

Job 32:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken, because they were elder than he.

Analysis

Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken, because they were elder than he (וַעֲלִיהוּא חָכָה אֶת־אֵיּוֹב בְּדַבָּרִים כִּי זָקֵנִים הָמָּה מִמֶּנּוּ לַיָּמִים, ve'Elihu chikkah 'et-'Iyyov bidvarim ki zeqenim hemmah mimmennu leyamim)—the verb chakah means to wait, tarry, or delay. Zaqen means elder, with yamim (days, years) emphasizing advanced age. Elihu's patience demonstrates cultural respect for age and wisdom.

This verse introduces Elihu, the fourth counselor who has remained silent through 31 chapters while Job's three friends failed to convince him. The emphasis on waiting reveals ancient honor codes: younger men deferred to elders in public discourse. Elihu's restraint contrasts with modern culture's dismissal of age and authority. Yet verse 7 shows Elihu believed age should bring wisdom—his disappointment at the elders' failure prompts his speech. The New Testament similarly commands respect for elders (1 Timothy 5:1) while acknowledging that age alone doesn't guarantee wisdom (Job 32:9).

Historical Context

Elihu's name means 'He is my God,' likely identifying him as a worshiper of YHWH. His lineage (Buzite of the family of Ram, 32:2) connects him to Abraham's family (Genesis 22:21, Buz was Nahor's son). Unlike Job's three friends from distant regions, Elihu may have been younger kin or local. Ancient Near Eastern protocol strictly governed speaking order in assemblies, with age determining precedence.

Elihu's speech (chapters 32-37) has been controversial—some scholars view it as interpolation, others as divinely inspired preparation for God's response.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does modern culture's disregard for age and experience conflict with biblical wisdom that honors elders?
2. When is it appropriate to speak after patiently listening, and when should we continue in silence?
3. What does Elihu's respectful waiting teach about humility and propriety in theological discourse?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵלִיהּ	חָכָה	אֶת	אֲיֹב	בְּדִבְרֵי	יָ	זְקֵנִים
Now Elihu	had waited	H853	till Job	had spoken	H3588	because they were elder
H453	H2442		H347	H1697		H2205

לְיָמָיו:	מִמֶּנּוּ	הָיָה
H3117	H4480	H1992