

Job 33:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I will speak.

Analysis

Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me (הַקְשֵׁב אֵין שְׁמָעָלִי, haqshev Iyyov shema-li)—The verb qashav (קָשֵׁב, "to attend, pay attention") and shama (שָׁמַע, "to hear, obey") together emphasize urgent listening. This doubles the imperative, demanding Job's full attention. The phrase **hold thy peace, and I will speak** uses charash (חָרַשׁ, "to be silent"). Elihu demands Job's silence to receive instruction. This reflects ancient teacher-student dynamics—disciples silent before masters.

The biblical pattern is consistent: "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). Jesus rebuked the storm: "Peace, be still" (Mark 4:39). Spiritual receptivity requires silencing our defenses and arguments. Job's previous speeches (chapters 3-31) have been extensive self-justification. Elihu demands he cease and listen. This anticipates God's answer (chapters 38-41), which also silences Job (40:4, 42:6). True wisdom begins with humble listening, not assertive speaking (James 1:19, "swift to hear, slow to speak").

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern wisdom tradition emphasized the disciple posture: silence before the teacher. Proverbs repeatedly contrasts the wise (who listen) with fools (who speak hastily): Proverbs 17:28, "Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise." Egyptian wisdom literature (Instruction of Amenemope) similarly emphasized listening. Elihu's demand reflects this pedagogy—learning requires receptivity, not merely asserting one's position.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does cultivating silence before God enable spiritual growth?
2. What prevents us from truly listening to God's word?
3. How does Job's eventual silence (42:6) demonstrate mature faith?

Interlinear Text

וְאָנֹכִ	בְּ	שְׁמַע	אֵי	וּבְ	פְּקָדֵשׁ	בְּ
Mark well	O Job	hearken	H0	unto me hold thy peace		H595
H7181	H347	H8085		H2790		

אָדָּבָרִים
and I will speak

Additional Cross-References

Job 18:2 (Parallel theme): How long will it be ere ye make an end of words? mark, and afterwards we will speak.

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