

BAND of BROTHERS

FALL SERIES 2024 – WEEK 8

### Job 32-37: Elihu the Egotist

*“Let me go on, and I will show you the truth. For I have not finished defending God!  
I will present profound arguments for the righteousness of my Creator.  
I am telling you nothing but the truth, for I am a man of great knowledge.  
– Job 36:2-4 NLT*

- **The wise fool**

- Elihu is...
 

...young	...persistent
...well-intentioned	...cocky
...sincere	...prideful
...verbose	...wrong
- He’s sophomoric

Conceited and overconfident of knowledge but poorly informed and immature; lacking in maturity, taste, or judgment – *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*

**sophos** – wise  
 + **mōros** – foolish  
**sophomoris** – wise fool

*Fools think their own way is right,  
but the wise listen to others.* – Proverbs 12:15 NLT

*A fool’s proud talk becomes a rod that beats him,  
but the words of the wise keep them safe.* – Proverbs 14:3 NLT

- Elihu is a **knowledge nerd**
  - He's young, hip, and informed
  - A new **generation** with new **insights**
  - He demands to be heard

*"Listen to **what** I know, not **who** I know."*

*Gray hair is a crown of glory;  
it is gained **by living a godly life**. – Proverbs 16:31 NLT*

- What Elihu lacks in **experience**, he makes up for in **arrogance**

*"It is not the old who are wise,  
nor the aged who understand what is right.  
Therefore I say, '**Listen to me**;  
let me also declare my opinion.'" – Job 32:9-10 ESV*

- **The demand to be heard**

- Elihu is impatient
  - impulsive
  - impudent
  - and self-important
- He's also got an anger problem

*So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. Then Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, **burned with anger. He burned with anger at Job** because he justified himself rather than God. **He burned with anger also at Job's three friends** because they had found no answer, although they had declared Job to be in the wrong. – Job 32:1-3 ESV*

*Fools vent their anger,  
but the wise quietly hold it back. – Proverbs 29:11 NLT*

*A fool is quick-tempered... – Proverbs 12:16 NLT*

*"And shall I wait, because they do not speak,  
because they stand there, and answer no more?  
I also will answer with my share;  
I also will declare my opinion.  
For I am full of words;  
the spirit within me constrains me.  
Behold, my belly is like wine that has no vent;  
like new wineskins ready to burst.  
I must speak, that I may find relief;  
I must open my lips and answer." – Job 32:16-20 ESV*

*The wise don't make a show of their knowledge,  
but **fools broadcast their foolishness.** – Proverbs 29:23 NLT*

- **God's gift to humanity**

*"But now, hear my speech, O Job,  
and listen to all my words.*

*Behold, I open my mouth;  
the tongue in my mouth speaks.*

*My words declare the uprightness of my heart,  
and what my lips know they speak sincerely.*

*The Spirit of God has made me,  
and the breath of the Almighty gives me life." – Proverbs 33:1-4 ESV*

- Elihu suffered from chronic self-importance
- He was "bursting" to share
- But he had nothing to learn
- He was egotistical and prideful

*"An older theologian may tend toward cynicism and impatience with the process of dialogue and debate (traits especially evident in Bildad), but the young believers tend toward certainty bordering on arrogance. They often have hastily drawn together systems of theology which they will adamantly defend...Zeal is good but it needs to be trained and disciplined." – Duane A. Garrett, *Job: Evangelical Exegetical Commentary**

*Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. – Philippians 2:3 ESV*

*Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. – Romans 12:3 NLT*

- Elihu was too self-assured and self-consumed

- **Using lies to defend the truth**

*"Surely you have spoken in my ears,  
and I have heard the sound of your words.*

*You say, 'I am pure, without transgression;  
I am clean, and there is no iniquity in me.*

*Behold, he finds occasions against me,  
he counts me as his enemy,  
he puts my feet in the stocks  
and watches all my paths.'" – Job 33:9-11 ESV*

- He twists Job's words
  - He makes libelous statements
  - He portrays Job as an enemy of God

- His theology won't tolerate questions
- His God won't put up with dissent

- **Minimizing God by maximizing Him**

*“Behold, in this you are not right. I will answer you,  
for God is greater than man.*

*Why do you contend against him,  
saying, ‘He will answer none of man's words’?*

*For God speaks in one way,  
and in two, though man does not perceive it.*

*In a dream, in a vision of the night,  
when deep sleep falls on men,*

*while they slumber on their beds,  
then he opens the ears of men*

*and terrifies them with warnings,  
that he may turn man aside from his deed*

*and conceal pride from a man;  
he keeps back his soul from the pit,*

*his life from perishing by the sword. – Job 33:12-18 ESV*

- “God is great!” is a true statement
  - But it doesn't answer Job's questions
  - It is too general and vague
  - It accentuates His authority and power
  - But minimizes His mercy and grace
- His **greatness** and **goodness** are inseparable
- Elihu's God is “mercifully mean”

*“God speaks again and again...He whispers in their ears and **terrifies them** with warnings.”  
– Job 33:14, 16 NLT*

*“**He makes them turn** from doing wrong....” – Job 33:17 NLT*

*“God **disciplines people with pain** on their sickbeds, **with ceaseless aching** in their bones.” – Job 33:19 NLT*

*“Their flesh wastes away, and their bones stick out. **They are at death's door**; the angels of death wait for them.” – Job 33:21-22 NLT*

- **A dark view of God**

*Behold, God does all these things,  
twice, three times, with a man,*

*to bring back his soul from the pit,  
that he may be lighted with the light of life. – Job 33:29-30 ESV*

- Elihu isn't promising Job eternal life
  - He is saying God may let him live
  - If Job repents, God won't kill him
- Portrays God's greatness as a **liability**
- Elihu's God is great and greatly to be feared

*"For his eyes are on the ways of a man,  
and he sees all his steps.  
There is no gloom or deep darkness  
where evildoers may hide themselves.  
For God has no need to consider a man further,  
that he should go before God in judgment.  
He shatters the mighty without investigation  
and sets others in their place.  
Thus, knowing their works,  
he overturns them in the night, and they are crushed.  
He strikes them for their wickedness  
in a place for all to see,  
because they turned aside from following him  
and had no regard for any of his ways..." – Job 34:21-27 ESV*

- He is a pay-back-to-win-back God
- He brings repentance through pain
- He uses suffering to save
- He penalizes in order to pardon

- **Elihu's great God**

*"God is mighty." – 36:5*

*"...he is mighty in strength of understanding." – 36:5*

*"God is exalted in his power." – 36:22*

*"God is great, and we know him not." – 36:26*

*"...consider the wondrous works of God." – 37:14*

*"Elihu is sophomoric, has an exaggerated view of his own wisdom, makes many false accusations against Job, says some things about God that border on or cross over into heresy, and twists Job's words." – Duane A. Garrett, Job: Evangelical Exegetical Commentary*

- Elihu's God is more mean than merciful

*"...the thunder of his voice." – 37:2*

*“...he does not restrain the lightnings.” – 37:4*

*“By the breath of God...waters are frozen.” – 37:10*

*“The Almighty...he is great in power, justice, and abundant righteousness.” – 37:23*

*“Therefore **men fear him**; he does not regard any who are wise in their own conceit.” – 37:24*

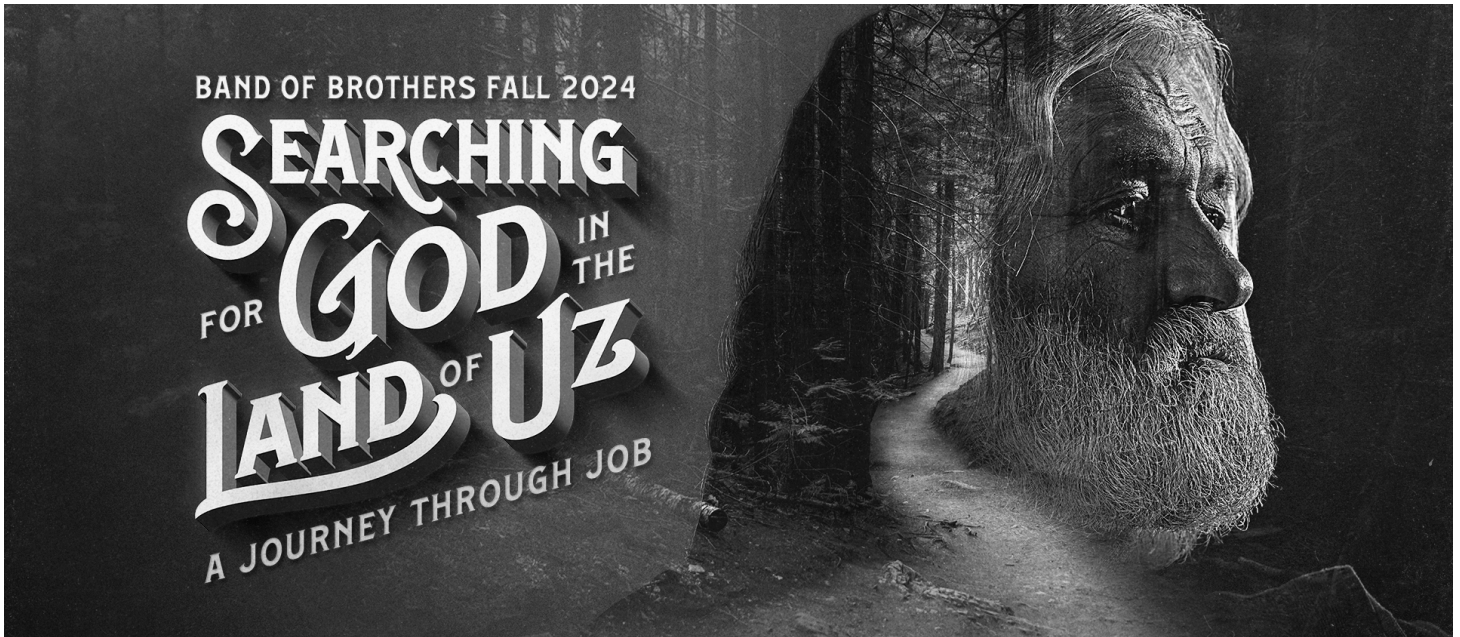
- A God of **retribution**, but not **redemption**
- A God of **judgment**, but not **grace**
- Great, but **greatly to be feared**

- **Discussion questions**

Why is it important to recognize the full scope of God’s greatness?

Why do unbelievers see God as more mean than merciful? What can we do to change their view?

Even some Christians see God as greatly to be feared rather than greatly to be praised? What’s missing from their theology?



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FALL SERIES 2024 – WEEK 9 HOMEWORK

**WEEK 9 – Wrong-sounding words rightly spoken – Job 6-7, 9-10, 12-14, 16-17, 19, 21**

Here we begin a two-week study on the various replies given by Job. In these passages, we will see Job addressing the false claims of his friends while trying to defend his innocence in the face of their relentless accusations of guilt. Job even utters a series of extended prayers to God, pleading for vindication and a validation of his innocence. While so much of what Job says in this chapters sounds disrespectful to God and filled with doubt, God declares that his statements are right and true. These two weeks will play a pivotal role in understanding why God viewed the words of Job and those of his friends so differently.

- Yes, I know this is a lot of reading, so pace yourself. It is 11 chapters, but it is essential that we understand what Job said and why God commended his words.
- Now the following pages from Ken's Devotional™ on Job: 47-48, 65-82, 87-100, 109-118, 123-127, 135-144. Again, a lot of reading, but it should give you some insights into what is going on in Job's mind and heart.
- Skim through chapters 6-7 and make a note of all the times Job seems to be saying things about God or his circumstances that are questionable and even heretical. Underline them in your Bible or write down the references below.

What does he say about his friends that reveals his disgust and disappointment with them?

- Now look at chapters 9-10 and make note of the perspective Job has of God based on his current circumstance. What does he say about God that borders on blasphemy?

What kinds of things does he accuse God of?

- Chapters 12-14 contain Job's reply to Zophar. How would you describe Job's tone? What does he say that reveals the true state of his heart?

Look at chapter 13, verse 3. What is it that Job longs for? What do you think he hopes to gain if he gets his way and what does this say about his view of God?

What does Job say in chapter 14 that reveals his pessimism and hopelessness?

- In chapter 16, Job replies to Eliphaz but addresses all three of his friends. What does he say about them that reveals his growing frustration?

What do you see in chapter 17 that Job is frustrated and hopeless?

- What do you see in chapter 19 that reveals Job might be having a change of heart?

What does Job need to have happen so that he can face the future with hope?

- In chapter 21, Job points out some flaws in his friends' theologies. Jot down just a few.



