

Job 33:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If thou canst answer me, set thy words in order before me,
stand up.

Analysis

If thou canst answer me, set thy words in order before me, stand up—Elihu invites Job to formal debate. The conditional 'if thou canst' challenges Job's previous demands to contend with God (13:3, 22; 23:3-7). עֲרַנִּי (orkeni, 'answer me') uses legal terminology—to arrange arguments systematically. עֲרַכָּה (irkah, 'set in order') appears in contexts of arranging battle lines or legal cases, suggesting forensic precision.

Stand up (הִתְיַצֵּבָה, hityatzevah) means to take a position, to present oneself—the stance of someone ready to defend their case. Elihu offers Job what he'd requested: dialogue with someone on equal footing rather than an overwhelming divine opponent. Yet the challenge contains implicit humility—Elihu doesn't claim to replace God but to mediate understanding. He positions himself as fellow creature (33:6) who can address Job without the terror Job feared in approaching God directly (9:34-35). This invitation demonstrates confidence in truth while respecting Job's dignity as rational moral agent capable of responding to argument.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern legal procedure involved formal presentations before judges or assemblies. Job had repeatedly demanded his 'day in court' with God (13:18-19, 23:3-7), longing to present his case. Elihu grants a version of this—not the divine encounter Job craved, but human dialogue that prepares him for God's actual

appearance. The legal language reflects ancient juridical customs where cases were argued publicly with witnesses and advocates.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Elihu's invitation to dialogue model respectful theological disagreement?
2. When have you demanded to 'make your case' to God—what was the result?
3. Why does God often use human mediators (teachers, friends, Scripture) rather than always speaking directly?

Interlinear Text

אִם	תּוּכַ ל	הַשִּׁיב־נִי	עֲרֹךְ ה	לִפְנֵי י	הִתְיַצֵּבְהָ:
H518	If thou canst	answer	me set thy words in order	before	me stand up
	H3201	H7725	H6186	H6440	H3320

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