

Job Chapter 36

36:1 – 37:24: Elihu had agreed with his 3 co-counselors that Job had sinned, if nowhere else, in the way he questioned God (33:12), by seeing his suffering as indicating God is unjust (34:34-37), and by feeling that righteousness had no reward (chapter 35). In this final answer to Job, he turned to focus mostly on God rather than the sufferer (verse 2).

Verses 1-25: Elihu continues by expounding the grace of God to men: He opposes wicked men (verses 5-6); exalts righteous men (verse 7); tries to bring sinners to repentance (verses 8-12), and delivers those who suffer unjustly (verse 15). Before such a God, Job must repent of his sins and praise the omnipotent God (verses 17-25).

Job 36:1 "Elihu also proceeded, and said,"

It is not easy to acquit Elihu of some of the “arrogance” he was so ready to ascribe to Job. He professes very great zeal for God, but it is hard to see that some of his great professions are warranted. For instance, he says in verse 2:

Verses 2-4: The phrase “knowledge from afar” conveys Elihu’s mistaken assertion that his words were directly from God.

Job 36:2 "Suffer me a little, and I will show thee that [I have] yet to speak on God's behalf."

Give me thy patient attention but a little longer.

"I will show thee that I have yet to speak on God’s behalf": That I have not yet said all that can be said to justify God’s dispensations toward thee.

Elihu acted as if he was fighting in behalf of God against Job. Job was not opposed to God, and never had been. Elihu was not through saying things that he thought might benefit in answering what he called Job's charges against God. Job really had placed no charges against God. Job just wanted to know what he had done to cause all of the calamity that had come upon him.

Job 36:3 "I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker."

From remote times, and places, and things. I will not confine my discourse to any particular case, but will justify God by declaring his great and glorious works of creation and providence, both in the heaven and the earth, and the manner of his dealings with men in other parts and ages of the world. These are the chief heads of the following discourse, and therefore the best comment upon this general expression.

"And will ascribe righteousness to my Maker": I will prove and maintain this truth, that God is righteous in all his ways.

Everyone who is a true believer (including Job), know that righteousness belongs to God. He was trying to prove to Job that God was righteous and Job already knew that He was righteous. Job also knew that we could put on the righteousness of God through belief in the Lord.

Job 36:4 "For truly my words [shall] not [be] false: he that is perfect in knowledge [is] with thee."

"He that is perfect in knowledge": Elihu made what appeared to be an outrageous claim in order to give credibility to his remarks.

This was an extremely egotistical statement. Perhaps he said this to impress on Job that he was telling the truth.

Verses 5-12: Elihu began by repeating the thought that though God sends trouble, He is just and merciful (verse 6); He watches over the righteous (verse 7); He convicts them of sin (verses 8-9); He teaches them to turn from it (verse 10), and rewards their obedience (verse 11), or punishes their rebellion (verses 12-14).

Job 36:5 "Behold, God [is] mighty, and despiseth not [any: he is] mighty in strength [and] wisdom."

His greatness doth not cause him (as the greatness of men causes them), to despise or oppress such as are mean.

"He is mighty in strength and wisdom": His strength is guided by wisdom, and therefore cannot be employed to do anything unbecoming him, or unjust toward his creatures, either of which would be an instance of folly.

Job fully agreed that God was mighty. He also agreed that God was just in his dealings with man. Job also knew that God had great love for all men. He is not a respecter of persons, and does not esteem one over another. God's strength is greater than any other, and He is the source of all wisdom. All of these things were stated by Elihu to prove that God was just. Job had not questioned whether God was just or not.

Job 36:6 "He preserveth not the life of the wicked: but giveth right to the poor."

There is no special providence over the life of the wicked, as Job had supposed, or pretended to suppose (Job 21:7; compare Job 12:6). On the contrary, God "overturneth" wicked men "in the night, so that they are destroyed; he striketh them as wicked men in the open sight of others" (Job 34:25-26).

"But giveth right to the poor": The poor and afflicted, the meek and humble, God vindicates. They are his special charge. So far is he from favoring the ungodly.

Elihu had said that he would say new things that would convince Job. All of these statements, Job himself had already given.

Job 36:7 "He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous: but with kings [are they] on the throne; yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted."

Under no circumstances does God cease to keep an eye upon the righteous, as Job had seemed to imply when he exclaimed, "Oh that I were as in months of old, in the days when God preserved me!" or "watched me!" (Job 29:2). "The eyes of the Lord are" always "upon the righteous, as his ears are open unto their cry" (Psalm 34:15).

"But with kings are they on the throne": In some cases, God shows his care of the righteous by "setting them with princes, even with the princes of his people" (Psalm 113:8), raising them, that is, to high station, and making them companions of the great of the earth.

"Yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted": They are permanently established in their high positions, like Joseph and Mordecai and Daniel; and they are exalted to the highest pitch of prosperity.

God exalts and God brings down. There is no argument with that. Job had mentioned earlier that he had been under the watchful eye of the LORD, before all of these calamities came. Job was not judging God. He just wanted to understand what was happening.

Job 36:8 "And if [they be] bound in fetters, [and] be holden in cords of affliction;"

On the other hand, there are doubtless cases where the righteous suffer adversity. And are even "bound in fetters," and "holden in cords of affliction" (Gen. 39:20; Jer. 40:1; Dan. 3:21; Matt. 14:3; Acts 12:6; 16:24; 24:27). But even here God's vigilance is not relaxed. On the contrary, he watches with the utmost care over their afflictions, apportioning them according to the needs of each, and making every possible effort, by means of them, to work their reformation.

Job 36:9 "Then he showeth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded."

God, by his chastisements, makes men see what has been faulty in their life's work. In what respects they have been negligent, where they have lapsed into actual sin. Signal afflictions are a call to men to "consider their ways," and search out the nature of their offences. Some afflictions, as sickness and imprisonment, by depriving men of active employment, almost force them to engage in such a retrospect.

"And their transgressions that they have exceeded": Rather, and their transgressions wherein they have behaved themselves proudly (compare the Revised Version). In all sin, as it is a contempt

of God's Law, there is an element of pride. The temptation to pride especially besets those whose conduct is, in outward appearance, correct and virtuous.

Elihu along with Job's friends, were relating difficulties in this life with being out of fellowship with God. This is absolutely not true. All of the apostles who followed Jesus, except for one, were believed to have died a martyr's death. That in itself discredits the theory that Elihu had here. These apostles suffered for doing good, not for doing wrong. Stephen was stoned to death for preaching the gospel. Those who are looking for just good times when they come to the Lord, have come to Him for the wrong reason.

2 Timothy 2:12 "If we suffer, we shall also reign with [him]: if we deny [him], he also will deny us:"

We must be extremely careful ourselves about coming to Christ, because we think it will eliminate our problems.

Job 36:10 "He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity."

I.e. He enableth and inclineth them to hearken to what God speaks by the rod, who would not hear in the time of their prosperity.

"To discipline": Or, to instruction, i.e. to receive instruction. Or, to chastening, i.e. to hear the rod, and who hath appointed it, as is said (Micah 6:9).

"Commandeth": Either by his word or Spirit accompanying the affliction, and discovering the mind and will of God in this dispensation.

"That they return from iniquity": Which is the chief cause of their calamity.

Job 36:11 "If they obey and serve [him], they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures."

God's admonition and command.

"They shall spend their days in prosperity": They shall be restored to their former prosperity, and shall live and die in it. This he says according to the tenor of God's promises, especially in the Old Testament state of the church, and according to the common course of God's providence in those days, which Elihu and other good men had observed.

"And their years in pleasures": Abounding in worldly comforts, and delighting themselves in the love and favor of God thereby manifested to them.

We must be careful to remember that these statements were made by Elihu. This did not happen for any of the prophets of old, and certainly is not the criteria for a perfect life on earth now. In the old covenant, there were blessings that went with obedience to God and curses for

disobedience, but that did not mean that was a blanket policy. God judges the heart more than he judges the actions of people. Many people who are wonderful, God fearing people are poor.

Job 36:12 "But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge."

Elihu argued that some people, like Job, do not learn from God's rebuke and instruction; they do not turn to Him, and as a result, they eventually "perish".

To disobey God is to say that He is not Lord. Your Lord tells you everything to do. The only thing that God will not forgive is a person dying not believing in Him.

Job 36:13 "But the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath: they cry not when he bindeth them."

The words rather mean the godless or profane in heart.

"They cry not": That is, cry not for help.

"When he bindeth them": That is, (as in Job 36:8), he has been speaking especially of one kind of affliction, like that, namely, of Joseph.

There was much truth mingled in with the false accusations of Elihu here. Notice in this, he mentioned the hypocrisy was in the heart. This statement is true. Hypocrisy is showing the world one thing and having an entirely different feeling in your heart. Hypocrites store up the wrath of God for themselves.

Job 36:14 "They die in youth, and their life [is] among the unclean."

Literally, their soul dies in youth. The result is that, while they are still young, the vital strength of their soul is sapped. They "come to a premature end, like youths who have destroyed the spring of life by licentiousness".

"And their life is among the unclean": On the particular "uncleanness" intended, (see Deut. 23:17.)

This was Elihu's opinion. Many hypocrites live to be very old.

Job 36:15 He delivereth the poor in his affliction, and openeth their ears in oppression."

"Openeth their ears in oppression": This was a new insight and perhaps the most helpful thing Elihu said. He went beyond all that had been said about God's using suffering to chasten and bring repentance. He was saying that God used suffering to open men's ears, to draw them to Himself. But as long as Job kept complaining, he was turning to iniquity rather than drawing near to God in his suffering (verses 16-21).

We discussed earlier, that Job was the champion of the poor. Elihu said that suffering for one's sins leads to God.

Job 36:16 "Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait [into] a broad place, where [there is] no straitness; and that which should be set on thy table [should be] full of fatness."

It is possible to understand this verse somewhat otherwise, and the sense may perhaps be improved. Elihu may be speaking, not of what God would have done, but of what He has done. "Yea, also He hath removed thee from the mouth of an adversary, even ease and abundance in the place of which there was no straitness, and that which came down upon thy table full of fatness. But thou art full of the judgment of the wicked, therefore justice and judgment take hold on thee." "God, in His mercy, saw that thou wast in danger, and He removed the cause of temptation, and thy chastisement would have been of short duration hadst thou been submissive and resigned. But thou hast been bold and daring, like the wicked, and hast reaped the judgment of the wicked."

It appears that Elihu was trying to say that Job would have been delivered from this terrible calamity he had been in, if he had accepted that calamity in the right spirit, and repented of his sins.

Job 36:17 "But thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked: judgment and justice take hold [on thee]."

I.e. but, as thou hast not so acted, the result has been different. Thy hardness and impenitence have brought upon thee the judgments reserved by God for the wicked.

"Judgment and justice take hold on thee": Thou art suffering the just penalty of thy obstinacy.

It seems that every few verses Elihu went back to telling Job he deserved all of the punishment that had come upon him. He was saying here, that God had judged Job, and now all of this calamity was the just punishment from God.

Job 36:18 "Because [there is] wrath, [beware] lest he take thee away with [his] stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee."

To wit, conceived by God against thee. Because by thy pleading the cause of the wicked, thou hast deserved that God should give sentence against thee, as was now said, and hast provoked God's wrath against thee. Therefore, look to thyself, and reconcile thyself to God by true repentance whilst thou may, and before sentence be executed upon thee.

"Beware": This is not in the Hebrew, but is necessarily to be understood to make up the sense, and is oft understood in the like cases (as Gen. 3:22; 11:4; 42:4; Isa. 36:8; see the like also Matt. 25:9; Acts 5:39).

"With his stroke": Properly, with the stroke of his hand or foot. It is an allusion to men, who oft express their anger by clapping their hands, or stamping with their feet.

"Then a great ransom cannot deliver thee": For if once God's wrath take hold of thee, and sentence be executed upon thee before thou dost repent and humble thyself to thy judge. Neither riches, nor friends, no, nor any person or thing in heaven and earth, can redeem thee; no ransom or price will be accepted for thee.

In this particular verse, he was saying that Job had gone too far. Elihu thought that God should have just killed Job. Elihu told Job there was danger of getting to the point where nothing could ransom him.

Job 36:19 "Will he esteem thy riches? [no], not gold, nor all the forces of strength."

Rather: Will thy riches suffice? (Revised Version). Or will they stand the shock of battle? Will they be a sufficient strength to thee in the time of trouble? "No, not gold". This rendering is now generally given up, and the words, *lo betsar* are taken in connection with the preceding sentence, thus: will thy riches suffice that thou be not in distress? Or, in other words: Will they keep thee out of trouble? If not, will all the forces of thy strength suffice to do so? Assuredly, nothing will avail against the "stroke" of God (verse 18).

Gold and other riches will not be of help to Job or anyone else, if the wrath of God came. Job's riches could not take away the terrible disease in his body. The wealth could not bring his children back to life.

Job 36:20 "Desire not the night, when people are cut off in their place."

The night of death, which Job had often desired, for then thou art irrecoverably gone. Take heed of thy foolish and often-repeated desire of death, lest God inflict it upon thee in anger.

"When people are cut off in their place": By which individuals, and even whole nations and bodies of people, are sometimes cut off in wrath, in their several places where they are. Or, are suddenly taken away before they can remove out of the place where the stroke of God finds them. Or, in the place where they are settled and surrounded with all manner of comforts and friends, all which cannot prevent their being cut off.

Job wanted God to take his life and end his suffering. Job had no desire to kill himself. He wanted God to end his life. Job knew that life and death should be in the hands of God, not in the hands of man. Elihu told Job not to even desire to die.

Job 36:21 "Take heed, regard not iniquity: for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction."

Hebrew, *al teepen*, look not to it. Namely, with an approving or desiring eye, as this expression is used (Prov. 23:31).

"This hast thou chosen rather than affliction": Thou hast chosen rather to quarrel with God, and censure his judgments, than humbly and quietly submit to them, and wait upon God by faith and prayer for deliverance in his due time and appointed way.

Elihu thought that Job should not complain, or even desire to die. He thought Job should just patiently accept his affliction as just punishment from God.

Verses 36:22 – 37:24: Instead of complaining and questioning God, as Job had been doing, which was sin (as Job will later confess in 42:6), he needed to see God in his suffering and worship Him. 33:24).

Job 36:22 "Behold, God exalteth by his power: who teacheth like him?"

The rest of Elihu's speech is splendidly eloquent. He dilates on the power and majesty of God, and appears to be speaking in contemplation of some magnificent natural phenomenon, as the tempest, or hurricane, or whirlwind; out of which the Lord ultimately spake (Job 38:1). It is probable that this storm was beginning to gather, and that it suggested the glorious imagery of Elihu's speech. The points are that;

- (1) God is the source of greatness;
- (2) That there is no teacher like Him (Job 36:22);
- (3) That He is absolute as well as almighty (Job 36:23); and
- (4) That He is unsearchable and eternal (Job 36:26).

Elihu thought God was teaching Job a lesson in these calamities. He thought if Job would accept his punishment, God would eventually restore him. He also thought that it was by His power that God ruled.

Job 36:23 "Who hath enjoined him his way? or who can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity?"

Who hath prescribed to him what he ought to do? Who is superior to him, and has marked out for him the plan which he ought to pursue? The idea is, that God is supreme and independent; no one has advised him, and no one has a right to counsel him. Perhaps also, Elihu designs this as a reproof to Job for having complained so much of the government of God, and for being disposed, as he thought, to "prescribe" to God what he should do.

"Or, who can say, thou hast wrought iniquity?" This may be said of every man, but it cannot be said of God by any without sin. For, as there is no iniquity in his nature, there can be none in his works. Not any in his works of providence, no, not in the afflictions of his people. Just and true are all his ways.

Of course, no one can say this to God. The thing was, Job had never said this to God. He was being accused of things he had never done. Elihu accused Job of trying to teach God a better way.

Job 36:24 "Remember that thou magnify his work, which men behold."

Every work which he doth; do not condemn any of his providential works, but adore them as done with admirable wisdom and justice.

“Behold”: With admiration and astonishment. Every man may see it, namely, his work last mentioned. The power, and wisdom, and greatness of God are so manifest in all his works that all who are not stupid must see and acknowledge them.

Job 36:25 "Every man may see it; man may behold [it] afar off."

Elihu was instructing Job to magnify God even in his sufferings. He was reminding Job that many were looking on to see how he handled this problem. Elihu had no idea the extent of what he had said. It was true, Satan and all the angels in heaven were looking on. Of course, the people around Job on the earth were looking too. It is strange, but even our generation look to Job in awe at his endurance. Many times, we compare our troubles with his. We always think, my troubles are less than his were, perhaps we too can stand without falling. He is an encouragement to us all.

Verses 36:26 – 37:24: In a beautiful passage on the power and greatness of God, Elihu lists the marvels of nature as tokens of God’s might: raindrops (36:27-28), thunderstorms (36:29 – 37:5), snow (37:6-9), ice (37:10), and clouds (37:11-13). In light of these examples of God’s greatness, Job is admonished to listen (verse 14). Man is too limited in knowledge (verses 15-20), to speak to, approach, or understand such a God (verses 21-23). Therefore, man must fear God.

Job 36:26 "Behold, God [is] great, and we know [him] not, neither can the number of his years be searched out."

“We know him not”: Though one may have a personal knowledge of God in salvation, the fullness of His glory is beyond human comprehension.

This was an understatement by Elihu. God's greatness endures forever. His years cannot be numbered, because He is eternal. He is Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. There is no way that mere man can comprehend the greatness of God. He is omnipresent. He is omniscient. He is omnipotent.

Ephesians 4:6 "One God and Father of all, who [is] above all, and through all, and in you all."

The best view we have of God is in Jesus:

Ephesians 1:20-22 "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set [him] at his own right hand in the heavenly [places]," "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which

is to come:" "And hath put all [things] under his feet, and gave him [to be] the head over all [things] to the church,"

Verses 27-33 Elihu's description of the "vapor" is simply a declaration of who controls the weather, a typical question in the ancient Near East.

From 36:27 – 37:4 Elihu gave a picture of God's power in the rain storm.

Job 36:27 "For he maketh small the drops of water: they pour down rain according to the vapor thereof:"

Rather, he draws up the drops of water. I.e. by the heat of his sun he causes exhalations to arise from the sea and the moist earth, and draws them up into the higher regions of the atmosphere, where they are condensed into clouds, that hang suspended in the air.

"They pour down rain according to the vapor thereof": Literally, they flow down as rain for his mist. The water collected in the clouds flows down in the shape of rain for the purpose of watering the earth (see Gen. 2:6, where the same word occurs).

God has complete control of all nature. He causes the sun to draw the water from the earth. It is held in the clouds, until He causes it to rain. He is all power.

Job 36:28 "Which the clouds do drop [and] distil upon man abundantly."

All is done for man, for his benefit and advantage.

It is God's decision how much rain will fall, and where it is to fall. One of the promises God made to those who obeyed Him, was that it would rain when they needed it for their crops to grow. Rain at the right time and in the right amount is a blessing from God.

Job 36:29 "Also can [any] understand the spreadings of the clouds, [or] the noise of his tabernacle?"

The rapid generation of clouds, their gathering together, seemingly from all quarters, and the way they almost suddenly overspread the heavens (1 Kings 18:45). Are among the most remarkable phenomena of nature, and are very difficult to "understand" and account for.

"Or the noise of his tabernacle": The awful crash of the thunder, which echoes along the sky. God's "tabernacle," or pavilion (Psalm 18:11), is, if not as inexplicable, even more fearful and astounding. Man shrinks and quails before the terrible sound, and feels himself in the presence of a mighty and inscrutable power.

The answer to this is no. The only time we will understand, is after we have left this body of flesh and are with Him in heaven. The noise of the tabernacle here, could be speaking of thunder in the heavens.

Job 36:30 "Behold, he spreadeth his light upon it, and covereth the bottom of the sea."

I.e. the lightning; of which the whole context speaks, which is fitly called God's light, as it is called God's lightning (Psalm 144:6). Because God only can light it.

"Upon it": Upon the cloud, which is in a manner the candlestick in which God sets up this light.

"Covereth the bottom of the sea": The lightning spreads far and wide over all the parts of the sea, and pierces deep, reaching even to the bottom of it, and spreading itself upon it, and so covering it like a gay and glorious garment, suddenly cast over and covering the body of a man or woman. Or as God is said to cover himself with light as with a garment (Psalm 104:2).

The source of all Light is God. Jesus said He is the Light of the world. In Him is no darkness at all. He is that Light in Genesis that gave everything the power to be.

Job 36:31 "For by them judgeth he the people; he giveth meat in abundance."

"Judgeth ... giveth meat": The rain storm can be a disaster of punishment from God or a source of abundant crops.

By his clouds God works two opposite effects. On the one hand, he executes judgment upon the peoples, destroying their crops, causing widespread ruin by inundations, smiting and slaying numbers with his thunderbolts. On the other:

"He giveth meat in abundance": Restoring to the parched earth its fertility by means of copious and refreshing showers, stimulating vegetation, and so furthering the harvest.

Job would not argue about these last few verses. Job had made all of these statements earlier himself. All good gifts come from God.

Job 36:32 "With clouds he covereth the light; and commandeth it [not to shine] by [the cloud] that cometh betwixt."

With thick and black clouds spread over the whole heavens, as it is in times of great thunders and lightning. Hebrew: With hands; either the clouds are so called for their resemblance to hands (1 Kings 18:4), as being hollow and spread abroad. Or the meaning is that God covers the light as it were by the hollow of his hand, as a man sometimes covers the light of a candle.

"The light": Either the lightning, or rather the sun, which is fitly called light (Job 31:26; Psalm 136:7), as being the fountain of light.

"Commandeth it not to shine": Or, gives a charge concerning it, to wit, that it shall be covered. Or, forbids it, as this Hebrew word, joined with this proposition, usually signifies (as Gen. 2:17; 28:6; 1 Kings 2:43; 11:11), and elsewhere. I.e. hindered it, as it were by an express command or prohibition, from its usual and proper work, to wit, from shining.

"That cometh betwixt": Which God interposes as a veil between the sun and earth; by which he does, as it were, deliver his command or prohibition to the sun that it should not shine.

It is not Satan who controls the weather, it is God. He causes the Light to shine. He causes the clouds to come between the Light and the earth. God is in control of everything and everyone, including Satan.

Job 36:33 "The noise thereof showeth concerning it, the cattle also concerning the vapor."

Or, concerning him. The loud crash proclaims the fierceness of God's anger.

"The cattle also concerning the vapor": Rather, it shows the cattle also concerning him that goes up. I.e. the very cattle also feel that God is in the storm, rides upon it, and "goeth up" (compare Psalm 47:5).

Even the lowly cattle know that God controls the elements of nature.

Job Chapter 36 Questions

1. What had Elihu charged Job with, that he had not done?
2. What do all true believers know about God?
3. What egotistical statement did Elihu make in verse 4?
4. What statements of Elihu did Job agree with (verse 5)?
5. He preserveth not the life of the _____.
6. Job was not judging God. He just wanted to _____ what was happening.
7. Elihu and Job's friends were relating difficulties in this life with what?
8. Why does the author say that is absolutely untrue?
9. The author warns that we must remember these statements were made by _____.
10. Many people who are God-fearing people are _____.
11. To disobey God is to say what?

12. What is the only thing God will not forgive?
13. In verse 13, Elihu said hypocrisy was in the _____.
14. What was Elihu trying to say in verse 16?
15. Elihu believed the calamities that Job had were _____ punishment from God.
16. What did Elihu believe Job was depending on to save him?
17. Job wanted God to take his life and end _____.
18. Job had no desire to _____ himself.
19. What did Elihu think Job should patiently do?
20. Elihu thought God to be _____ Job a lesson in these calamities.
21. Elihu accused Job of trying to teach God a _____.
22. Who truly was, and is, looking on to see how Job handled these calamities that came to him?
23. Why can God's years not be numbered?
24. Who controls the rain?
25. What is the answer to verse 29?
26. The source of all Light is _____.
27. _____ gave everything the power to be.