

Job 32:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, then his wrath was kindled.

Analysis

When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men (וַיַּרְא כִּי אֵין מַעֲנָה בְּפִי שְׁלֹשֶׁת הָאֲנָשִׁים, vayyar ki 'en ma'aneh befi sheloshet ha'anashim)—the verb ra'ah (saw, perceived) indicates Elihu's discernment; ma'aneh means answer or response. The three friends—Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar—have exhausted their arguments and fallen silent. **Then his wrath was kindled** (וַיִּחַר אָפוֹ, vayyichar 'appo)—charah means to burn, be kindled; 'af literally means nose or nostrils, idiomatically anger (as nostrils flare).

Elihu's anger is righteous indignation at theological failure. The three friends couldn't refute Job's claims of innocence yet still insisted he must have sinned grievously. Their retributive theology—suffering always indicates sin—has collapsed under Job's integrity. Elihu's wrath burns at their inability to defend God's justice properly. Righteous anger at bad theology appears throughout Scripture (Mark 3:5, Jesus angered at hard hearts; Galatians 1:9, Paul's anathemas against false gospels). Elihu will attempt what the three friends couldn't: vindicating God's justice while acknowledging Job's integrity.

Historical Context

After three rounds of debate (chapters 3-31), Job's friends have been reduced to silence. Their theology of exact temporal retribution—good people prosper, bad people suffer—cannot explain Job's situation. Elihu witnesses this theological bankruptcy and prepares to offer a different perspective: God uses suffering to

discipline and refine even the righteous (33:19-30). This anticipates the New Testament's teaching on sanctifying affliction (Hebrews 12:5-11, James 1:2-4).

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. When have you witnessed bad theology cause more harm than help in someone's suffering?
2. What is the difference between righteous anger at theological error and sinful argumentativeness?
3. How can we respond to others' suffering without falling into simplistic explanations that Job's friends represent?

Interlinear Text

וַיֵּרָא	אֵלֶיהָ וַאֲ	כִּי	אֵין	מַעַן ה	בְּפִי
saw	When Elihu	H3588	H369	that there was no answer	in the mouth
H7200	H453			H4617	H6310
שֶׁל שְׁתֵּי	הָאֲנָשִׁים	וַיִּחַר	אָפוֹ:		
of these three	H376	was kindled	then his wrath		
H7969		H2734	H639		

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