

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 (הַקְשִׁיב אֵיּוֹב שְׁמַע־לִי, haqshev Iyyov shema-li)—The verb qashav (קָשַׁב, "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** (הַחֲרִשׁ וְאֶנְכִּי אֲדַבֵּר) 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

וְאֵנֹכִי יְהוָה שָׁמְעֵ לִי הַקֵּשׁ בְּ
unto me hold thy peace H595
H2790
H7181 H347 H8085 H0

וְאֵנֹכִי יְהוָה שָׁמְעֵ לִי הַקֵּשׁ בְּ
and I will speak
H1696

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.