

Job 32:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man.

Analysis

Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person (אֶל־נָא אֶשְׂאֵל פְּנֵי־אִישׁ, al-na esa pene-ish)—The idiom "lift up face" (nasa panim) means to show partiality or favoritism (Leviticus 19:15, Deuteronomy 1:17). Elihu declares impartiality—he won't flatter Job because of status. The phrase **neither let me give flattering titles unto man** (וְלֹא אֶתְּנֶה לְאִישׁ כְּנָה) uses kanah (כָּנָה), meaning "to surname, give honorific titles." Elihu refuses obsequious speech. This echoes James 2:1-9's condemnation of partiality: "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ... with respect of persons."

Elihu's claim to impartiality is admirable but potentially arrogant—declaring one's own objectivity often betrays subjectivity. True impartiality requires divine perspective (1 Samuel 16:7, "man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart"). The gospel reveals ultimate impartiality: God shows no favoritism (Romans 2:11, Galatians 2:6), judging each according to works, but offering grace equally to all who believe. Christ's cross levels all distinctions—no room for partiality or flattery.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern cultures highly valued honor, deference to superiors, and elaborate titles. Court officials used extensive honorifics. Prophets challenged this by speaking God's word regardless of human power (Jeremiah 1:7-8, Ezekiel 2:6). Elihu's refusal of flattery aligns with prophetic tradition—speaking truth over

maintaining social harmony. His youth makes this bolder, as cultural norms expected deference to elders.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How can we speak truth while maintaining appropriate respect for authority?
2. What is the difference between godly respect and sinful flattery?
3. How does the gospel's leveling effect (Galatians 3:28) challenge cultural hierarchies?

Interlinear Text

לֹא	אֲנִי		אֲשׁוּ	פְּנֵי	אֶשׁ	לְאִלֹּהִים	וְלִבְּנֵי אָדָם
H408	H4994		H5375	H6440	H376	H413	H120
		Let me not	I pray you accept	person	any man's		unto man

אֲנִי	לֹא		אֲשׁוּ	כְּתֹבָה:
H3808				H3655
		neither let me	give flattering titles	

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 19:15 (Parallel theme): Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.

Job 34:19 (Parallel theme): How much less to him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor? for they all are the work of his hands.

Job 13:8 (Parallel theme): Will ye accept his person? will ye contend for God?

Matthew 22:16 (Parallel theme): And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men.

Job 13:10 (Parallel theme): He will surely reprove you, if ye do secretly accept persons.

Proverbs 24:23 (Parallel theme): These things also belong to the wise. It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment.

Deuteronomy 1:17 (Parallel theme): Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it.

Deuteronomy 16:19 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous.

2 Samuel 14:20 (Parallel theme): To fetch about this form of speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing: and my lord is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth.

2 Samuel 14:17 (Parallel theme): Then thine handmaid said, The word of my lord the king shall now be comfortable: for as an angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and bad: therefore the LORD thy God will be with thee.