

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 בְּעַנְבָּא) 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 literally 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

Psalm 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

כ	א	י	ו	ב	א	ת	מִנ	ע	נ	ו	ת	בְּ	אֱלֹה	בְּאָנֹש	יְמ	שְׁל	שַׁת	יְשַׁבַּת	ו
ceased				So these three			men												
H7673				H7969			H582												
בְּאָנֹשִׁים				צַדְיק	יְה														
because he was righteous				in his own eyes															
H1931				H6662															

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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