've invested a little bit of time in trying to get some background and perspective on the nature of these speeches, which is a fancy way of telling you they're difficult and they have been difficult for translators. They're difficult to read because the translation was difficult and they don't always flow logically.

And when they have been sort of forced to flow logically, they don't necessarily reflect what Elihu was actually trying to say, at least certainly not in my estimation, looking at them in Hebrew. So let's say let's pick up here in Job chapter 34. And this is Elihu's second speech.

And he is backing up. He started out talking to Job and the three friends. Now he has said, you men of understanding.

And it seems that he is addressing he that has an ear to hear. Anyone in the big tent there who is there for the Bible conference can benefit from these words. Why does he say this? Because everyone has heard the previous speeches.

Everyone has got these bits and pieces of good gospel truth that have not really been constructed into a viewpoint and into an understanding and into an answer for Job's predicament. The pieces are pretty much all good, but they're just not lined up. And this is why Elihu keeps coming back and saying, you've got understanding, so listen.

You men of understanding, pay attention. You've got these pieces. Let's together stick them in place.

Now, think about the Lord Jesus in His first advent. What was the nature of His appeal to Israel? Did He start from the beginning and start teaching them history and the commandments? What did He do? He appealed to their existing knowledge, didn't He? He said, look, you've got this wisdom. You know the Old Testament scriptures.

And you ought to be able to identify me because they speak of me. You know these scriptures, but you're not applying them correctly. You're not interpreting them profitably and beneficially.

And that's Elihu's argument here. So, he is now, Elihu is describing God. This is the way God really is.

And he's drawing almost every other line here is a quote from the previous speeches. You can recognize some of these even in the English. So, he says in verses 10 through 15.

Far be it from God to do wickedness and from the Almighty to commit iniquity. This is really the first major point that he's going to make here. He repays man according to his work.

He makes man to find a reward according to his way. God will never do wickedly. The Almighty

will not pervert justice.

This is something we can observe, interpret, and apply. Bad things happen to good people all the time. God does not miraculously intervene, to my knowledge, in the modern day.

We don't see people raised from the dead. We don't see people with grievous bodily harm miraculously healed. There is a time and a place and a purpose for God to so do.

He doesn't do that. Nature takes its course. And sometimes in our lives, we will not understand why God has allowed nature to take that particular course.

This is a bankable doctrine of the Word of God. God is not unjust. God is not wicked.

Do you believe it or not? Are you in that faith or not? It's a decision. It's a volition point. When something bad happens, what do you conclude about God? It defines who we are.

It decides when we make that decision, that decision determines where we are going to fall in the future in God's plan. Are we going to be with the faithful? Are we going to be with the reprobates who are in the darkness outside? Verse 16. If you have understanding, hear this.

Listen to the sound of my words. Listen to the sound of my words. This in Hebrew is the voice, the kol, Q-O-L.

Listen to the voice of my words. Why does he say this? This is an exhortation to listen carefully and explicitly. This is kind of like President Bush I when he was talking about no new taxes.

And he said, read my lips, pay close attention. One of the greatest political blunders of my lifetime, I think. He says, listen to the sound, to the voice of my words.

Let these words sink into your ears. Should one who hates justice govern? Well, I was listening real closely and watching for the sound of those words, but it doesn't make a lot of sense to me. I mean, on the surface we would say, well, someone who is unjust should not govern.

But what's that got to do with his point? That doesn't seem profound enough for that big introduction. Should someone who hates justice govern? Will you condemn him who is most just? Is it fitting to say to a king you are worthless and to nobles you are wicked? But look at all of the italics in there. This is really a mess.

Depending on which version you read, in the New American Standard, for example, it says, shall one who hates justice rule? In other words, do you think someone who hates justice is ever going to rule? Will you condemn the righteous mighty one who says to a king, worthless one, and says to nobles, you wicked ones, who shows no partiality to princes, and so forth. The New English Translation parses it out this way. Do you really think that one who hates justice can govern? And will you declare guilty the supremely righteous one who says to a king, and then it kind of follows

the New American Standard, who shows no partiality, and so forth.

Well, the first thing we have to figure out is who is being spoken of here, because we've had kind of a new introduction. He finished the thought about God being righteous and just. So now, in verse 16, he seems to be starting a new thought.

Whenever you get these little introductory formulas, this marks off the thought units. So this is a new thought unit. It's not the old thought unit.

So what's the new thought unit? Well, in verse 16, it says, if you have understanding, hear this. And this is really heed this. Shama means not only to hear, but to heed.

So this is something you should put into practice. He says, listen to the sound of my words. And in verse 17, shall one who hates mishpat, remember, shafat is the word for judge.

Mishafat or mishpat is that which comes from a judge. Shall one who hates a judicial ruling or a judicial decree, a judgment, this is where justice comes from. Justice is judicial.

Shall one rule hating, this is an ing word in Greek. Remember the o-e-n fix? This is sone, from sana, which means to hate. So this is one who is in the process, who is an ongoing hater of judicial rulings.

So someone who is a hater of judicial rulings, rule. This is from kabash. And this root idea is to bundle or gird, to bring something under control.

It's not the king rule. It's not malak, as in melek, the king. This has the idea of saddling an animal.

So this is hands-on control. This is operating the reins of a thing, so to speak. Wrapping or winding something.

So the statement of verse 17 is, someone who hates the rules and the rulings, and is a hater of those, shall they have operational control? Someone who hates the rules, should they have operational control? Now, the question is, to whom is Elihu referring when he makes this statement? You've got a lot of capital letters in your translation saying, well, he's still talking about God and about his justice. Well, let's go a little further and see if we can answer this question for ourselves. What is the next phrase? Vaim sadik.

The particle here is an adverb, the aim idea. Aim sometimes means if. Sadik is the righteous.

And the next word here is kavir, which has the idea of being strong or mighty. So is this someone you are going to condemn? In going through this translation with you, and I'm not going to do this for every verse, but I'm trying to demonstrate. You can see that when you see a word for righteous and you see a word for strong, they're going to associate this back with the previous thought unit and think that it's talking about God.

I would submit to you that Elihu here is alternating talking about God and talking about Job. Remember earlier he said, Job has said this and that and he's a righteous man. God is not unjust.

God is not going to condemn the righteous. God maintains justice. He completed that thought unit.

Now in verse 16, we have a new thought unit. If you have understanding, hear this. Listen to the sound of my words.

Is someone who is an ongoing hater of justice and judgment and that which comes from the judge, should he be in control? Who has been in control all of this time? It's Job. Job is the mighty man who sits in the gate and kings hush to hear his words. Remember how he described how revered and awe-filled everyone was around him and so forth? I think he's talking about Job.

I don't think these should be capital letters. Why would anybody assume that God was a hater of justice? And it's nonsensical in my mind to say, well, if God is ruling, he can't be a hater of justice. Those concepts just don't associate with God.

But this is the accusation. This is the implication of the speeches made by the friends against Job, that he has been a secret oppressor of the poor, that he doesn't really care about the poor, that he has taken advantage of them to get ill-gotten gains, and this is why God is punishing him. Remember those allegations earlier on? And Elihu is saying, look, as he has already said, does someone who is getting abused by the wicked, he's drinking their scorn like water, is he going to be one who's walking with the wicked? And he's returning to that theme and he's saying, look, Job is not a hater of justice and a ruler.

He didn't get to be a ruler. God is in his heaven. God determines.

And someone with this much influence and this much power, in those days, God... Elihu is asking the question, do you think that someone who is a hater of this divine justice I've been talking about, this God in the heaven who rules all and determines all, someone who hates all of that, is he going to rule? No, is the rhetorical answer. Will you condemn a righteous man, Sadiq, Job was described as Sadiq in chapter 1, very same adjective applied to Job, and a strong one. He's one of the greatest, most powerful men of the East.

Will you condemn him? This man who says to a king, worthless one, and to nobles, you wicked ones. Do you remember Job in his last speech talked about how he was no respecter of persons and he was just as likely to say to the son of a prince, you need to go out there with my servants and you need to go sleep with my dogs. He didn't favor the rich, he didn't despise the poor, Job claimed this for himself.

Elihu is going back and referring to this and saying, look, this is a righteous man, he's not a hater

of justice. He has said to kings, you're worthless. He has said to nobles, you're wicked.

He's righteous, he's not corrupted, he's not perverted. He shows no partiality to princes, he shows no regards to the rich above the poor, for they are all the work of his hands, in verse 19. Whose hands are we talking about? Because they are Asah, they are manufactured by his hands, all of them.

Well, of course, this is God's hands. He's weaving these two ideas together. He's talking about Job and he's talking about God.

In a moment they die, at midnight people are shaken and pass away, and the mighty are taken away without a hand, for his eyes are upon the ways of a man, and he sees all his steps. Elihu, when he switches subjects from Job to God, doesn't change pronouns, and so it's confusing. And that's why in some of these you'll see the he is capitalized all the way down, in other translations it's not, and it's tough to parse out.

And this is why I gave you the introduction in the first session tonight. What is the point, what is the purpose of this speech? If we know what the theme of it is, and what it's trying to get across, what is it trying to get across? What is the nature of relationship with God? How does God treat his own? There are certain things God will allow to happen to his own, and there are certain things that he will not. God is in his heaven, God is all powerful, God is answerable to no one.

The mistakes that were made in the earlier speeches was ascribing things to Job and to God that were erroneous, that were not appropriate. Elihu is now saying these are parts of wisdom, this is what the Spirit speaks, this is what God does do and does not do, this is what Job has done and what Job has not done. He's weaving these together.

So, God's eyes are upon the ways of a man, and he sees all his steps. There is no darkness or deep shadow where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves, for he does not need to consider a man further that he should go before God in judgment. He breaks in pieces mighty men without inquiry and sets others in their place.

Therefore he knows their works, and he overthrows them in the night, and they are crushed. He strikes them like the wicked in a public place, because they turned aside from following him and had no regard for any of his ways, so that they caused the cry of the poor to come to him, that he might hear the cry of the afflicted. When he keeps quiet, who then can condemn? And when he hides his face, who then can behold him? That is, in regard to both nation and man, so that the godless men would not rule, nor be snares of the people.

And we're back, we've come full circle in verse 30. We'll talk about those intervening verses. But, see what it says in verse 30, so that godless men would not rule, nor be snares of the people.

He started talking about Job, and now he's referring back to his previous point and saying, you

know, there are things that God will allow to happen, and there are things that God will not allow to happen. One of the things God will not allow to happen is godless men to rule and be snares of the people. Now, you say, well, wait a minute.

It looks to me like there's lots of godless men. I see Chavez on the news. I see, uh, Aja Benadad, or whatever the heck his name is, over there in Iran.

And you've got an evil dictator in Korea. It seems like there's evil men all over the place, really. Well, we're not talking about the church age, and we're not talking about the present day.

We are talking about ancient days, and we're talking about places where people who are interested in God dwell. And in those times, and in those places, God granted authority and set up Mishpatim, justices, Shafatim, judges, who would rule on behalf of those people. And Elihu's point is godless men, God, if God's going to keep quiet, nobody can condemn.

And when God hides His face, who can behold Him in regard to both nation and man, so that godless men do not rule, nor be snares of the people. If justice is needed, God will make sure that there is a justice there, a Shafat, a judge, who will ensure justice. If God does not make such provision, if God does not speak, if God hides His face, if the righteous are oppressed, in other words, if the righteous suffer, and God does not speak, makes no provision, doesn't put that godly man in charge, who are we to question Him? This is getting at Job's situation.

Job says, where's my justice? Where's a mediator or a judge who will come and say, hey, you've got a bad deal, let's fix this. This is exactly what Elihu is talking about. He says, look, God is just, and God will put righteous men in place as judges when they are needed, when God wants them to ensure that godless men do not rule and that the people are not ensnared, God will make provision.

But there are other times when He hides His face, when He is not able to be seen, and that's His plan, that's His purpose. Well, it's hard to extract out of this section, but this is the point. Has anyone said to God, in verse 31, I have born, basically, born it.

Chastisement is an inference here. In verse 31, it basically says, who has said to God, I have born, I will not offend. The word for born here is nasa, which has the idea of carrying, or lifting something.

And the second word here is kabal, C-H-A-B-A-L, it's very near to hevel, but this is a hard C-H, and it has the idea of impounding something or getting a pledge for a thing, taking a security for a thing. I have lifted up, I will not, or I have born, I will not hold. Now, this is difficult.

It goes on to say, teach me what I do not see, if I have done iniquity, I will not do it again. So, if you look at the quotes here, it says, as anyone said to God, I have born, I have carried, I have lifted this, in other words, I have been burdened, I will not lay hold, I will not act in a corrupt

manner. The idea is here to take something that you really shouldn't take.

Take a pledge that you shouldn't take, lay hold of something that you shouldn't. I have suffered, I am not going to inflict a wrong on someone else, is the way they interpret it here. Teach me what I do not see, if I have done iniquity, I will not do it again.

Here's my understanding of this section. Who is it that will say to God, in a situation like he has just described, there's been an injustice, and there was no judge to set it right, and it's because God hid his face, God withdrew and allowed it to take place. Who is the man who will say, okay, I have borne this injustice, this burden has come upon me, I will not cling to my old understanding, I'm not going to be stubborn, I'm not going to be intransigent, would be a good understanding here.

In other words, I want to learn from this. Elihu is asking the question, who is the man that will get in this situation, and not rail about God's justice, but say, what can I learn from this? I'm not going to keep a hold of a thing, in a wrong manner. I'm not going to lash myself to the mast of my presuppositions and my understanding.

I'm going to let go. I want to learn. Teach me what I don't know.

Show me what I can't see. That's the proper response. Now think about it.

Think about the Lord Jesus. Elihu is foreshadowing in many ways, to my way of thinking, things about the Lord Jesus Christ. He is going to be bruised for our iniquities.

He is going to be wounded for our transgressions. God is going to turn his back and hide his face. Jesus is going to cry out on the cross, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Think about these arguments that Elihu makes, almost in a foreshadowing of Jesus himself.

You can imagine the Lord Jesus saying, I'm not going to be here on the cross, and start getting wrapped up in, where is the justice in this? And why am I bearing all of these sins? And why is God turning his back on me? I'm doing this great work in love, and fulfilling the Father's plan. Why is he forsaking me? I'm not going to make the mistake Job made. I'm not going to fall into the trap of questioning God's justice.

I have confidence that God's justice is intact. That he knows what he's doing. And I'm not going to question that.

Which is why Jesus said, not my will but thine be done. And so Elihu says, I don't think he's asking, has anyone ever said this to God? He's saying, who is the man who will say this? Where is the man who will see in confidence, who will say in faith, I'm bearing this injustice, and I want to learn from it. Show me what I can't see.

If I've done iniquity, I won't do it again. Shall he recompense on your terms because you have

rejected? For you must choose and not I, therefore declare what you know. Does this sound like gobbledygook to you like it does to me? Trying to sort this out in English is just nearly impossible.

But the central idea is fairly clear in verse 31 and 32. This injustice where God seems far away, and there's no judge to set it right. This has been Job's theme.

Where is the man who will say, I will not hold my old way of thinking. If there's something I can learn here, show it to me. So now we get to verse 33.

Well, actually the end of verse 32 where it says, if I have done iniquity, I will not do it again. Where it says, I will not do it again, this is from Yassaf. And it's in the Hyphial, which is the causative stem.

Hyphial is you cause to do a thing. And when he says, I will not do it again, Yassaf means to continue, to keep on. If I'm in the wrong, I will not continue, is what he's saying.

Not I will not do it again. There's no verb here for doing. This is continuing.

And it goes back to the first thought. Teach me what I do not see. I'm going to bear this unjust burden because I want to learn.

Show me what I can't see. And when I see this thing that I need to learn and get past or get over, I won't continue in it. I'll respond.

When I learn the thing that you're trying to show me, I'll respond and I won't continue doing whatever it is that made this needful for me. That's what he's saying. So then in verse 33 it goes on, and in your English here it says, shall he recompense on your terms because you have rejected it? Another translation of this says, is it your opinion that God should recompense it because you reject this? Which I think is closer.

Are you thinking that God should look at this in simple terms of justice and just make it right? Here God is purposely creating this burden of injustice so that you can see something you can't see any other way. And where is the man who will say, okay, I want to learn what I'm supposed to get out of this. Show it to me and then I won't continue in my old way.

I won't cling and hang on to, like a pledge, my old way of thinking. I'm going to grow. I'm going to come to a divine viewpoint through this experience.

That's what I want. Where is that man? Or, in verse 33, are you going to be the man that says, I just wanted to do justice. I just want this unjust situation fixed.

Are you going to look for the justice or are you going to look for the lesson? Are you going to look for the understanding that God is trying to give? That's the gist of what's being said here. Where is the man who will say, teach me what I don't know instead of give me the justice I don't see

myself getting. Does that make sense? If you get that central idea out of this, the rest of it, even in English, will kind of fall into place.

That's Elihu's point. It's a deep and beautiful point. It cuts at the very heart of this entire book.

It's right in the middle. It's in one of his central speeches. And this is the point.

Job is suffering unjustly. God has something He wants to show him and teach him. And he says, Job, where you're wrong is in contending with God over justice instead of looking for this divine truth that God is trying to reveal.

You're clinging to this idea that you should have justice instead of looking for that hidden manna, looking for this revelation that God is trying to give you. That's the big idea as I see it in this chapter. Men of understanding will say to me, verse 34, and a wise man who hears me, Job's problem is he's speaking without knowledge.

And his words are without wisdom. And it is all about justice. He should be tried to the limit because he answers like wicked men.

And he adds rebellion to his sin. He clasps his hands among us and multiplies his words against God. Even men of understanding, even wise men, are going to have trouble with this point.

They're going to say, no, Job is worthy. Job is deserving of this bad experience because he's rebellious. And he's shooing us out.

He's saying, listen, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, don't let your pride get in the way of understanding this point as well. You're focusing on Job. You're saying Job needs his comeuppance.

Job is clapping his hands, like you do to the dog, to shoo us out of the room, saying that we're wrong. He's rebelling against God and he needs justice. This is basically an appeal to these men to get past their pride and pay attention to this divine lesson, which Job is getting at first hand by experience, which they can get by observation.

And that's the application point for us. We're not Job. Hopefully we'll never be Job.

Hopefully God doesn't have to inflict a grievous injustice on us to teach us these things. They're revealed in God's words. We can learn them vicariously.

We can learn them by study and by observation. And so Elihu, as he speaks to these men, is like the Lord Jesus speaking to us. Today, if you will hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.

He that has an ear to hear, let him hear. There is a great lesson here regarding faith in God, no matter what happens. Not getting hung up on justice.

Where's the justice in this life? Where's the return? Why do I go to church? Well, I want that

return. I want to get a benefit. If I'm going to tithe, I'm expecting a benefit.

If I'm going to give an offering, I'm expecting a benefit. If I'm going to invest in the well-being of others, I'm expecting those others to invest in my well-being. Or I'm expecting a cleansing and a catharsis.

Or I'm expecting entertainment. Or I'm expecting excitement. Or I have an expectation.

And Scripture speaks so much more. There's not always going to be justice in this life. John the Baptist did not get justice.

A lot of people in this life do not get justice. Christians who have been massacred around the world, even in our generation, did not get justice. And if you get hung up on justice, you're going to miss the great lessons that God can teach us in the midst of injustice.

Life is not going to be fair. And if we get hung up about the unfairness, we'll miss these wonderful truths that God is trying to reveal. Now, what are those truths? You say, okay, I'm with you so far.

The injustice has come. And Job is right on the brink. What is it that God is going to show him? What is this great truth that we should see, like Eliphaz and Bildad and Zophar at Elihu's behest? What is this marvelous thing? Well, it's coming up.

That's what's going to be in the rest of this monologue section of the book. Beginning with Elihu and ending with the Lord God, we're going to get that answer. But it's important for us to understand the question and the issue so that we can recognize what the rest of the book is dealing with.

And that's the issue. So, I apologize if I've gone through a lot of explanation and not a whole lot of translation tonight. But these are the big ideas.

This is the movement and the flow of thought in this critical section of the book. And understanding this will unlock the rest of the book like a big, giant golden key. So, with that in mind, we'll close for this evening.

And we'll pick up on the threshold of chapter 35 next week. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the heavenly truths that are contained therein and the opportunity that we have to lay hold of them, to be transformed by them, and to reflect your glory and the glory of the Lord Jesus as we learn them and apply them.

We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will impress them on our hearts. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.