

Job 32:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

Analysis

The narrative introduces Elihu: "So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes." The phrase "righteous in his own eyes" (tsaddiq be'enav, צַדִּיק בְּעֵינָיו) is crucial—it can mean either

1. Job appeared righteous to the friends, or
2. Job considered himself righteous.

The ambiguity is deliberate. Elihu will argue that Job's self-justification, though understandable, requires correction. From a Reformed perspective, this introduces a critical distinction: objective righteousness before God versus subjective perception of righteousness. Romans 3:23 declares "all have sinned," yet Romans 4:5 says God "justifieth the ungodly." The tension Job embodies—genuine righteousness (1:8) yet human imperfection requiring humility—anticipates the gospel paradox: we are simultaneously simul justus et peccator (righteous yet sinner). Elihu's entrance signals a new voice that will bridge the friends' legalism and Job's defensiveness.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern wisdom dialogues typically featured multiple speakers presenting viewpoints. Elihu's delayed entrance is literarily significant—he represents a younger generation waiting respectfully before speaking (32:4). His name means "He is my God," suggesting theological focus. Unlike Job's three friends who are from regions associated with Edomite wisdom (Uz, Teman, Shuah),

Elihu is from Buz—Abraham's family line (Genesis 22:21), suggesting closer covenant connections.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does the phrase "righteous in his own eyes" challenge our self-perception versus God's evaluation?
2. What is the relationship between defending our integrity and maintaining humility before God?
3. How does Elihu's respectful waiting before speaking model proper discourse in theological disagreement?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּשְׁבֹּת	שְׁלֹשָׁה	הָאֲנָשִׁים	הָאֱלֹהִים	יָמְעַנּוּ	אֶת	אֵי אֹב	כִּי
ceased	So these three	men	H428	to answer	H853	Job	H3588
H7673	H7969	H582		H6030		H347	
וְאֵל	צַדִּיק	בְּעֵינָיו:					
H1931	because he was righteous	in his own eyes					
	H6662	H5869					

Additional Cross-References

Job 10:7 (Parallel theme): Thou knowest that I am not wicked; and there is none that can deliver out of thine hand.

Job 33:9 (Parallel theme): I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me.

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