

Job 33:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If thou hast any thing to say, answer me: speak, for I desire to justify thee.

Analysis

If thou hast any thing to say, answer me (אָם-יֵשׁ-מִלִּין הָשִׁיבֵנִי, im-yesh-millin hashiveni)—The noun millah (מִלָּה, word, speech) and verb shuv (שׁוּב, Hiphil "to answer, respond") invite Job to reply if he has legitimate response. The phrase **speak, for I desire to justify thee** (דַּבֵּר כִּי-חַפְּצָתִי צַדִּיקָה, dabber ki-chaphatzti tzaddeqekha) uses chaphetz (חָפֵץ, "to delight in, desire") and tsadaq (צַדִּיק, Piel "to justify, declare righteous"). Elihu claims benevolent intent—he wants to vindicate Job if possible, not condemn him. This sets Elihu apart from the three friends who presumed Job's guilt.

Elihu's desire to justify anticipates God's own vindication of Job (42:7-8). Yet only God can truly justify (Romans 3:26, 8:33). Elihu's offer, though sincere, is inadequate—human wisdom cannot justify before God. This points to gospel truth: justification comes not by human arguments or defense but by faith in Christ (Romans 5:1, Galatians 2:16). God justifies the ungodly (Romans 4:5), not based on our defense but on Christ's righteousness imputed to believers.

Historical Context

Ancient legal settings featured advocates attempting to justify defendants. The Hebrew tsadaq is forensic language—declaring righteous in legal context. Elihu adopts advocate role, unlike Job's friends who functioned as prosecutors. This reflects ancient Near Eastern justice systems where skilled advocates could mean

difference between condemnation and acquittal. Yet ultimate vindication required divine intervention—earthly courts were fallible.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does Elihu's inability to justify Job point to our need for Christ's advocacy?
2. What is the relationship between human vindication and divine justification?
3. How does Christ's role as Advocate (1 John 2:1) fulfill what Elihu attempted?

Interlinear Text

אָם	יְשׁ	מֵלֵךְ	הַשִּׁיבֵנִי	אֶבְרָרְךָ	כִּי	חָפֵצְתִּי
H518	If thou hast	any thing to say	answer	me speak	H3588	for I desire
	H3426	H4405	H7725	H1696		H2654

צַדִּיקָא
to justify
H6663