

Job 32:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion.

Analysis

Elihu explains his hesitation: "I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion." The Hebrew *yare* (יָרֵא, "afraid") and *gur* (גֹּר, "durst not") express reverence and trepidation. Ancient culture valued age and experience (Leviticus 19:32). Yet Elihu will argue that wisdom doesn't automatically come with age—it's a gift of the Spirit (verse 8). This tension between honoring tradition and recognizing that truth isn't bound by seniority appears throughout Scripture. From a Reformed perspective, this models proper humility while maintaining commitment to truth. Paul instructs Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth" (1 Timothy 4:12), affirming that God can speak through the young. Elihu's respectful yet confident approach balances deference to elders with boldness to speak truth. His testimony encourages younger believers to contribute to theological discourse while maintaining appropriate humility.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern societies were gerontocracies—elders held authority in wisdom and governance. Proverbs repeatedly extols learning from the aged (Proverbs 16:31, 20:29). Yet Scripture also records young people receiving divine revelation (Samuel, Jeremiah, Daniel). Elihu represents the tension between cultural norms of age-based authority and theological conviction that wisdom is divinely granted regardless of age.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How can younger believers contribute to theological discussions while honoring their elders?
2. What is the proper relationship between respecting tradition and pursuing truth that may challenge conventional wisdom?
3. How does Elihu's example inform intergenerational dialogue in the church today?

Interlinear Text

אַָעַיִר	וַיֹּאמֶר	הַבּוּזִי	יֶבְרָכְאֵל	בֶּן	אֱלִיהוּ	וַיַּעֲנוּ
I am young	and said	the Buzite	of Barachel	the son	And Elihu	answered
H6810	H559	H940	H1292	H1121	H453	H6030
זָחַלְתִּי	כִּי	עַל	יְשִׁישִׁים	וְאַתָּה	לְיָמִים	אָנֹכִי
wherefore I was afraid			and ye are very old			
H2119	H3651	H5921	H3453	H859	H3117	H589
אֶתְכֶם:	יָדַעַי	מִחוּת	וְאִיכָּא			
	you mine opinion	not shew	and durst			
H853	H1843	H2331	H3372			

Additional Cross-References

Job 15:10 (Parallel theme): With us are both the grayheaded and very aged men, much elder than thy father.

1 Timothy 5:1 (Parallel theme): Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren;

1 Peter 5:5 (Parallel theme): Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

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