

April 2

Scriptures: Read Job 33 & 34

Key Verse: “He will redeem his soul from going down to the Pit, and his life shall see the light.” (Job 33:28)

Overview

The young man, Elihu, continued his discourse by directing his attention to Job. He respectfully, yet confidently, challenged Job’s position, but he also assured Job he had nothing to fear; Elihu would be as Job’s “spokesman before God” (33:6), and he sought to justify Job by revealing the truth (33:32).

Job’s words concerning his innocence and purity were accurately quoted by Elihu (33:9), but it must be remembered that these words of Job were spoken in defence of the charges laid against him by his three friends and not in denial of a sin nature (cf. 7:21; 13:26). There is, however, a hint of self-righteousness in Job (especially in chapter 31), but Elihu soon proved that Job’s complaining attitude toward God and His justice (or, as Job believed, the lack of it) was unrighteous (33:12) and even rebellious (34:37). Job’s attitude showed that he lacked wisdom and knowledge (34:35). Elihu argued that it was impossible for God to be unjust and that since He is God and greater than man, man cannot hope to understand all His ways and purposes.

God has only the good of His creation in mind, and contrary to Job’s expressed feeling that God is disinterested in mankind, Elihu expressed the truth that “His eyes are on the ways of man, and He sees all his steps” (34:21). God’s purpose is to redeem and save mankind from falling into “the Pit”, and Elihu gives three means whereby God seeks to save souls and reveal Himself: (1) through dreams and visions (33:15); (2) through chastening with pain and suffering (33:19); and (3) by a righteous messenger or mediator sent by a gracious God to redeem man (33:23-24). This third point was no doubt inspired by God in prophetic anticipation of the Lord Jesus who was that Messenger sent by God, and who Himself became our advocate and was made a ransom (or atonement) for us (1 John 2:1; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; Heb. 7:25).

Job must have been relieved and thrilled to view his suffering in this new light. His suffering was a chastisement, not meted out in proportion to sin, as Eliphaz reasoned (5:17), but a gracious act of God to warn and teach him, so that he might not eventually fall into sin (pride/self-righteousness) and perish in the Pit (33:17-18). Elihu painted a beautiful picture of the joyous restoration God offers (33:25-26), and this surely would have given hope to Job. Elihu pointed out that this restoration must be accompanied by prayer, confession, and repentance, and it involved a restoration of God’s righteousness upon man (33:26-27). Truly, without the righteousness of Christ in us, we are as filthy rags before God (Isaiah 64:6, IJohn 1:9).

Finally, when Job was given the opportunity to answer Elihu, he had nothing to say. He held his peace and accepted the instruction and wisdom of Elihu (33:31-33). This new insight must have filled Job with shame as he recalled the accusations he made against his gracious and loving God. Elihu continued by quoting Job’s complaints against God which actually accused God of being unjust in punishing him, since he was “without transgression” (34:5-6). Elihu went on to argue

that God was indeed just and righteous. The Almighty Creator and Ruler of the orderly universe could never pervert justice, for that would mean anarchy, but God is a God of order. He is also a good God, and an impartial, sovereign, and all-knowing Judge over mankind, His creation. In Him all living things find their being (Acts 17:28). If He so desired, He could lift His Spirit from the earth, and all life would perish and return to dust (34:14-15). But God seeks to give man new and more abundant life; that is why He sent His Son Jesus into the world (John 10:10).

Although it is understandable, Job was foolish to question God's benevolent providence, and he was rebellious to question His justice. Job would clap his hands with impatience and indignation against God and speak against Him; this only added to his guilt (34:37). Once again, Elihu gave Job the opportunity to defend his rebelliousness, but Elihu's words of wisdom had again silenced him. This must have been a humbling experience for Job, and he did well to heed the words of young Elihu, who might well have been one of those young men who were once awestruck by Job's presence and no doubt desired to emulate him (29:8). Truly Job once had been an admirable figure and a worthy example, and after his experience of suffering, he would be an even greater example.

Prayer

Father, we come to You today with grateful hearts. Fill us with all spiritual wisdom and understanding, that we might see the good intentions of Your heart even in the midst of adverse circumstances.