

Job 34:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Hear my words, O ye wise men; and give ear unto me, ye that have knowledge.

Analysis

Hear my words, O ye wise men (שְׁמַעוּ חֲכָמִים מִלְּאֵן)—shim'u chakamim millay)—Shama (hear) implies obedient attention, not mere auditory reception. Elihu addresses chakamim (wise men), using Job's three friends' self-perception ironically—they claimed wisdom yet failed to answer Job. **And give ear unto me, ye that have knowledge** (וְיָדְעִים הָאִזְנוּ לִי) v'yod'im ha'azinu li)—Yada (know) and azan (give ear, listen carefully) create synonymous parallelism emphasizing attentiveness.

Elihu's rhetorical strategy mirrors wisdom literature's pedagogical style: addressing the wise to instruct them further (Proverbs 9:9). The irony is deliberate—those claiming knowledge need instruction. This pattern appears in New Testament wisdom teaching: 'If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know' (1 Corinthians 8:2). True wisdom recognizes its limits and remains teachable.

Historical Context

Elihu speaks in the wisdom tradition that valued reasoned discourse and careful argumentation. Ancient Near Eastern wisdom culture (reflected in Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Egyptian instructions, Mesopotamian wisdom) emphasized learning through dialogue. Elihu's appeal to 'wise men' and 'those with knowledge' frames his speech as wisdom discourse rather than prophetic oracle or legal brief.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does Elihu's call for the wise to listen challenge intellectual pride in theological discussion?
2. What distinguishes genuine wisdom from the false confidence Job's friends displayed?
3. How should biblical humility inform how we engage complex theological questions like suffering?

Interlinear Text

שָׁמַע	יְמִינְךָ	מַלְכָךְ	יְמִינְךָ	יְדַעַת	יְמִינְךָ	פָּאֵץ									
Shāma' <small>H8085</small>	O <small>H2450</small>	ye <small>H4405</small>	wise <small>H3045</small>	my <small>H238</small>	words <small>H238</small>	unto <small>H238</small>	me <small>H238</small>	ye <small>H238</small>	that <small>H238</small>	have <small>H238</small>	knowledge <small>H238</small>	men <small>H238</small>	and <small>H238</small>	give <small>H238</small>	ear <small>H238</small>

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Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 1:5 (Parallel theme): A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

1 Corinthians 14:20 (Parallel theme): Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

