

Job 32:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When I had waited, (for they spake not, but stood still, and answered no more;)

Analysis

When I had waited, (for they spake not, but stood still, and answered no more;) וְהִזְמַלְתִּי פִּילָא יְדַבֵּרוּ פִּי עָמְדוּ לֹא-עָנוּ עִזִּים (veHochalti ki-lo yedabberu ki 'amadu lo-'anu 'od)—yachal means to wait, hope, or tarry; dabar is to speak; 'amad means to stand, stand still, or stop; 'anah is to answer. The triple negatives (not speak, stood still, no more answered) emphasize complete cessation of the friends' arguments.

Elihu's patience reaches its limit not when debate becomes heated but when it ceases entirely. He waited respectfully for the elders to exhaust their wisdom, but their silence signals opportunity—and obligation—for him to contribute. This demonstrates a principle: younger believers should respect elders but not allow theological error or inadequate answers to go unchallenged when elders themselves fall silent. Paul rebuked Peter publicly when necessary (Galatians 2:11). Apollos needed Priscilla and Aquila's correction (Acts 18:26). Truth-seeking requires both respect for authority and courage to speak when silence would harm.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern protocols dictated speaking order, but also recognized that when elders failed, others must step forward. Elihu's careful observation of the friends' complete silence justifies his intervention. The phrase 'stood still' suggests they've not only stopped speaking but ceased mental struggle—they have no more

arguments. This provides Elihu both opportunity and responsibility to offer better theological perspective.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How do you balance respect for spiritual elders with responsibility to speak truth when they remain silent?
2. When is it appropriate to enter a discussion that others have abandoned or cannot resolve?
3. What does Elihu's patient observation teach about discerning the right time to contribute to theological discourse?

Interlinear Text

לֹא	עַ	מִדְ	וְ	כִּי	לֹא	גַּי	רֹא	יָדַב	רֹא	וְ	כִּי	לֹא	גַּי	וְ	הַזְמָלֵתִי	וְ	הַזְמָלֵתִי	
When I had waited	H3176	H3588	H3808		for they spake	H1696	H3588		not but stood still	H5975	H3808							

and answered H6030

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