

Elihu Contradicts Job's Friends

Job 32:1-37:24

MEMORY VERSE

Job 34:12

“Surely God will never do wickedly, nor will the Almighty pervert justice.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A small balloon for each child in your class and confetti

One to two hula-hoops depending on class size (one for each 8 – 10 children).

Scraps of fabric, felt, lace, yarn, etc., construction paper, scissors, glue, glitter, markers or crayons

Tell children that the attention-getting signal you'll use during this lesson is clapping your hands three times. Ask children to respond by clapping their hands three times and focusing their attention on you. Rehearse the signal with the children, telling them to respond quickly so you have plenty of time for all the fun activities planned for this lesson.

ATTENTION GETTER!

I Just Gotta Say Something!

For this activity, give each child a small balloon. (This activity is probably best for 2nd Grade and above.) Help the children put just a little bit of confetti in each balloon before blowing them up. Have each child blow up their balloon and tie them. Then give each child a small pushpin and on the count of three have them all pop their balloons. Collect the pins back and ask for volunteers to help with the clean up after class. You may want to, instead, have the children just blow up the balloons (not tie them); then instruct them to let the air out on the count of three.

Today we are going to learn about a young man by the name of Elihu, the youngest of Job's counselors. He had listened to Job's three friends and Job's answers for a long time and now wanted to say some things himself. He was waiting and waiting. Finally, he could not wait any longer and jumped in. Maybe he felt like he was about to pop like our balloons if he did not say anything. Let's take a look at what was so important for him to share with Job.

LESSON TIME!

In our lesson today, we find Job in big need of real encouragement. His three friends tried their best to analyze and show their friend Job why he was in such a horrible situation. Their attempt to help their Job only brought about more problems for him. Job only got an ear-full of their own wisdom; and as a result, he laid his boil-stricken body on his bed of ashes with sorrow and pain.

It's natural for us to sometimes think the worse about God's plan for our life when we are going through a difficult trial. Job wanted answers, but up till now, he was still wondering why he had to suffer. What was God doing and why was He allowing this to happen to him when he had done nothing to deserve such treatment? **God is never wicked or unjust.** He had a plan for Job's life, though Job could not yet see it.

At this time, however, Job would need to endure the advice of one more counselor.

JOB 32

So these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

Then the wrath of Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, was aroused against Job; his wrath was aroused because he justified himself rather than God.

Also against his three friends his wrath was aroused, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.

Now because they were years older than he, Elihu had waited to speak to Job.

When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, his wrath was aroused.

So Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, answered and said: "I am young in years, and you are very old; Therefore I was afraid, And dared not declare my opinion to you.

I said, 'Age should speak, And multitude of years should teach wisdom.'

But there is a spirit in man, And the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding.

Great men are not always wise, Nor do the aged always understand justice.

"Therefore I say, 'Listen to me, I also will declare my opinion.'

Indeed I waited for your words, I listened to your reasonings, while you searched out what to say.

I paid close attention to you; And surely not one of you convinced Job, Or answered his words;

Lest you say, 'We have found wisdom'; God will vanquish him, not man.

Now he has not directed his words against me; So I will not answer him with your words.

"They are dismayed and answer no more; Words escape them.

And I have waited, because they did not speak, Because they stood still and answered no more.

I also will answer my part, I too will declare my opinion.

For I am full of words; The spirit within me compels me.

Indeed my belly is like wine that has no vent; It is ready to burst like new wineskins.

I will speak, that I may find relief; I must open my lips and answer.

Let me not, I pray, show partiality to anyone; Nor let me flatter any man.

For I do not know how to flatter, Else my Maker would soon take me away.

Job's three friends were convinced that there was some sin in Job's life that brought about his suffering. Their theory was that suffering is always God's punishment for evil actions. They would not move from their argument with Job so they stopped their discussion with him after he refused to admit any sin. But Job knew that he had lived right before God and others (ch. 29) and had avoided wrong thoughts and actions (ch. 31). Job was not going to make up a sin just to satisfy his friends.

Young Elihu now rebukes the three friends for being unable to give Job a reasonable answer for why he was suffering. He had remained silent until now because he was younger, but he could not hold back from sharing his thoughts any longer. Those who are older are said to be wiser, but age does not necessarily make men wise; rather, wisdom comes from God who makes us wise (vs. 7-9). (Note: It certainly is important that we respect those who are older than us.)

JOB 33:1-11

"But please, Job, hear my speech, And listen to all my words.

Now, I open my mouth; My tongue speaks in my mouth.

My words come from my upright heart; My lips utter pure knowledge.

The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

If you can answer me, Set your words in order before me; Take your stand.

Truly I am as your spokesman before God; I also have been formed out of clay.

Surely no fear of me will terrify you, Nor will my hand be heavy on you.

"Surely you have spoken in my hearing, And I have heard the sound of your words, saying,

'I am pure, without transgression; I am innocent, and there is no iniquity in me.

Yet He finds occasions against me, He counts me as His enemy;

He puts my feet in the stocks, He watches all my paths.'

Elihu encourages Job to continue listening with a challenge to disagree with him if he can. Elihu viewed himself equal with Job, for he said "both were created by God." Therefore, Job did not need to fear him for he would treat Job kindly and not be like his other three friends.

Elihu had listened to Job very carefully and even quoted Job's very words (vs. 8-12). He reminds Job of the comments he made about God's unfair treatment of him, even though Job felt he was not guilty. He felt as though God was watching every move he made. Job thought that God was using a fine-toothed comb to try to find a fault against him, and so to count him as an enemy. Have you ever felt like God was not on your side in a situation? It might seem like that when we are faced with a problem; we must remember that God is *always* for us.

JOB 34:16-37

"If you have understanding, hear this; listen to the sound of my words:

Should one who hates justice govern? Will you condemn Him who is most just?

Is it fitting to say to a king, 'You are worthless,' And to nobles, 'You are wicked'?

Yet He is not partial to princes, Nor does He regard the rich more than the poor; For they are all the work of His hands.

In a moment they die, in the middle of the night; The people are shaken and pass away; The mighty are taken away without a hand.

For His eyes are on the ways of man, And He sees all his steps.

There is no darkness nor shadow of death Where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.

For He need not further consider a man, That he should go before God in judgment.

He breaks in pieces mighty men without inquiry, And sets others in their place.

Therefore he knows their works; He overthrows them in the night, And they are crushed.

He strikes them as wicked men In the open sight of others,

Because they turned back from Him, And would not consider any of His ways,

So that they caused the cry of the poor to come to Him; For He hears the cry of the afflicted.

When He gives quietness, who then can make trouble? And when He hides His face, who then can see Him, Whether it is against a nation or a man alone? --

That the hypocrite should not reign, Lest the people be ensnared.

For has anyone said to God, 'I have borne chastening; I will offend no more;

Teach me what I do not see; If I have done iniquity, I will do no more'?

Should He repay it according to your terms, Just because you disavow it? You must choose, and not I; Therefore speak what you know.

"Men of understanding say to me, Wise men who listen to me:

'Job speaks without knowledge, His words are without wisdom.'

Oh, that Job were tried to the utmost, Because his answers are like those of wicked men!

For he adds rebellion to his sin; He claps his hands among us, And multiplies his words against God."

Elihu had the attention of Job and his three friends. He accused Job of being a sinner and associating with ungodly people (Job 9:30-31; 35:2). Elihu, like Job's three friends, expressed some words of wisdom, but they were buried under layers of his own wisdom.

Elihu was correct in pointing out that Job was upset with God, and correct in his assertion that because of who God is, He should not be questioned. God has reasons for everything He does—reasons which are beyond our understanding; because He is God, He has the right to do as He wishes. It is true, Job needed to renew an attitude of surrender to God. God, creator of the universe will not stoop down to our demands or terms. We need to remember God's faithfulness and concern to complete the work that He has started in our life for His good pleasure (Philippians 1:6; 2:13). Rather than question God, Job needed to face the future knowing that he was in the loving care of a God who truly loved him. **God is never wicked or unjust.**

No one can blame Job for wanting to know and understand why God was allowing him to go through such a terrible time. If God had told Job everything beforehand, Job would not need to show faith and trust in God.

Elihu told Job that God was trying to answer him, but he was not listening. This statement was not true; for, if God were to answer all our questions, we would not be stretched in our life to place our faith and trust in Him. Job's greatest test was not the pain and suffering, but the fact that he did not know why it happened. Strong trials build strong faith.

Elihu makes many true statements: God is righteous. God does not sin and is never unjust. He has authority over all the earth and will be the one to bring justice in the world. If God were to withdraw His Spirit, all life would disappear and mankind would turn again to dust. **God is never wicked or unjust.** He is fair in all His dealings with us. Unfortunately, his conclusions about Job would not help Job at all.

JOB 35:1-3

Moreover Elihu answered and said:

"Do you think this is right? Do you say, 'My righteousness is more than God's'?

For you say, 'What advantage will it be to You? What profit shall I have, more than if I had sinned?'

Job had said he was innocent but felt that he would have been no better off before God if he had sinned (vs. 1-3). Elihu pointed out that God is supreme and because of His sovereignty, He not affected by man's sins nor does He benefit from man's good works. We cannot bribe God to change our circumstances because we are good.

Job felt abandoned. Just because God fails to jump in right away in every situation does not mean He is unconcerned. God will do what is right in His time. We have His promise on that. We must not lose hope, but wait upon God.

Going Around and Around

It seemed like Job's friends were sometimes just going around and around in circles with what they were saying. Sometimes it seemed they were saying the same things over and over. Sometimes, we can talk a lot, but it is always important to make sure that we are seeking God's wisdom in the things we say.

For this game you will need two hula-hoops. Have your class form two circles of 8 – 10 children. Have the children hold hands. One hula-hoop will go to each group. The object of this game will be to have the children pass through the hoop and have the hula-hoop travel around the circle while still holding hands.

Start by placing the hula-hoop between two children in each of the groups. When you say, "go" have them begin to go in a clockwise direction. The first child will put their head through and then their body and legs and get the hula-hoop to the next person. Remember that they cannot stop holding hands while doing this. Have a fun time and see which team finishes first.

JOB 36:1-23

Elihu also proceeded and said:

"Bear with me a little, and I will show you that there are yet words to speak on God's behalf.

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

For truly my words are not false; One who is perfect in knowledge is with you.

"Behold, God is mighty, but despises no one; He is mighty in strength of understanding.

He does not preserve the life of the wicked, But gives justice to the oppressed.

He does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous; But they are on the throne with kings, For He has seated them forever, And they are exalted.

And if they are bound in fetters, Held in the cords of affliction,

Then He tells them their work and their transgressions; that they have acted defiantly.

He also opens their ear to instruction, And commands that they turn from iniquity.

If they obey and serve Him, They shall spend their days in prosperity, And their years in pleasures.

But if they do not obey, they shall perish by the sword, And they shall die without knowledge.

"But the hypocrites in heart store up wrath; they do not cry for help when He binds them.

They die in youth, and their life ends among the perverted persons.

He delivers the poor in their affliction, And opens their ears in oppression.

"Indeed He would have brought you out of dire distress, into a broad place where there is no restraint; and what is set on your table would be full of richness.

But you are filled with the judgment due the wicked;
Judgment and justice take hold of you.

Because there is wrath, beware lest He take you away
with one blow; for a large ransom would not help you
avoid it.

Will your riches, or all the mighty forces, keep you
from distress?

Do not desire the night, when people are cut off in
their place.

Take heed, do not turn to iniquity, for you have
chosen this rather than affliction.

"Behold, God is exalted by His power; who teaches
like Him?

Who has assigned Him His way, or who has said, 'You
have done wrong'?

Elihu continues to defend God's justice and power in His dealings
with man. **God is never wicked or unjust.** Though Job had
noticed that sinners seemed to prosper, Elihu reminded him that
God restores His people who are suffering, giving blessings to them
as He watches over them with care.

He has a purpose for us when we go through trials (vs. 8-10). Elihu
suggested that a godly sufferer who will listen to God with a desire
to once again obey and serve Him would then prosper and enjoy
contentment (vs. 11-12). Though Job's friends were more
concerned that Job was guilty of sinful actions, Elihu was more
concerned with Job's sinful attitude of pride.

Elihu had cautioned Job to be careful not to let his anger lead him into speaking wrongly towards God (vs. 17-23). He was concerned that Job would let his suffering embitter him against the only one who could deliver him. God is all-powerful. Who can teach Him or say that what He does is evil? Instead, we should glorify Him for His mighty works, for they are clearly seen by everyone. **God is never wicked or unjust.**

JOB 36:24-37:24

"Remember to magnify His work, Of which men have sung.

Everyone has seen it; Man looks on it from afar.

"Behold, God is great, and we do not know Him; Nor can the number of His years be discovered.

For He draws up drops of water, Which distill as rain from the mist,

Which the clouds drop down And pour abundantly on man.

Indeed, can anyone understand the spreading of clouds, The thunder from His canopy?

Look, He scatters his light upon it, And covers the depths of the sea.

For by these He judges the peoples; He gives food in abundance.

He covers His hands with lightning, And commands it to strike.

His thunder declares it, The cattle also, concerning
the rising storm.

"At this also my heart trembles, And leaps from its
place.

Hear attentively the thunder of His voice, And the
rumbling that comes from His mouth.

He sends it forth under the whole heaven, His
lightning to the ends of the earth.

After it a voice roars; He thunders with His majestic
voice, And He does not restrain them when His voice
is heard.

God thunders marvelously with His voice; He does
great things which we cannot comprehend.

For He says to the snow, 'Fall on the earth'; Likewise
to the gentle rain and the heavy rain of His strength.

He seals the hand of every man, That all men may
know His work.

The beasts go into dens, And remain in their lairs.

From the chamber of the south comes the whirlwind,
And cold from the scattering winds of the north.

By the breath of God ice is given, And the broad
waters are frozen.

Also with moisture He saturates the thick clouds; He
scatters His bright clouds.

And they swirl about, being turned by His guidance,
That they may do whatever He commands them On
the face of the whole earth.

He causes it to come, Whether for correction, Or for
His land, Or for mercy.

"Listen to this, O Job; Stand still and consider the
wondrous works of God.

Do you know when God dispatches them, And causes
the light of His cloud to shine?

Do you know how the clouds are balanced, Those
wondrous works of Him who is perfect in knowledge?

Why are your garments hot, When He quiets the earth
by the south wind?

With Him, have you spread out the skies, Strong as a
cast metal mirror?

"Teach us what we should say to Him, For we can
prepare nothing because of the darkness.

Should He be told that I wish to speak? If a man were
to speak, surely he would be swallowed up.

Even now men cannot look at the light when it is
bright in the skies, When the wind has passed and
cleared them.

He comes from the north as golden splendor; With
God is awesome majesty.

As for the Almighty, we cannot find Him; He is excellent in power, In judgment and abundant justice; He does not oppress.

Therefore men fear Him; He shows no partiality to any who are wise of heart."

Elihu now talks about the awesome power of God. God is so great, how could we begin to know Him? No one can begin to understand eternity (v. 26). Nothing can compare with God. His power and presence are awesome; when He speaks, we should listen (v. 14). His mighty works deserve our praise and adoration. Job is reminded of God's control over nature; just as God is sovereign over His creation, He is in control of Job's life.

Elihu concludes his speech with the wonderful truth that faith in God is far more important than Job's desire for an explanation for his suffering (vs. 21-24). God's ways should not be challenged because His ways are beyond human understanding. **God is never wicked or unjust.** God can work many good purposes through suffering and trials. If God knows what is best for us, then He is to be trusted, not blamed for our problems.

If God is over all of creation, He is also to be in charge of our lives. He is in control to direct, preserve, and sustain His creation. Although Job could not see it, God was directing his life, just like He does ours. As we look at His wonderful creation, we can be reminded of His power in every aspect of our lives. May we never forget that God is all-knowing and present as He watches over His most important creation, mankind.

Elihu had recognized the truth that God was the only source of real wisdom; yet he failed to seek and acquire God's wisdom to help Job. Elihu would give his best answers to Job, but they would be incomplete. He had no idea of God's plan for Job's life.

Job needed encouragement and support. It's hard to understand what God is doing in someone's life as they face a difficult trial. Instead of judging them, we should bring them before the Lord in prayer while supporting them with encouragement that God has a plan for their life. **God is never wicked or unjust.** Job was exactly where God wanted him to be in his life.

No matter how difficult our trials may be, we can be at peace and rest in the fact that God is in control, and He will have His way. As a child of God, we will be blessed, as we trust in Him to bring us through the difficult times. **God is never wicked or unjust.** He wants His best for us. Job would end up blessed beyond all that he could hope for; but for now, he needed to rest in the loving arms of God. Our unknown future is secure in the hands of our all-knowing God who is holy and just.

Card of Encouragement

As we consider Job's "friends," it certainly reminds us of the need to be an encourager. Job's friends did not seem to be very encouraging, did they? They seemed to discourage him and accuse him more than encourage him. The Bible calls us to encourage those we love. In this craft, let's take a few moments to encourage someone.

You will need scraps of fabric, felt, lace, yarn, etc., construction paper, scissors, glue, glitter, markers or crayons. Think of someone who may be going through a difficult time or maybe just needs a kind word. This could be a family member, friend, or school mate. Using a sheet of construction paper, fold it in half to make a card. Write a short note or verse on the inside of the card. (Note: you may want to look up two or three encouraging verses to have available for the children). Decorate the card. Next, pray for that person that the Lord would encourage them. Finally, mail or give them the card.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to trust the Lord no matter what, even through difficult trials. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.