

A Few Comments About Elihu

Generally, people's opinions of Elihu range anywhere from "total scoundrel" to "prophet of God." They consider his message to be anything from "so bad that it's not even worth refuting," to "misguided," to "just about the best that *human* understanding can produce," to "the inspired message of God."

To a large degree, one's view is determined by what he believes about the way book of Job was written. People (primarily those with "liberal" views about the Bible) who interpret the book as being developed in an "evolutionary progression" down through the centuries, by many authors, will tend to have a low esteem of Elihu. In contrast, those who consider the book to be the "inspired" ("God-breathed") Word of God generally have a more favorable attitude toward him (with a few exceptions). Yet even most "conservatives" believe his words contain at least some error - "human opinion."

When I examined the book, based on my perspective of the Bible (accepting it "as written"), I could not find anything wrong with what he said. True, he does not always say things the way that many "modern" people would like it... but he lived in a different culture, at a time in which other methods of communication were deemed acceptable. For instance, many people today become offended at his "introductory statements," in which he talks about himself. They consider him to be a "conceited braggart." Back then, however, it was necessary for him to convince the older, supposedly wiser men that he was worth listening to, before he spoke. A second example is this: Elihu often quotes the *implied meaning* of what Job says (which Job may have not fully understood), whereas today people want to see an exact quote. Also, some of his replies seem "harsh," in the opinion of many people today.

I personally think he was accurate. There is no statement in the entire book that says he was wrong in anything. Job is offered the opportunity to reply, but he doesn't do so (Job 33:5, 32). Elihu has the honor of "introducing" God (ch. 37), and God doesn't say anything against him - although God does have something to say against the others (Job and the 3 friends)! And what God says is, in many ways, just a reaffirmation and expansion of one of the points Elihu had already made! In many respects, Elihu simply "appears" on the scene, does his job, and then "disappears" from the scene, so that God can have the final glory. Sounds almost like a prophet, to me!