



Job – Part #4

Continuing with this five-part outline, this week we will tackle Elihu's speeches, and next week we will finish the book of Job by combining the last two sections:

- Job's Testing (an unexplained tragedy) 1:1 – 2:13
- The Dialogues (the search for answers) 3:1 – 31:40
- **Elihu's Speeches (an attempt at theodicy) 32:1 – 37:24**
- God's Response to Job (and Job's repentance) 38:1 – 42:6
- God's Restoration of Job (and of Job's friends) 42:7 – 17

Elihu is a new character who has not been mentioned before. He is younger than the other men, and so he had to wait until they finished for a chance to speak. He is angry at Job's claim of innocence and angry at the other men's inability to verbally refute Job (32:1-5). He exhorts his seniors and Job to heed his words, even though he is their junior.

Elihu insists on the integrity of his words and embarks on five long speeches aimed at correcting the basic flaw in Job's relationship to God which came to light in the discussion with the three older friends. Elihu wants to speak on God's behalf to ascribe God's righteousness (36:2), essentially playing the role of God's defense attorney. He teaches that God is gracious to those who serve Him and drives home the truth that righteousness is the foundation of God's rule. He also plants the idea in Job's mind that he will have to drop this claim of innocent before finding reconciliation with God and recounts the theme of disciplinary suffering.

While Elihu wrestles and reasons theologically with the problem of *theodicy* (the question of God's justice in the light of suffering) while proclaiming God's greatness and sovereignty, he goes too far by claiming to speak with "perfect knowledge" (36:4). Neither Job nor Job's friends respond to Elihu, he is essentially waved away without rebuttal.

Elihu's heart may have been in the right place but he was also zealous and impetuous, perhaps still due to his age. *How has our message been impacted by misdirected theology?*