

Job 32:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.

Analysis

I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom (אָמַרְתִּי יָמִים יְדַבֵּר וּרְבָ שָׁנִים יְדַעַּו חָכָמָה)—yamim (days) metonymically represents advanced age; rov means abundance or multitude; shanah is year; chokhmah is wisdom, skill, or insight. The verb dabar (speak) suggests that age itself should proclaim truth.

Elihu articulates a cultural assumption: age brings wisdom through accumulated experience and reflection. Proverbs 16:31 says 'the hoary head is a crown of glory,' and Leviticus 19:32 commands standing before the aged. Yet Elihu's next verse (32:8) qualifies this: 'there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.' True wisdom comes not from years but from God's Spirit. Paul instructs Timothy, 'Let no man despise thy youth' (1 Timothy 4:12), and Jesus astonished elders with childhood wisdom (Luke 2:46-47). The Bible honors age but recognizes that spiritual wisdom transcends chronology.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern cultures venerated age as the primary source of wisdom, reflected in councils of elders governing communities. The wisdom literature (Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes) consistently explores whether experience alone produces understanding or whether divine revelation is necessary. Elihu represents a transitional figure: respecting age while insisting that God's Spirit, not mere longevity, imparts true wisdom.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. In what ways does your culture honor or dishonor the wisdom that can come with age and experience?
2. How can we balance respect for elders with recognition that the Holy Spirit can grant wisdom to the young?
3. What is the difference between wisdom gained through experience and wisdom that comes from divine revelation?

Interlinear Text

אָמַרְתִּי	רְבָבָה	יְמִינֵי	רְבָבָה	שְׁנֵי יָמִים	יְמִינֵי
I said	Days	should speak	and multitude	of years	should teach
H559	H3117	H1696	H7230	H8141	H3045
חָכְמָה:					
wisdom					
H2451					

Additional Cross-References

Job 12:12 (Parallel theme): With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding.

Proverbs 16:31 (Parallel theme): The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.