

Job 32:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

Analysis

Elihu declares: 'But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.' The word ruach (רוּחַ, spirit) refers to the life-breath or spirit God breathed into humanity (Genesis 2:7). Nishmat Shaddai (נִשְׁמַת שָׁדָדִי, inspiration of the Almighty) literally means 'breath of the Almighty.' Biyn (בִּין, understanding) means discernment or insight. Elihu argues that wisdom doesn't necessarily come with age but through divine inspiration. This corrects the assumption that elders monopolize wisdom, preparing for God's direct speech that will supersede all human wisdom.

Historical Context

Ancient cultures venerated age and assumed elders possessed superior wisdom. Elihu (younger than the other speakers) challenges this assumption, arguing that divine inspiration matters more than age. His speeches (chapters 32-37) prepare for God's response by shifting focus from human wisdom (which all speakers including Job claimed) to divine revelation (which will correct all).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Elihu's claim that inspiration matters more than age challenge our assumptions about authority?
2. What is the relationship between human wisdom and divine inspiration in understanding God's ways?

Interlinear Text

אָנָּה	קֹם	בָּאָנָּה וְשָׁה	וְיָא	וְנִשְׁתַּחַת	שָׁה
But	there is a spirit	H1931	in man	and the inspiration	of the Almighty
H403	H7307		H582	H5397	H7706

תְּבִינָם:
giveth them understanding
H995

Additional Cross-References

Job 38:36 (Parallel theme): Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart?

Job 33:4 (Spirit): The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.

2 Timothy 3:16 (Parallel theme): All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

Proverbs 2:6 (Parallel theme): For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

James 1:5 (Parallel theme): If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

Ecclesiastes 2:26 (Spirit): For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit.

1 Kings 3:12 (Parallel theme): Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

Job 35:11 (Parallel theme): Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven?

1 Corinthians 12:8 (Spirit): For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

1 Kings 3:28 (Parallel theme): And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment.

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