

1. Let's start with my title: "The Angry Young Man Part 1". Yes, that means there'll be a part 2, but I promise no more. Give me a minute and I'll explain. As someone who's read lots of books, I have never liked it, when a key new character is introduced late in the story as if we should have seen it coming. Apparently, beside the three men who've been debating Job through most of this book, there was at least one other person there this whole time. We've had no idea about him until we get to this point in the book. This new character gets a six-chapter speech, with no response from anyone in the crowd and when God chimes in to end the book, there's no comment about this new guy after this six chapter speech. All we can do is take it at face value, and ponder why it's a part of the story and part of the bible for that matter. Hopefully, before I finish these six chapters, we'll understand why this is here. In the meantime, we have to accept the fact this new character exists and even though his arguments are not anything new, it's a part of the story.
2. Ok, that's a little confusing. Let me try again: In this chapter, we get introduced to a man named Elihu. ("E-lie-who"). Apparently he's been listening to the whole debate. He's younger than the rest. The text strongly implies that he's angry. He's angry at everyone there. He's angry at the three friends for not finding the reason for Job's suffering. He's also angry at Job for trying to justify his life over God's sovereignty. He spends a lot of verses explaining himself and then he'll give a lot of arguments similar to what we've heard so far in the book. Yes, I'm strongly tempted to say "blah, blah, blah" at Elihu's arguments, but since it's part of the bible, I'll rise above that. He gets six chapters to take his stab at Job before God Himself chimes in as if to say, "OK, everyone, I can't take it anymore. All of you shut up! Let Me speak for Myself for awhile!" Yes, that's a major paraphrase, but that's what I see God doing in a few chapters.
3. John, we know it's killing you to answer the "Why should we care" question, so go at it. I've read these chapters a dozen times now. All I figure is God wanted to exhaust every possible "wrong argument" against Job sinning before chiming in. Maybe God just wanted to see if Job would sin if this "hot head" yapped for six chapters. What's dawning on me, is in life, often the best way to handle a hot-head, is to let them talk until they get it out of their system. It's only after they've exhausted themselves, that they're willing to listen to anyone else. That's how I have learned to handle people like that. Let them get it out of their system, and then calmly say a nice response on how you've heard them and politely disagree. We can't fix what we can't fix, so we just let people let the air out of their own sails. It's a way to calm the room when we deal with people like this. I'm sure there is more to learn from Elihu, but that's the first thing that pops in my head as I study this passage.
 - a) OK John, suppose we know that, or know it now. Why should I waste my time reading it if that's the key point? The main reason God wants us to study His word is to draw close to Him. Therefore even by studying the words of an angry young man, God's teaching us a little about how life works and how to best deal with such people. It is one thing to just read it and say, so what? It's another to study the arguments and see the good and bad of them just as we have through Job's three friends.
 - b) Bottom line, it's part of the bible for a reason as God uses even the tough arguments of the angry young man in these six chapters to draw us closer to Him. That's why we're here!
4. Let's try this one more way and then start the verse by verse commentary: Why are there a total of six chapters? Why not just have one long chapter with one big speech? First, realize the breaks were not inserted until the time of the printing press (about 1200 AD off the top of my head). It is technically one big speech if you read the original text. Still, the breaks are not bad, as it helps to cut the text into bite size chunks. The whole bible was divided that way to help us find passages.
 - a) OK then, let me try to explain what's going on in these three chapters, and then I'll begin the main part of this lesson. Chapter 32 is mostly about who Elihu is and how he plans to destroy all the arguments made so far in this book.

- b) In Chapter 33, Elihu claims to speak for God, which is a pretty brash statement to make. Like Job's other three friends he'll use the logic of what they see around them and make a few conclusions about how God works. In that sense, he's no better than the other three guys as essentially he'll make the same arguments that Job must deserve what he got. It is an argument we all must endure for these six chapters.
 - c) In Chapter 34, Elihu is claiming God's justice is being carried out against Job and that's the reason for all the suffering. Yes he's wrong, but that's the case he builds.
 - d) Some people see the Elihu speech as an interlude between Job finishing and God speaking as if a dramatic pause was needed between the two big speeches. Either way, it's here, so let's deal with it the best we can.
 - e) I was tempted to crank out all six chapters in one lesson, but there are too many verses for me to cover, so that's why we've got "The Angry Young Man Part 1" title for this lesson.
 - f) I keep thinking of a line from the movie "Men in Black" when the head guys weren't listening to what new guy (Will Smith) is saying. In frustration, he yells out, "Hey, old dudes". That got their attention. That's how I picture the speaker talking to everyone in that scene here. OK, now that we've got the mental picture going, let's start the text.
5. Chapter 32, Verse 1: So these three men stopped answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. ² But Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, became very angry with Job for justifying himself rather than God. ³ He was also angry with the three friends, because they had found no way to refute Job, and yet had condemned him.
- a) Here we get the introduction to Elihu. He gives his family history on the assumption that either Job or some of his friends have no idea who he is. I used to think he just wandered into this debate, but later he says he's heard the whole thing. This tells us there were more than the debate participants there at the great debate.
 - b) As to the family background, there is a reference to "Buz" in Genesis 22:21, but there is no reference to the "Family of Ram". I'll still argue that Job and his friends lived about the time of Abraham and the "Buzite" reference would fit that scenario. This was before all of the "Nation of Israel" history began, but there were still people who believed in God since the days of the flood. There are those of us who consider Hebrew, or an early form of it to be the original language, which is how this play got "translated" into modern Hebrew. We don't know for sure, but that's just my logical explanation.
 - c) The other strong set of facts we get here, is that whoever this Elihu was, he's ticked off at all the "players" in the story so far. He was angry at Job, because Job focused on justifying himself and not God. (I'd disagree with that statement, as I'd argue Job justified God with his arguments), but that's Elihu's opinion. He was also angry at Job's three friends as they failed to find a way to refute Job. Again, I picture Will Smith from Men in Black, yelling to the group, "Hey Old Dudes". It sort of fits the scenario here.
 - d) Anyway, that's the back story.
 - e) Notice the first thought Elihu has even before giving his family background is he is angry because Job was convinced he was right about his stand with God. I'd agree that Job was right, but that's not how Elihu saw it. One reason he's angry is that he saw Job as one who justified himself as opposed to justifying God's right to make Job suffer. Thus, Elihu lays out his case in these chapters after giving some background information about why he's there as well as why he waited until now to speak. Speaking of which:
6. Verse 4: Now Elihu had waited before speaking to Job because they were older than he. ⁵ But when he saw that the three men had nothing more to say, his anger was aroused.
- a) The idea of this scene is that Elihu didn't walk in the room angry. He simply listened to all the debate so far, patiently waited his turn to speak and after the other three guys couldn't think of anything else to say, Elihu knew it was time to "let off some steam". Give him the credit to realize he's not on Job's "buddy list", and he was younger, so he waited until after the great debate was over before chiming in here.

7. Verse 6: So Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite said: "I am young in years, and you are old; that is why I was fearful, not daring to tell you what I know. ⁷ I thought, 'Age should speak; advanced years should teach wisdom.'⁸ But it is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that gives him understanding. ⁹ It is not only the old who are wise, not only the aged who understand what is right.
- a) Let me speak a little on "age and wisdom". First realize the difference between knowledge and wisdom. Knowledge is essentially knowing what is the right thing to do. Wisdom is the application of that knowledge. To repeat an example I gave recently, if you're hungry and there is food in the refrigerator near you, "knowledge" is realizing the food's there. To actually eat the food is the "wisdom". The concept of biblical wisdom is all about applying God's laws to our lives. It's actually practicing what the bible teaches.
 - b) OK with that speech out of my system, Elihu makes a point that is true: As we grow older we grow in knowledge but not necessarily wisdom. As we get older, we learn more stuff about how life works and we accumulate knowledge. However, wisdom must be applied at any age. I'd argue that practicing biblical wisdom begins with believing that God exists and because He's going to judge our lives, a healthy fear of that judgment drives us to act with biblical wisdom. I know many intelligent people who have lots of great knowledge about all sorts of things, but they don't have great wisdom about living as God desires the way they should live. That in effect is Elihu's point here.
 - c) To expand, Elihu is saying, "I let all of you guys talk first, because I figured you're all a lot older than me and therefore you should have more wisdom. However, since none of you have figured out why Job is suffering, I've had enough of the lot of you and I'm about to go off on everyone here! I figure I've got as much wisdom as any of you when it comes to how to apply God's standards to your life. In other words, since I patiently listened to all of you for dozens of chapters now, I'd like you to patently listen to me as I believe I've got the biblical wisdom to understand what's going on here." (Again, paraphrased.)
 - i) If nothing else, you can see the "brashness" of Elihu as he begins his speech as he's insulting everyone in the room for lacking Godly wisdom. At that alone, I admit I would be tempted to slap this guy around for even making that accusation.
 - ii) All we do know is at the end of this, God's had enough of all of this talk and He is going to put all of this talk to an end. By the way, that's my favorite part of Job, but I'll wait until I get there before I start commenting on that. In the meantime, let us get back to the "Angry young man".
8. Verse 10: "Therefore I say: Listen to me; I too will tell you what I know. ¹¹ I waited while you spoke, I listened to your reasoning; while you were searching for words, ¹² I gave you my full attention.
- a) This is Elihu saying, "Hey I kept my mouth shut while all of you were debating, so please offer me the same courtesy here". Let's face it, Job or his three friends could have said, we didn't invite you to this debate, so why should we let you talk? Therefore, Elihu is asking for a little patience among everyone else present.
 - b) On a related note, I listen to a lot of talk radio. Good hosts will let the caller go off on what it is they have to say (assuming they don't take away from commercial time). Then I will hear the host say, "Hey, you want a dialogue or do you just want to make a speech?" I patently listened to you talk, so now can I respond? My point is that's a great way in life to handle someone who just needs to rant about something and how to respond. Speaking of ranting, let's get back to Elihu.
9. Verse 12b: But not one of you has proved Job wrong; none of you has answered his arguments.
- a) That's the "crux" of why Elihu is angry. Job has maintained for dozens of chapters that he has not sinned and despite the three "friends" arguments all of that time, nothing changed since the debate began. Therefore, Elihu's dying to get his own shots in, not only with Job but also with his three friends. That's what we'll be dealing with in these chapters.

10. Verse 13: Do not say, 'We have found wisdom; let God refute him, not man.'¹⁴ But Job has not marshaled his words against me, and I will not answer him with your arguments.
 - a) Elihu's saying I'm not going to repeat all the points you've made over all these chapters. I just want to present my case as I think I've got the answers to why Job's going through all of this. Yes, Elihu doesn't know about God's and Satan's bet, and he'll be just as wrong as the rest of them. However, the "interlude" between the great debate and God speaking is an integral part of this story, so let's continue.
11. Verse 15: "They are dismayed and have no more to say; words have failed them."¹⁶ Must I wait, now that they are silent, now that they stand there with no reply?¹⁷ I too will have my say; I too will tell what I know.¹⁸ For I am full of words, and the spirit within me compels me;¹⁹ inside I am like bottled-up wine, like new wineskins ready to burst.²⁰ I must speak and find relief; I must open my lips and reply.
 - a) I have to admit, I do see Elihu as sort of a "windbag". Essentially Chapter 32 is nothing but a long introduction of who this guy is and the fact he's dying to speak. He's not going to start his arguments until Chapter 33 (two verses away). I simply want you to grasp what a loud mouth this guy is, based on how long it takes him just to start making his points!
 - b) In essence, all he's saying here is "he's dying to speak and he's got a lot to say". All I want to do is say, "OK, enough of the introduction already, get on with it!" It's one thing to do a dramatic pause. It's another to go on and on like this. OK, two more introduction verses and we can start his actual arguments:
12. Verse 21: I will show partiality to no one, nor will I flatter any man;²² for if I were skilled in flattery, my Maker would soon take me away.
 - a) If there is one thing we should know by studying Job to date, is "flattery" is not a word we should associate with any of the characters in this story. Job never flatters his friends and the three friends never complimented Job for anything. Therefore, Elihu is letting us know that he's got no plans to say anything positive to anyone in the "room" here today.
 - b) Elihu even goes so far as to say that if he did say anything nice, God would punish him if he did flatter them. A quick comment here: Flattery is not a sin. However, it should only be applied lightly and taken with a grain of salt. My favorite comment on flattery that it's to be applied like perfume: a little is nice but it shouldn't enter the room before you do!
 - c) OK, enough of that. Onto Elihu's actual arguments:
13. Chapter 33, Verse 1: "But now, Job, listen to my words; pay attention to everything I say."² I am about to open my mouth; my words are on the tip of my tongue.³ My words come from an upright heart; my lips sincerely speak what I know.
 - a) I said this guy is a "windbag" and I meant it. He still can't start on his actual arguments. I perceive that Elihu is the kind of guy who's in love "with the sound of his own voice". It's pretty obvious given the fact we're over a chapter into his speech and he is still giving his intro to what he wants to say. The key point here is that Elihu is convinced what he's got to say is correct (just as everyone else there thought they were correct!).
14. Verse 4: The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.⁵ Answer me then, if you can; prepare yourself and confront me.⁶ I am just like you before God; I too have been taken from clay.⁷ No fear of me should alarm you, nor should my hand be heavy upon you.⁸ "But you have said in my hearing-- I heard the very words--"⁹ 'I am pure and without sin; I am clean and free from guilt.
 - a) Elihu's first point is simply the fact that he is a man created by God, so therefore everyone there should hear what he has to say, as he's had the same opportunity to acquire wisdom as everyone else there.
 - b) Elihu comments here on Job's key point: That he has effectively stated that there's nothing bothering his conscious, so Job's "sinless" in the sense that he's forgiven. Elihu is saying he knows that argument and that's what Elihu wants rebuke, "assuming he ever gets around to it" in this overly long introduction here!

- c) Therefore, Elihu's other point is that Job or the other three shouldn't be afraid of what it is he's about to say since Elihu's aware of what Job thinks about himself in this debate.
- d) OK, let's continue:
- 15. Verse 10: Yet God has found fault with me; he considers me his enemy. ¹¹ He fastens my feet in shackles; he keeps close watch on all my paths.'
 - a) This is Elihu paraphrasing Job here. Job's made statements to the effect that he believed God had abandoned him based on all the suffering he's been through. In Verse 11, Elihu gets colorful as he quotes or paraphrases Job's earlier speeches about how God did allow all of this to occur. Job still believed God still watched over him, but of course no one can explain why Job's suffering the way he is. That leads to Elihu's next point in Verse 12:
- 16. Verse 12: "But I tell you, in this you are not right, for God is greater than man. ¹³ Why do you complain to him that he answers none of man's words?
 - a) My loose translation, "Hey Job, who gave you the right to question God in the first place?" You're not God and who do you think you are to question how He's does things? We can all see you're suffering terribly. Why do you question God as if He's required to give you an answer for all of this? This leads to a big discussion on the topic of God speaking to us, which I'll start beginning in the next set of verses:
- 17. Verse 14: For God does speak--now one way, now another-- though man may not perceive it. ¹⁵ In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on men as they slumber in their beds, ¹⁶ he may speak in their ears and terrify them with warnings, ¹⁷ to turn man from wrongdoing and keep him from pride, ¹⁸ to preserve his soul from the pit, his life from perishing by the sword.
 - a) Elihu's main point is that God does speak to us, but he does so in ways we aren't always aware that He's doing it. There is an old Christian joke that goes, "The reason God doesn't speak to us more is we're too busy talking to be quiet and let Him speak to us." I strongly hold the view that God isn't required to tell us anything. In other words, we can not force God to speak to us just because we want Him too. I don't believe God is required to give us say instructions for the day if we're quiet and demand an answer. My simple point is that "God gave us a brain and He expects us to use it." It's always a matter of doing what is logical while not violating His commands for us. That's how we live as God desires. If we use the gifts that God gives us for His glory and don't violate biblical principals, then He is guiding us whether we realize it or not.
 - b) OK, with that speech out of my system, I can talk about these verses: Can God talk to us while we're sleeping? Can God interrupt our day to make something obvious to us? Yes, of course. If God is God, He can do what He wants when He wants. All I'm saying is we can't force God to act a certain way because we want Him too. Do I believe God speaks to us at times? Of course, I've had a few of those moments in my life. All I'm saying is that we can't force it to occur just because we want answers from Him.
 - c) With that said, Elihu is making the point that God does desire to guide our lives. Realize He created us for a purpose, to guide our lives to glorify Him. That means in many ways God does "speak to us" to guide our lives. That includes through His word and when He wants to, subtle and not so subtle ways to guide us. We can't predict or control that, but we usually can recognize in hindsight as God works in our lives.
 - d) With all that said Elihu's making the point that God does speak to us in the sense that He desires to guide our lives for His glory. It's not "Turn this way, now that way", but by the decisions we make that lead us to a productive life for His glory, He is guiding us. Like I have been saying, it's easy to see in hindsight how He's been guiding our lives.
 - e) Speaking of Elihu's rants, he continues:
- 18. Verse 19: Or a man may be chastened on a bed of pain with constant distress in his bones, ²⁰ so that his very being finds food repulsive and his soul loathes the choicest meal.
 - a) Here we get Elihu's not to subtle attack on Job. Elihu's saying that if one is suffering in a lot of pain, that's a good sign God's trying to communicate something to us.

- b) If you've ever been sick with a stomach ache, or even a fever sometimes, even the thought of food can be repulsive. What's implied here is Job's in so much physical pain, that even the thought of sitting down to a nice meal is repulsive. The funny part is as I'm discussing being repulsed by food, I had a bad stomach ache last night and can relate to this. Yes, I'm better now, but it's another simple example how God "allows things" to help us relate to a passage in His word. (If you ever teach the bible, it'll never cease to amaze you how God allows us to experience stuff to relate to the text better. I'm not positive my stomach pain is related to this. I'm just saying it's an interesting coincidence.).
 - c) OK, enough of my problems, let's get back to Job's pain.
19. Verse 21: His flesh wastes away to nothing, and his bones, once hidden, now stick out. ²² His soul draws near to the pit, and his life to the messengers of death.
- a) I'm sure Elihu is commenting about life in general and using aspects of Job's suffering as a big example of that type of suffering. If you've read my earlier Job lessons, he spent lots of time almost obsessed with death, as I'm sure Job would have considered it welcome relief of all the physical pain he's had to suffer. Elihu is using the pain of "near death" to show a way how God works in our lives to draw us closer to Him through suffering.
20. Verse 23: "Yet if there is an angel on his side as a mediator, one out of a thousand, to tell a man what is right for him, ²⁴ to be gracious to him and say, 'Spare him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom for him'-- ²⁵ then his flesh is renewed like a child's; it is restored as in the days of his youth.
- a) Remember how Job desired a mediator between God and Himself many chapters ago. An argument for an "angel mediator" is in Verse 23. Some say that's an argument that Job did want an angel mediator, but I'd still argue Job wanted a "man" who could relate to all this suffering he had to deal with. Remember Job used a "kinsmen redeemer" reference when he wanted a mediator. That's refers to a person who could substitute for Job here.
 - b) Elihu's point is that if God decided to send an angel to physically help someone at a point of death, God has the power to change that person because "God is God".
 - c) Since Elihu brought up angels, time for a quick angel discussion. Job is the oldest book in the bible, and speaks of angel's existence. Yes, I believe in good and demonic ones. I also believe they're organized in "ranks" like an army. God created them to carry out His will. I believe they've got free will, as some chose to rebel against God. Theologians will argue they're all around us, with a spiritual battle constantly going around us. One way I like to prove that Satan is real, is to oppose him by preaching the Gospel or making a difference for God and watch "stuff happen". Ok that's my angel talk in a paragraph.
 - d) Meanwhile, back to Elihu. His point is if God chooses He can heal anyone at anytime. I often pray for healing for people, but God has the free will to choose or not to choose to respond as He sees fit. In other words, we're free to ask and He's free to say yes or no.
21. Verse 26: He prays to God and finds favor with him, he sees God's face and shouts for joy; he is restored by God to his righteous state. ²⁷ Then he comes to men and says, 'I sinned, and perverted what was right, but I did not get what I deserved. ²⁸ He redeemed my soul from going down to the pit, and I will live to enjoy the light.'
- a) I see this is as Elihu's not so subtle request to ask Job to repent of whatever sin Elihu does believe Job committed. Elihu is preaching here that when people repent God leads them to heaven versus hell. Elihu may be thinking, he's trying to save Job from going to hell as he believes Job must be guilty of something. Elihu's smart enough to realize that because one has repented does not mean life on earth automatically gets better.
 - b) I keep thinking of a movie where some fugitives on the run get saved from their sins. The leader of this group then says in effect, "God may forgive you, but the state of Mississippi may have something else to say about us being fugitives ". (From "O Brother, Where Art Thou" paraphrased). The point is the same. Sin forgiveness and recovery from whatever we're dealing with are always two separate matters.

- c) Does that mean God doesn't miraculously help at times? I've seen people recover from a number of horrid things with no natural explanation including some deadly cancers. I've also seen some wonderful Christians die in a lot of pain through the diseases they've had to deal with to the end. The point is miracles do happen, but we're not guaranteed them if say we believe in Jesus.
 - d) OK, enough of all of that. Back to Elihu's speech.
22. Verse 29: "God does all these things to a man-- twice, even three times-- ³⁰ to turn back his soul from the pit, that the light of life may shine on him.
- a) I hold the view that God doesn't want anyone to go to hell. He'll work in subtle and not so subtle ways to get us to do the right thing. That doesn't mean if we stand on the edge of a cliff and jump, angels will catch us. It means that if we have a heart to seek God, He does promise to guide our lives for His glory. Our life ends on His timing and not any moment sooner or later. That's the essence of these verses.
23. Verse 31: "Pay attention, Job, and listen to me; be silent, and I will speak. ³² If you have anything to say, answer me; speak up, for I want you to be cleared. ³³ But if not, then listen to me; be silent, and I will teach you wisdom."
- a) If we have any doubt that Elihu is focusing on Job and not just life in general, these verses here that wrap up Chapter 33 make it clear. Elihu's essential point for better or for worse, is he wants Job to "shut up and listen". Elihu believes he has Godly wisdom in what he is saying. Elihu's main argument against Job is that Job was trying to justify his existence as opposed to God's justice. I'd argue that Job was a great witness for God through all of this but Elihu's denying that. That's why Elihu's got four more chapters to preach to Job.
 - b) I suspect Job was sitting there in pain thinking, "Well, I put up with the other three idiots, I suppose I can listen to this guy give his arguments as I've got nothing better to do."
 - c) Ok then, let's continue:
24. Chapter 34, Verse 1: Then Elihu said: ² "Hear my words, you wise men; listen to me, you men of learning. ³ For the ear tests words as the tongue tastes food. ⁴ Let us discern for ourselves what is right; let us learn together what is good.
- a) Some of the chapter breaks are inserted at points where the speaker is making a "dramatic pause". The text actually says "Then Elihu said" with the simple point he's continuing.
 - b) Remember that Job's other three friends were still there listening. We don't know if there is anyone else present. We just know Elihu believes he's fully of godly wisdom and he is going to let the "room" hear him out whether they like it or not.
 - c) He's effectively inviting everyone there to hear out his words, and they can judge if what he's saying is "Godly wisdom" or not. Ok then, back to Elihu.
25. Verse 5: "Job says, 'I am innocent, but God denies me justice. ⁶ Although I am right, I am considered a liar; although I am guiltless, his arrow inflicts an incurable wound.'
- a) Elihu is quoting Job again. Elihu's paraphrasing a little, but he's essentially saying what it is Job's been proclaiming throughout the book: 1) God's denying Job an explanation for all the suffering and 2) Job's three friends consider him a liar because he refuses to repent of a "major sin". What Elihu's saying is not exactly true as far as #1 is concerned, but that's the idea he's trying to convey here.
26. Verse 7: What man is like Job, who drinks scorn like water? ⁸ He keeps company with evildoers; he associates with wicked men.
- a) In Verse 7 Elihu is saying, "All Job does is complain about himself". Personally, there's no way I could go through what Job went through and not be self-focused. It takes a lifetime to get over the death of one of our own children, let alone all of them, all that we own, not to mention poor health. Besides what else can Job do except complain about how all of his friends aren't doing anything but complaining about unconfessed sins. If the friends did a little something to make Job feel better, maybe he wouldn't be spending all these chapters complaining about the pain.

- b) As to evildoers, unless Elihu is talking about Job's three friends, it's either a lie, or he does not know anything about Job. What I suspect Elihu is doing here is, he wants to build up a case against Job, so he's "assuming" he associates with wicked people. Elihu too believes Job has some unconfessed sin, so Elihu's "throwing out possibilities here".
 - c) OK time for the tough question: What if we're facing false accusations? The first thing I've been taught is consider the source. The next thing is if it's a "courtroom situation" present evidence to the contrary or demand to see the evidence. Think of Paul's trials before those Jewish courts. He was accused of all sorts of false things out of hatred. Paul simply used those opportunities to preach the Gospel as if his own life didn't matter. Remember again why God created us, to glorify Him through our lives. Try to keep that in mind the next time we have to deal with false accusations. Speaking of which, back to Elihu:
27. Verse 9: For he says, 'It profits a man nothing when he tries to please God.' ¹⁰ "So listen to me, you men of understanding. Far be it from God to do evil, from the Almighty to do wrong.
- a) Here we get a logical statement from God. The simple point is if God is perfect, then he is not going to personally benefit from us trying to please Him. In other words, us doing the right thing doesn't make God a "better entity". What is missing from that idea, is that God cares about us, as it's His desire we be a good witness from Him. While I believe His will is sovereign, I'd also argue that God is pleased with us when we're doing His will.
 - b) Then Elihu makes another logical point that God's incapable of doing anything wrong. If He is perfect by definition, then by definition He doesn't do anything wrong. I've always argued that God can't lie, He can't learn and He can't force anyone to love Him. That's all a part of being a perfect entity. OK then, now that I've stated the obvious, let's move on.
28. Verse 11: He repays a man for what he has done; he brings upon him what his conduct deserves.
- a) This is about God's judgment. If heaven is God's domain, then He gets to decide who will be with Him forever and we should have no right to argue. If God is perfect by definition that means His standard is perfection. That's why God Himself has to pay for our sins, so we can be perfect to be with a perfect God.
 - b) So if God Himself pays for our sins, what's the purpose of judging us? The answer is to see what we did with that knowledge of Him! What did we know or could have known about God and what did we do with that knowledge? That's how judgment is based. I'm convinced that Christians aren't condemned to hell, but there are heavenly rewards based on what we did with the knowledge we had or could have had about Jesus.
 - c) Elihu's not to subtle message here is that God's judging Job now for some unconfessed sin in his life. I do believe God allows things to occur to "get it through our thick head" of the fact He's in charge and we're not. At the same time, many non-God fearing people live a financially successful life and many God fearing people live poor all of their lives. All I'm saying is the financial, or success status of this life is not necessary an indication of how it is we'll be eternally judged. OK, that's stating the obvious some more, back to Elihu:
29. Verse 12: It is unthinkable that God would do wrong, that the Almighty would pervert justice.
- a) We're back to "stating the obvious". If God is perfect by definition, then it'd be impossible for God to do wrong. That's the simple point here. However, Elihu is heading somewhere with this, so let's continue:
30. Verse 13: Who appointed him over the earth? Who put him in charge of the whole world?
- a) This gets back to the classic question of "who created God?" If one believes in a multitude of gods, the logical speculation is that there must be a single entity that started all of that. It's the classic "chicken or the egg" debate over what came first. What's logical is there has to be some sort of God who "started the ball rolling" and that He always existed. Since He made everything, whether we like it or not that means He's in charge. Yes, there are those who argue that God got the ball rolling and then walked away like He didn't care. I'd say based on the way people live their lives to make a difference for God, that He does care as He created us to give Him glory based on how we live our lives. Ok, back to Elihu:

31. Verse 14: If it were his intention and he withdrew his spirit and breath, ¹⁵ all mankind would perish together and man would return to the dust.
- a) Let's be honest, if God didn't care about people, there would be no reason to exist. Those who are atheist can't argue there is a purpose for life if there is no next one. All we would do is eventually die off and "that's that". I simply refuse to believe all of life is one major "random accident". Our world is way to finely tuned to be an accident. That's essentially Elihu's point here that God exists and He created us for a reason. Let's see where Elihu is going with this:
32. Verse 16: "If you have understanding, hear this; listen to what I say. ¹⁷ Can he who hates justice govern? Will you condemn the just and mighty One?"
- a) If you ask a religious Jewish person to describe the most important trait about God, they'd most likely say, "He's a God of justice". That is, He's a God who wants what's right in the world He created. As a devout Christian, I don't argue with that. I see God as EQUALLY a God of Justice and a God of Love. He can't compromise on either one of those things!
 - b) Elihu is getting to a point here. If God is God of justice, how can we condemn what it is He is doing in our world, if that's His ultimate goal to enforce justice?
 - i) Ok, I just opened a can of worms there. How can we say God is "just" if He allows all of the horrors that exist in our world? I've beaten this one to death in previous lessons, but to be brief, we live in a sin filled world and God wants us to rise above it to make a difference for Him in spite of whatever it is we must deal with in life! A point here is God desires to work with us as individuals to guide our lives as to make a difference for Him despite whatever it is we must deal with in our lives!
 - c) That little speech leads us right back to Elihu. He accepts that God exists. He accepts that God is just. He then argues that Job is "condemning God" because God refuses to explain why Job is suffering the way he is. The crux of Elihu's argument is that he's angry at Job for demanding a reason why God allowed him to suffer so much. Elihu's essential point is why does Job demand a reason for God to do what He's doing? In other words, what gives us the right to question God in the first place? Elihu's saying Job's condemning God by demanding an explanation. Yes he's correct on that point, but that doesn't mean Job is a bad person. We have every right to question how God works, as it helps us to accept all the things that we go through in life.
 - d) Recall why Satan wanted to attack Job in the first place (Chapter 1). It was because Job is a "good egg" in God's eyes. Just as Jesus said it was Satan's desire to attack Peter when he denied Jesus three times. My point is it is Satan's goal to make good witnesses for God to be ineffective witnesses so Satan attacks those who are "God's chosen". Elihu makes the correct point that God is sovereign and we must accept it. At the same time, Job is one of the people who God is pleased with and we should be careful who we condemn! All I'm saying is when we "mess with people" we're messing with one of God's chosen, and it's a fact we need to keep in mind when we put people down! Keep that in mind as we read Elihu's subtle condemnation of Job through the final part of this chapter.
33. Verse 18: Is he not the One who says to kings, 'You are worthless,' and to nobles, 'You are wicked,' ¹⁹ who shows no partiality to princes and does not favor the rich over the poor, for they are all the work of his hands?
- a) Meanwhile Elihu's continuing his "God is sovereign" speech in these verses. It's the point that just because someone is a leader or someone is rich does not mean God favors them over someone who has little in life! We can't judge who God considers to be one of His by the status we have in life! There are devout Christians from every walk in life. Elihu says that all people are the work of God's hands. The subtle point to us is we shouldn't judge one's eternal status based on their standing in this life.
 - b) In other words, this is one big, "God's in charge, deal with it" speech. Elihu's making it as to say to Job, you must accept your lot in life as God's in charge, so accept it all.

- c) Let me pause to ask, ok, if God's in charge, should we not try to improve our situation? I would never argue for that. If we're injured or sick, we should try to get better. If we are suffering in some other way, we should deal with it. Just sitting around feeling sorry for ourselves doesn't solve problems. Just as God is going to bless Job in the end, so God also wants to bless our lives eternally as we use our lives as a witness for Him. Yes, we have to accept what's happened to us in life, but we must also ask, "Does God expect me to stay in this same "mental place" forever? Of course not. Yes some have to live with disabilities all of the rest of their lives. The issue is attitude. We can sit there and feel sorry for ourselves or we can say, "I've got this, I must accept it, so God help me be a good witness for You in spite of what I have to deal with at the moment."
- d) Meanwhile Elihu's still in the "people suffer as God allows it" speech:
- 34. Verse 20: They die in an instant, in the middle of the night; the people are shaken and they pass away; the mighty are removed without human hand.
 - a) Let's be honest, every day people die. One of my favorite speeches to give about life is for us to realize that none of us know how long we get to live. That's why God desires we use the unspecified time He gives us to make a difference for Him. That should be our goal!
 - b) Elihu's point is still "God's in charge we must deal with it". He is using death as his proof of God being in charge of how long we get to live here.
- 35. Verse 21: "His eyes are on the ways of men; he sees their every step. ²² There is no dark place, no deep shadow, where evildoers can hide.
 - a) One of the hardest things to grasp about God is "how big He is". I don't mean how tall He is, but how much He understands about life. He is a God who understands all about our life and all that we do, good and bad. He holds the world together. He created all things. My favorite quote on this topic is from David Hocking, "Every time I think about how big God is, all I do is give myself a headache". Anyway, Elihu's still on his "God's in charge, so deal with it speech" as he points out there is no escape from God in this life!
- 36. Verse 23: God has no need to examine men further, that they should come before him for judgment. ²⁴ Without inquiry he shatters the mighty and sets up others in their place. ²⁵ Because he takes note of their deeds, he overthrows them in the night and they are crushed.
 - a) The idea that if God knows all things there is no need for Him to "review the evidence" of our lives before we're judged. It's the idea that we're all to be judged by God, we have to accept it and there is no appeal after that. It's more of Elihu's "God's in charge so we must deal with it" speech. Let's continue:
- 37. Verse 26: He punishes them for their wickedness where everyone can see them, ²⁷ because they turned from following him and had no regard for any of his ways.
 - a) I admit I struggle with this verse. I studied a number of translations. What puzzled me is the idea that "Everyone can see them". Is Elihu arguing that everyone living around those who are wicked know the fate of those who are wicked? Is the punishment obvious to all around them? That's where I struggle as I don't know if it's an "every time" scenario. Yes it is usually the case that when the wicked fall "people rejoice" as implied in Proverbs 29:2.
 - b) The main point of this verse is as a general rule, when people turn from God all their life, it is a fate that becomes evidence to others around them as to how to live. Again, it's all a part of Elihu's "God's in charge, deal with it" speech. Let's let him continue:
- 38. Verse 28: They caused the cry of the poor to come before him, so that he heard the cry of the needy.
 - a) If God is a God of "justice", then it's logical that God cares about those who are suffering. A great question is not what is God doing about it, but what are we doing about it? One of the hardest attributes to develop is courage. We can't fix the whole world, but we can and should do "something". God decides to work through people. Therefore it's up to us to be helpful when we can and where we can. That's how He helps the needy!
 - b) Our built in desire to help others is a part of the "God's in charge" speech.

- c) I've always liked the line that goes, "I can't fix the whole world, but I can do something about the little corner I live in". That's the desire to make a difference in the world that is around us. I believe Elihu's underlying point is God gives us that built in desire.
 - d) OK John, we accept that. What does it have to do with Elihu and Job? Here is Job sitting there in a lot of pain wondering "where is God?" Elihu's response in effect is God will do something for the needy, but we need to turn to Him for that help! It's a subtle accusation that Job's still got some unconfessed sin and that's why no one's helping Job.
 - e) With that out there, let's get back to Elihu's speech.
39. Verse 29: But if he remains silent, who can condemn him? If he hides his face, who can see him?
- a) Elihu's point is "If God's not acting the way we want Him to act, who are we to condemn Him for not acting? It's the old "Where's God argument? Why is He allowing all of this to occur and why isn't God working the way we want Him to work?" We're back to the idea that God is sovereign and we must accept it. If God doesn't act in a "mighty way" the way we want Him to act, who are we to question God? That's Elihu's main condemnation over Job because Elihu is angry that Job wants to know why God isn't acting in his situation!
40. Verse 29 (cont.): Yet he is over man and nation alike,³⁰ to keep a godless man from ruling, from laying snares for the people.
- a) The text implies that God prevents "Godless men from ruling". Is that true? Not that I've seen. I think the point is about ruling eternally or continuing to rule. Eventually the bad rulers do die off. God cares so much for the suffering he doesn't let the cruel rule forever. At the time I'm writing this, North Korea is being ruled by a horrid dictator where people are starving while the ruling class aren't affected. I don't know how, but I'm willing to bet he won't rule like this to an old age, simply because I believe in a God who cares for all of his people. So are you saying that leader will get a snare? Willing to bet on it, but I can't prove it. I just know how God works. For example, Hitler was overthrown, although it cost millions of lives to bring down a regime that evil! All I'm saying is God will triumph in the end. I think that's Elihu's point here. OK, let's move on.
41. Verse 31: "Suppose a man says to God, 'I am guilty but will offend no more.'³² Teach me what I cannot see; if I have done wrong, I will not do so again.'³³ Should God then reward you on your terms, when you refuse to repent? You must decide, not I; so tell me what you know.
- a) The point here is simply that we have to come to God on His terms, not ours. Yes He will work on our level to draw us closer to Him, but the goal is always the same, to honor Him with our lives.
 - b) The key word here is the word repent. (Last word of first sentence in Verse 33). Elihu still is arguing that Job's "guilty of something". That's why he gave the speech that God won't allow evil people to rule as Elihu argued in the last few verses. That's why Elihu is saying that we must turn over lives over to God in order to live as He desires. In a sense, we are getting a preview of what we'll see in the next lesson: "Elihu gets personal and will attack how Job is living". That'll be the theme of my next lesson and the final three chapters of a six chapter speech by this guy.
 - c) That leads back to Verse 31. Elihu's implying people appeal to God on their own terms. It never works that way. We all know that, and so does this group. Ok four verses to go.
42. Verse 34: "Men of understanding declare, wise men who hear me say to me,³⁵ 'Job speaks without knowledge; his words lack insight.'³⁶ Oh, that Job might be tested to the utmost for answering like a wicked man!
- a) If you recall, I opened this lesson by calling it "Angry Young Man Part 1". You can see it in these verses. Elihu is convinced as is Job's other three friends that Job's guilty of some sin. Further, he's arguing that Job's making his case like a wicked man, as he's failing to glorify God based on his arguments. I disagree, but that's his views. Elihu is convinced Job has to be guilty of "something", with the proof being the life Job's currently living at the moment.

- b) Elihu's main theme is "God's in charge, deal with it." He thinks Job is failing to do that.
 - i) That's why he's been ranting about Job for many chapters now. He's convinced Job only cares about justifying his life and not God's sovereignty. I'd argue that Job has never failed to be a good witness for God in spite of all that suffering. Job wanted an explanation but that's something any of us would ask for in that situation.
 - ii) The basic point of Elihu's response is God's not entitled to give Job an explanation. That point will be driven home in the last verse of this chapter. Speaking of which:
43. Verse 37: To his sin he adds rebellion; scornfully he claps his hands among us and multiplies his words against God."
- a) Don't ignore the fact that Elihu is convinced Job must be guilty of "some great sin". That's why Elihu is convinced that Job is lying there in pain. Elihu is further convinced that Job is rebelling against God for refusing to repent of that sin. Yes Elihu is wrong here, but it's necessary to get this speech out of his system, if for no other reason, then when God steps in (in Chapter 37), He'll in effect rebuke all of Elihu's arguments by saying, "Hey, none of you know the big picture. So be quiet, let me talk and explain what's going on.
 - b) Remember that I said that Satan wants to "sift" those who are godly. Jesus commented on that with Peter before his denials. Satan went after Job in Chapter 1. My point is we can't say Elihu has a valid point because he doesn't know the big picture. The important thing to me, is Job continued to be a good witness for God despite all these attacks against him throughout this book.
 - c) In the meantime, we still have "Angry Young Man Part Two" for the next lesson. Until I get to that one, I'd say the best thing for us to do is to pray that God help us to do His will and be the type of witness He wants us to be in life. Thanks for reading and time to close in prayer.
44. Heavenly Father, More than anything else, we should desire to do what is Your will. We don't always know what that is, so may Your Spirit guide us to do what it is You desire of us right at this moment. Help us to make the right decisions that please You in our lives. Thanks for the lessons you've taught through Your Word and may they inspire us to live as You desire. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.