

JOB 33

ELIHU ACTS AS A MEDIATOR

Pompous prefaces often introduce poor performances, but Elihu's discourse did not disappoint the expectations which his preface had raised. It is substantial, lively, and very much to the purpose. In the foregoing chapter, he had spoken his mind to Job's three friends; and now he directed his words to Job himself. As Job had desired, in the heat of the dispute with his friends, to have some mediator to judge for him; Elihu humbly proposed himself under this character. Job had asked for a mediator; and in Elihu, he had such a one as could call forth no fear – for Elihu was a human being, just like himself. But ought we not lose sight of Job and all his personal afflictions, so that we may better and more fully discover the outlines of our precious Jesus, Whose gracious office is here so beautifully foreshadowed? Can we behold Elihu coming forth to arbitrate the cause of Job and his friends; and shall we forget Him Who came forth to make up the deadly breach of sin, when our whole nature had sunken down to infinitely greater misery than Job had – even with all his sores, and all his sorrows of both mind and body? Can we read what Elihu said of the Spirit of God and the breath of the Almighty, and not call to mind how Jesus was anointed to preach the Gospel to the poor, and how the Holy Spirit was poured out upon Him without measure? At the call of His Father, He came forth and stood up as our glorious Mediator – as both God and Man – so that in Him, we might return again to the Lord, from Whom we had parted by our sin and rebellion. We never would have seen our God's face, and we never could have approached Him, if Jesus had not opened a way for us by His blood! He was the only One Who could mediate between an offended God and wretched sinners, and He has made our peace in the blood of His cross!

God speaks to us by conscience, by Providence, and by ministers; and of all these, Elihu spoke. When the Lord intends good to be done to a person's soul, He opens the heart by the convictions and dictates of their own consciences (as He did with Lydia, in Acts 16); and He also opens their ears, so that conviction finds or forces its way in. The end purpose of these admonitions is to keep people from sin – particularly the sin of pride. While sinners are pursuing evil purposes and indulging their pride, their souls are hastening to destruction. And so that which the Lord uses to turn them away from sin saves them also from hell. What a mercy it is to be under the restraints of an awakened conscience!

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ Elihu begs Job to accept what he was about to say – verses 1-7
- ❖ He reproves Job for the words that he had spoken against the Lord – verses 8-11
- ❖ He endeavors to convince Job of his fault and folly – verses 12-30
- ❖ He requests Job to either answer him or let him go on – verses 31-33

This is a precious part of Elihu's sermon, independent of the connection that it has with Job's history. It will be highly profitable to view every part of it in relation to every exercised and afflicted soul. Generally speaking, it forms a beautiful account, indeed, of how the Lord is dealing with His people – to open their ear to discipline, and to bring them into an acquaintance with Himself. If we behold Elihu's words in the light of the Gospel – as the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart, convincing of sin and of the righteousness of Jesus – then every word in the passage may be sweetly explained with an eye to the Redeemer's glory and the sinner's conversion. When God's people were delivered from Babylonian captivity, they thought that it was more like a dream than reality; for the blessing seemed to be too great to be true! (Ps. 126:1-4) And is it not the same way with the awakened, convinced, converted, and liberated sinner?

Elihu also described another plan by which the Lord graciously works. He had said before (verse 14) that God speaks once, and even twice; and men do not perceive it. And here he showed that when the instructions from the ministry of the Word prove to be effectual in awakening the senseless and unthinking sinner, then the Lord goes on in His gracious work of mercy, to bring the sinner to his better senses by another process of love. He lays the unthinking creature down upon a bed of sickness; and He visits him with pains, wakeful nights, and wearisome days – such as what Job had complained of (chapter 7:3). Hereby the Lord arouses the sinner to a sense of inquiry; He puts a cry in his heart, "Wherefore is this evil come upon me? What have I done to deserve it?" And when solemn questions of this nature arise in the mind – if the Lord sends him "one among a thousand" to be an interpreter to unfold to him His gracious purpose, and to point him to Jesus for salvation; then the whole process of Divine love is unfolded! God's mercy is seen in the affliction, the sinner sees his profit under it, and the glory of Jesus in redeeming him is also made plain. All of these appear glorious to the sinner's view, and his delighted soul hears the sweet voice of pardon speaking about him. "Deliver him from going down to the pit!" says the Lord. "I have found a ransom." Jesus is both the Messenger and the Ransom, as Elihu called Him (verses 23-24); for He is both the Purchaser and the Price, the Priest and the Sacrifice. So high was the value of souls, that nothing less would redeem them; and so great was the hurt done by sin, that nothing less would atone for it – nothing less than the blood of the Son of God, Who gave His life as a ransom for many! And all who truly repent of their sins with broken and contrite hearts (1 John 1:9) shall surely find mercy with the Lord.



Thank You, Lord Jesus, for doing for us what none other could do, by ransoming us from our just doom. We thank You that beneath Your spotless robe of righteousness, the Father's all-searching eye can discover no condemning sin! Amen.