

Job 36:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe
righteousness to my Maker.

Analysis

Elihu announces his intention: "I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker." The verb *nasa* (נָשָׂא, "fetch") means to carry or bear. The phrase "from afar" (l'merachok, לְמֵרָחוֹק) suggests comprehensive scope. The verb *natan* (נָתַן, "ascribe") means to give or attribute. Elihu claims his knowledge is expansive and his purpose theodicy—vindicating God's righteousness. From a Reformed perspective, theodicy (justifying God's ways) is precarious enterprise. Romans 9:20 asks, "Who art thou that repliest against God?" While defending God's character is legitimate, presuming we can fully explain His ways risks overstepping. Elihu's confidence that he can vindicate God reveals hubris. God needs no defense—He will vindicate Himself (Job 38-41). Our task is faithfulness and trust, not comprehensive explanation. Yet Elihu's desire to affirm God's righteousness is commendable even if his execution is flawed.

Historical Context

Ancient wisdom literature included theodicy—Mesopotamian texts like "Ludlul Bel Nemeqi" and "Babylonian Theodicy" grappled with divine justice and human suffering. Job stands apart by refusing easy answers while maintaining God's righteousness. Elihu's approach—attempting systematic vindication of God—reflects wisdom tradition's apologetic impulse, though God's speeches will demonstrate theodicy's insufficiency.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What is the proper place for theodicy (defending God's ways) versus simply trusting Him?
2. How does Elihu's confident vindication of God compare to God's self-vindication in chapters 38-41?
3. When does defending God's character cross into presumption that we can fully explain His ways?

Interlinear Text

אֶשׂ אֶ	יְעִי	לְמִרְחָ וּקִי	וּלְפָעַל י	אֶתֵּן
I will fetch	my knowledge	from afar	to my Maker	and will ascribe
H5375	H1843	H7350	H6466	H5414

צִדִּיקִי
righteousness
H6664

Additional Cross-References

James 3:17 (Parallel theme): But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

James 1:17 (Parallel theme): Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Revelation 15:3 (Righteousness): And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

Psalms 145:17 (Righteousness): The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

Psalms 11:7 (Righteousness): For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.

Job 8:3 (Righteousness): Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?

Job 32:8 (Parallel theme): But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

Deuteronomy 32:4 (Righteousness): He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

Daniel 9:14 (Righteousness): Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice.

Daniel 9:7 (Righteousness): O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee.