

Job 32:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Behold, I waited for your words; I gave ear to your reasons,
whilst ye searched out what to say.

Analysis

Behold, I waited for your words; I gave ear to your reasons (הִנֵּהוּחַלְתִּי לְדִבְרֵיכֶם, 'azin 'ad-tevunoteikhem)—yachal means to wait, hope, or expect; diber is word or speech; 'azan means to give ear, listen attentively; tevunah is understanding, intelligence, or reasoning. **Whilst ye searched out what to say** (עַד־תַּחְקְרוּן מִלִּין, 'ad-tachqerun millin)—chaqar means to search, investigate, examine thoroughly; millah is word or saying (Aramaic loan word).

Elihu describes his patient listening as the three friends struggled to formulate responses to Job. He wasn't merely silent but actively attentive, waiting to hear if they would provide adequate answers. The verb 'searched out' suggests their struggle—they exhausted their theology trying to convict Job but couldn't refute his claims. Elihu's description reveals the intellectual integrity of genuine discourse: listening carefully before speaking, weighing others' arguments, searching for truth rather than merely winning debates. James 1:19 commands, 'be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath'—wisdom Elihu demonstrates.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern wisdom discourse involved careful listening and measured response. Unlike modern debates focused on soundbites and interruptions, wisdom literature shows extended speeches with patient hearing. Elihu's lengthy silence (chapters 3-31) demonstrates the cultural expectation that younger participants

observe before contributing. His attention to the friends' reasoning shows intellectual respect even while preparing to refute them.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How often do you truly listen to understand rather than merely waiting to respond?
2. What would change in theological discussions if participants followed Elihu's model of patient, attentive listening?
3. In what ways does careful attention to others' reasoning sharpen your own theological understanding?

Interlinear Text

הָיָה	הוֹחַ לְתִין	לְדַבְּרֶיךָ	אָזִין	עַד	תֵּב וְנִתִּיךָ	עַד
H2005	Behold I waited	for your words	I gave ear	H5704	to your reasons	H5704
	H3176	H1697	H238		H8394	
	תִּחְקֹר	מִלִּין:				
	whilst ye searched out	what to say				
	H2713	H4405				