

# CHAPTER 32

## INTRODUCTION TO JOB 32

Job's three friends being silenced, and having no more to say in reply to him, Elihu, of whose descent some account is given, a bystander and hearer of the whole dispute between them, rises up as a moderator, and expresses some anger both against them and Job, (~~8301~~ Job 32:1-5); he makes an apology for engaging in this controversy, by reason of his youth, and they being advanced in years, (~~8306~~ Job 32:6,7); but since there is a spirit in man, that gives understanding to men of every age, and old men are not always wise, he desires they would hearken to him while he delivered his sentiments on the subject in debate, (~~8308~~ Job 32:8-10); and hopes to be heard patiently, since he had waited until they had said all they had to say, and had closely attended to it, and which fell short of convincing Job; and this he was obliged to say, lest they should be wise in their own conceit, and attribute that to men which belongs to God, (~~8301~~ Job 32:11-13); he proposes to take a new method with Job, different from theirs; and now they hearing all this from a young man, they were filled with amazement, and struck with silence; and after he had waited a while to observe whether they would say anything or not, he determined to take his turn, and show his opinion also, (~~8304~~ Job 32:14-17); and the rather because he was full of arguments, he was desirous to propose them, and was uneasy until he had brought them out; and which he was resolved to do with all impartiality and integrity, (~~8308~~ Job 32:18-22).

**Ver. 1.** *So these three men ceased to answer Job*, etc.] His three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, who came to visit and comfort him under his afflictions; but unawares were led into a controversy with him, occasioned by some rash and impatient expressions of his; which controversy had been carried on between them a considerable time, but now dropped; they grew weary of it, and now rested themselves as men do on a sabbath, as the word signifies; they set themselves down, and made no reply to Job's vindication of himself, not caring to give themselves any further trouble, or labour the point any more and longer, perceiving it was all to no purpose: or "and these three men

ceased”, etc. the last words of the preceding chapter are, “the words of Job are ended”, (<sup><8314></sup>Job 31:40); and the copulative “and” connects these with them, and shows that these men also had done speaking; so that the dispute was closed between Job and them, and the way was clear for another disputant that might think fit to enter, as Elihu did, after mentioned

*because he [was] righteous in his own eyes*; some take this to express the state of the question between them, rendering the words, “that he was righteous”, etc. <sup>f1157</sup>. The notion his friends had of him was, that he was righteous in his own account, and as he professed to be, and might so seem to others; but was a wicked man, and an hypocrite, as his afflictions showed; this point they had been labouring to prove, but, upon Job’s long and clear vindication of his integrity, they ceased to defend it: others suppose the words to be an inference of Job’s from their silence: “therefore he was righteous”, etc. they making no reply to him, he concluded himself to be quit and clear of the charge they had brought against him; but they rather, according to our version, contain a reason why they ceased to answer him; because they thought him self-conceited, self-willed, obstinate, and incorrigible; not open to conviction, stiffly insisting on his own innocence, not allowing that he was guilty of any sin or sins, which were the cause of his afflictions; otherwise, in the article of justification before God, Job was no self-righteous man, nor was he so charged by his friends; to say he was is to abuse his character, and is contrary to that which God himself has given of him; nor would he have so highly commended him as to suggest there was none like him on earth, when of all men in the world there are none more abominable to God than a self-righteous man; (see <sup><2704></sup>Isaiah 65:4 <sup><2165></sup>Luke 16:15 18:14). It is contrary to Job’s knowledge of and faith in Christ, as his living Redeemer, (<sup><8925></sup>Job 19:25); and to many clear and strong expressions, confessing his sin, disclaiming perfection, and declaring himself no self-justiciary, (<sup><8172></sup>Job 7:20 9:2,20,31-33).

**Ver. 2.** *Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite*, etc.] Both against Job and his three friends, for reasons after given; who this person was is not easy to say; they debase him too much, who make him to be Balaam the soothsayer, according to the tradition of the Jews <sup>f1158</sup>; for neither the time he lived in, nor his character, will agree with him; this man living before the times of Balaam; and being also a holy good man, which all his discourses show: and they too much exalt him who make him to be Christ; for though some phrases, being strained, may seem to agree with him, and some things in the signification of his name, and the

names of his ancestors, may be thought to answer to him; Elihu signifying, “my God is he”; the son of Barachel, “the son of the blessed God”; of the kindred of Ram, of the high and holy line; the Buzite, one “despised” and reproached; yet there are other things that cannot be said of him, as particularly in (<sup><B322></sup>Job 32:22); besides, the Messiah seems to be spoken of by him as another person, (<sup><B323></sup>Job 33:23,24); it is very probable that he was one of Job’s relations that was come to visit him in his melancholy circumstances, had been a bystander, and an hearer of the whole dispute between Job and his friends, with the management of which he was not a little displeased; he is described by his descent, when Job’s other three friends are not, because he was a young man, and not known as they were: and this serves to show the truth of this history, that it is not a mere apologue, or moral fable, but a real fact; though who his father Barachel the Buzite was cannot easily be determined; it is probable he was a descendant of Buz, the son of Nahor, Abraham’s brother, (<sup><B221></sup>Genesis 22:20,21); of this opinion are Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom; unless it can be thought he was so called from the city Buz, of which he might be an inhabitant, mentioned along with Dedan and Tema, (<sup><B273></sup>Jeremiah 25:23), places in Edom or Idumea, where or near to which Job lived:

*of the kindred of Ram*; according to the Targum, of the kindred of Abraham, in which it is followed by other Jewish writers<sup>f1159</sup>; and some even take him to be Isaac, the son of Abraham<sup>f1160</sup>; Aben Ezra thinks he is the same with Ram the father of Amminadab, (<sup><B419></sup>Ruth 4:19); but he is abundantly too late for this man to be of his kindred; others take him to be the same with Aram, the son of Kemuel, a brother of Buz, (<sup><B221></sup>Genesis 22:21); these names being used for one another, either by adding or removing a letter; (see <sup><B408></sup>Matthew 1:3); compared with (<sup><B419></sup>Ruth 4:19);

*against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God*; not that he made himself more just than God, he could never think or say so, (see <sup><B417></sup>Job 4:17); nor that he was just before him or by him; for he was so in an evangelic, though not in a legal sense; and Elihu would not have been displeased with him for asserting that; he did not deny that Job was a righteous man in the sight of God; nor that he was righteous, and in the right in the sight of God, with respect to the controversy between him and his friends; nor did he blame him for justifying himself from their charges; but that he justified himself “more” than God; so the Jewish writers<sup>f1161</sup> generally render it: he spent more time, and insisted longer on his own justification than upon the justification of God in the dealings of

his providence with him; he was more careful of his own character and reputation than he was of the honour of God, and the glory of his justice; he said more for himself than he did for God; and this displeased Elihu; it gave this good man some concern, that, though Job did not directly charge God with unrighteousness in his dealings with him, yet by consequence; and he expressed himself in such language that would bear such a construction, whether it was his real sense or not; and to hear him complain so heavily of God, and at the same time enlarge so much on his own innocence, and to importune in so bold and daring a manner to have a hearing of his cause; these things being observed by Elihu, raised his choler and indignation.

**Ver. 3.** *Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled*, etc.] He did not take part with either side, but blamed both, and took upon him to be a moderator between them, and deal impartially with them: what highly displeased him, and raised his spirit against the three friends of Job, was,

*because they had found no answer*; they were at a loss for one, for a sufficient one; they had all of them been answering him in their turns again and again, but with nothing to the purpose, not with anything conclusive and convincing; and particularly they could find and give no answer to Job's last vindication of himself:

*and [yet] had condemned Job*; as a very wicked man, and an hypocrite, for no other reason but because he was afflicted; and they still persisted in their sentiment, though Job had so fully cleared himself, and put them to entire silence; this exasperated Elihu, to observe these men to retain so unreasonable a sentiment, to pronounce such a rash sentence, and yet could make no reply to Job's defence of himself. Jarchi says, this place is one of the corrections of the Scribes, it having been formerly written "God" instead of "Job"; as if the sense was, that Elihu was provoked with them, because by their silence they had condemned the Lord, not vindicating his honour and glory as became them; but Aben Ezra declares his ignorance of that correction, and observes, that they that say so knew what was hid from him.

**Ver. 4.** *Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken*, etc.] Made an end of speaking, until he had thus expressed himself, "the words of Job are ended", (<sup>4894</sup>Job 31:40): and waited likewise until his three friends had said all they had to say, and which is here supposed and implied, as appears by what follows:

*because they [were] elder than he*; it may be added, from the original text, “in”, or “as two days”<sup>f1162</sup>; they had lived longer in the world than he, and therefore did not take upon him to speak till they had done; he, as became a young man, was swift to hear, and slow to speak; that they were old men, appears from what Eliphaz says, (<sup><3850></sup>Job 15:10).

**Ver. 5.** *When Elihu saw that [there was] no answer in the mouth of [these] three men*, etc.] That could be called an answer; nay, when he perceived they were quite nonplussed and silenced, though men of years and experience, and reputed wise and knowing:

*then his wrath was kindled*; his spirit was stirred up; his heart was hot within him; he burned with anger against those men; he was all on fire, as it were, and wanted to vent his resentment.

**Ver. 6.** *And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said*, etc.] Since there was no answer in them, he takes upon him to give one himself; but first makes an apology on account of his youth:

*I [am] young, and ye [are] very old*; or “few of days”; a few days, comparatively speaking, had he lived in the world; or “small”, or “little as two days”<sup>f1163</sup>; he had been but a little time in it, and so could be thought to have but little knowledge and experience; whereas they were old, even very old; with them were the aged and the grayheaded, (<sup><3850></sup>Job 15:10); in whom it might have been expected was much wisdom and knowledge:

*wherefore I was afraid, and durst not show mine opinion*; declare what knowledge he had of the things in dispute, lest it should appear mean, small, and contemptible; or give his sentiments concerning them, lest he should speak wrongly, and not only give offence, but do more harm than good: the first of these words, in the Arabic language<sup>f1164</sup>, as Aben Ezra observes, signifies to go back; it is used of worms, which, through fear, withdraw themselves from men; so mean an opinion had he of himself, and such a sense of his own weakness, that it not only kept him back, but even caused him to draw back, and keep out of the dispute, and at a distance from it, instead of being forward to engage in it: one Jewish commentator<sup>f1165</sup> paraphrases it

“I humbled myself as one that goes on his belly;”

referring to worms that go low and creep upon their belly, or to the prostrate posture of men that humble themselves to their superiors.

**Ver. 7.** *I said, days should speak*, etc.] That is, men of days, of many days, who have lived many days and years in the world: man in common is but of few days, even the most that men arrive to are but few; and some indeed are very few, in comparison of whom others may be said to be men of days, or to have lived many days; and to such it belongs to speak, it is their place, nor should they be prevented or interrupted; it should be allowed them to speak, nor should they be hindered; and it is their duty to speak and instruct juniors, and all that are under them; and it might be reasonably expected, that when they speak it will be to the purpose, and to profit and edification:

*and multitude of years should teach wisdom*; that is, such over whom many have passed; these it may be thought, having had an opportunity of making their observation on things, and of increasing experience, and of treasuring up a stock of knowledge, they should be very capable of, and indeed the only fit persons to teach others wisdom; either natural wisdom, or the knowledge of natural things; or divine wisdom, the knowledge of God, of his perfections and providences; and inward, spiritual, and evangelical wisdom, which lies in the knowledge of a man's self; in the knowledge of God in Christ; in the knowledge of Christ and of the Gospel of Christ, and the truths of it: this was a sentiment Elihu had entertained of ancient men, and this had restrained him from entering sooner into this debate between Job and his friends; they all being his superiors in age, and, as from thence he judged, in wisdom and knowledge also.

**Ver. 8.** *But [there is] a spirit in man*, etc.] This seems to be a correction of his former sentiment; the consideration of which gave him encouragement, though young, to declare his opinion, since there is a spirit in men, both young and old; and wherever that be, there is an ability to speak and a capacity of teaching wisdom; which is not tied to age; but may be found in young men as well as in old men: some by this understand the rational soul, or spirit, which is immaterial, immortal, is of God, and is in man; and the rather it is thought this is meant, because it is in every man, whereby he has knowledge of many things, natural and divine, and particularly is capable of trying and judging things, of discerning the difference between one thing and another, and of reasoning and discoursing upon them; and this being observed by Elihu, and he being conscious to himself of having such a spirit in him, was emboldened to engage in the debate, though a young man; but if such a spirit is meant, the words may be rendered to such a sense, verily, truly, indeed "there is [such a rational

spirit] in man”, which makes him capable of knowing many things, “but the inspiration of the Almighty”, etc. <sup>f1166</sup>; it is not owing to the rational powers and faculties of the soul of man, and the use of them, that a man becomes capable of teaching others wisdom; but to his soul or spirit being inspired by the Almighty; and such an one, be he young or old, that God breathes into, and he is under his inspiration, he is the man fit to engage in such work: though I rather think, that in this first clause the spirit of God is meant, and so Jarchi; who is an uncreated, infinite, and eternal Spirit; is of God, and is put into men; for he is not in men naturally, nor in everyone; and where he is, he is given, and there he abides; and it is from him men have their wisdom and knowledge; it is he that makes men know themselves, that searches the deep things of God, and reveals them to men, and that is the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, and leads into all truth, as it is in him; though rather the spirit in his gifts, than in his spiritual saving grace, is here meant; and so does not point to every good man in common, but to such who are favoured with the gifts of the spirit superior to others; and so the Targum interprets it of the spirit of prophecy; and on whomsoever this rests, whether on young or old, he is fit to teach men wisdom:

*and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding*; not the soul of man, or breath of God inspired by him, which is the candle of the Lord, searching the inward parts of men; for that leaves him without understanding of things of the greatest importance: rather, as the Targum, the Word of God, the essential Word, the Son of God, who gives an understanding of the best things, (~~GEN~~1 John 5:20); but, better, the Spirit of God, by whom the Scriptures were inspired, and who is breathed into men, (~~GEN~~John 20:22); and is a spirit of understanding to them; for though a man has an understanding of natural things, yet not of things spiritual; to have an understanding of them is the special gift of God, and is in particular the work of the Spirit of God: Elihu now having some reason to believe that he had the Spirit of God, and was under his inspiration, and was favoured with knowledge and understanding by him, is encouraged, though young, to interpose in this dispute between Job and his friends, and declare his opinion on the matter in debate; and which leads him to make an observation somewhat different from his former sentiment, as follows.

**Ver. 9.** *Great men are not [always] wise*, etc.] Men of grandeur and dignity, as Job’s friends might be, the rich, the honourable, and noble; the apostle is thought to refer to this, at least to express the sentiment



contained in it, (~~f1026~~1 Corinthians 1:26); or the great in quantity, the many, the multitude; and therefore are not to be followed in principle or practice; or that are great in years, well stricken in age, have lived long in the world, so some versions <sup>f1167</sup>; or are doctors, teachers of others, masters in Israel, as Nicodemus, and yet ignorant; all these may be wise in natural, civil, and worldly things, though this is not always the case; but not wise and knowing in divine and spiritual things, particularly in those respecting the causes and reasons of God's providential dealings with men, afflicting the righteous, and suffering the wicked to prosper, which is more fully explained in the next clause:

*neither do the aged understand judgment*; what is right and wrong, the difference between truth and error, and particularly the judgments of God, which are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out; even so to understand them as to observe and acknowledge his sovereignty, wisdom, truth, and faithfulness in them.

**Ver. 10.** *Therefore I said, hearken to me*, etc.] Thou O Job, and every one of you his friends, for the word is singular; though I am but a young man, yet if I have the Spirit of God, and am under the inspiration of the Almighty, I may be able to say something to you worth your hearing:

*I also will show mine opinion*; for though for a while he was timorous and fearful of doing it, lest he should mistake and expose himself, yet having duly weighed and considered the above things, he was determined to do it.

**Ver. 11.** *Behold, I waited for your words*, etc.] With great desire, with great eagerness and earnestness, in hope of meeting with arguments fully satisfying and convincing; he waited for them, as for the rain, and the latter rain, to be revived, refreshed, and edified therewith; and he patiently waited until they had done speaking:

*I gave ear to your reasons*, or "understandings" <sup>f1168</sup>; endeavoured to get into the sense and meaning of their words; not only attended to what they did say, but to what he thought they meant to say: some are not so happy in their expressions; and yet, by what they do say, with close attention it may be understood what they aim at, what is their drift and design; this Elihu was careful to attain unto, not barely to hear their words, but penetrate, if possible, into their meaning:

*whilst ye searched out what to say*; for they did not make their replies to Job immediately, and say what came uppermost at once, but they took time



to think of things, and to search out for the most forcible arguments to refute Job, and strengthen their cause; it is very probable they made a pause at the end of every speech of Job's, and considered what was proper to be said in reply, and, perhaps, consulted each other.

**Ver. 12.** *Yea, I attended unto you*, etc.] Very closely, with great application and diligence, endeavouring to get, as it were, within them, and thoroughly understand the meaning of what they said:

*and, behold, [there was] none of you that convinced Job*; which was not owing to his obstinacy, but to want of proof in them, their words and arguments; they had charged Job highly, as particularly Eliphaz, (~~1821~~ Job 22:5-9); but then they failed in their proof; they produced nothing to support their allegations:

*[or] that answered his words*; the arguments and reasons he gave in proof of his own innocence and uprightness, or the instances he produced, showing that God often afflicted good men, and suffered the wicked to prosper; and therefore no argument could be drawn from God's dealings with men, proving they were either of this or the other character, good or bad men.

**Ver. 13.** *Lest ye should say, we have found out wisdom*, etc.] They were left to themselves, and not directed to take the proper methods of convincing Job, and answering his arguments; lest they should be wise in their own conceits, and attribute too much to themselves; or Elihu told them this, that they had not convicted Job, though they had condemned him, nor answered his arguments, though they had left off speaking; and this he was obliged to say, and that for the reason before observed: for all wisdom is of God, and not to be found out or acquired by men; not natural wisdom, that is not of men, but of God, and especially supernatural wisdom, or the knowledge of divine and spiritual things, and the reason of God's dealings with the sons of men in the different manner he does, (see ~~1832~~ Job 28:12,13,20,28);

*God thrusteth him down, not man*: some think Elihu says this in reference to himself, whom God would make use of as an instrument to convince Job and answer his arguments; and that he would ascribe this not to himself, but to God; they took a natural way to convince Job, which failed, that they might not be proud of their own wisdom; he should take a more divine and spiritual method, and, if he succeeded, he should give all the glory to

God, and ascribe nothing to himself: as in the conviction and conversion of a sinner, though ministers are instruments, it is not by might or power of men, but by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts; it is God that thrusts down man from a vain opinion he has of himself; that convinces him of sin, that takes him off of his own righteousness, and humbles him, and lays him low at his feet: but they rather seem to be the words of Job's friends, as related by Elihu; and the sense is in connection with the former, either that they found it was the wisest method they could take with Job to be silent, and leave him to himself, lest they should add to his afflict; on; to which Jarchi inclines, who paraphrases it,

“we found wisdom by our silence, that we may not provoke him any more;”

which, if their sense, shows more tenderness and compassion than they had hitherto expressed, and answers pretty much to the advice given (~~4th~~ 2 Corinthians 2:6,7); or else their meaning is, that they found it the best and wisest way to leave him with God, he being so obstinate and incorrigible that none but God could move him; it was not in the power of men, or of words used by men, to make him sensible of things; or rather the meaning is, Elihu was obliged to tell them, that none of them had convinced Job, or answered his arguments, lest they should say, we have found out a wise and strong argument, proving the charge brought against him, that he must be a wicked man and an hypocrite, since God has so sorely afflicted him, and thrust him down from all his grandeur and dignity; which no man could ever have done, and God would not, if he had not been the man we suppose him to be; now Elihu's view is to observe to them, that there was nothing in this argument convincing, in which they imagined so much wisdom lay. Job's afflictions, indeed, were of God, and not men; and which he often owns himself; but this was no proof or argument of his being a wicked man: Mr. Broughton renders the words,

“the Omnipotent doth toss him, not man.”

**Ver. 14.** *Now he hath not directed [his] words against me*, etc.] That is, Job had not directed his speech to him, or levelled his arguments against him; he had not set himself and his words in battle array against him, as the word signifies; he had not lashed and irritated him as he had them; and therefore he came into the dispute calm and unprovoked, having nothing in view but truth, the glory of God, and the good of Job; and therefore hoped for better success than they had had:

*neither will I answer him with your speeches*; he proposed to take a new and different method from them, as he did; for he never charges Job with any sin or sins, or a course of living in a sinful manner, before those afflictions came upon him, and as the cause of them; he only takes notice of what was amiss in him since his afflictions, and what dropped from him in the heat of this controversy, rash and unbecoming speeches, which reflected upon the honour and justice of God; and if he made use of any words and arguments similar to theirs, yet to another purpose, and in a milder and gentler manner.

**Ver. 15.** *They were amazed*, etc.] They were like persons thunderstruck, quite surprised and astonished to hear a young man talk after this manner:

*they answered no more*; as they had ceased to answer Job, they did not undertake to answer Elihu, who had plainly told them their arguments were not convincing, their answers were no answers, and that they had done a wrong thing in condemning Job without proof; and that which they thought their greatest wisdom, and strongest argument, had no wisdom nor strength in it; namely, which was taken from his sore afflictions by the hand of God:

*they left off speaking*; or words departed from them, as Jarchi; their speech left them, they seemed deprived of it: Mr. Broughton renders the whole,

“they shrink away, do speak no more, speeches be departed from them.”

**Ver. 16.** *When one had waited*, etc.] To observe whether they would make any reply to what he had said, or any objection to his engaging in the controversy:

*for they spake not*; were as mute as fishes:

*but stood still*; like statues, had no power to move, neither to sit down nor to depart, but were as if all life, sense, and motion, were gone from them:

*[and] answered no more*; or not at all; for it does not appear that they had given him any answer before, as well as not now.

**Ver. 17.** *[I said], I will answer also my part*, etc.] Or take his turn in giving an answer to Job; what they had given being quite insufficient and unsuitable:

*I also will show mine opinion*; knowledge, or sentiment; this for a while he was fearful of doing, but, upon a thorough and serious consideration of things, he determined upon it, and now repeats it, to assure he would do it; the reasons of which follow.

**Ver. 18.** *For I am full of matter*, etc.] Or “full [of] words”<sup>f1169</sup>; not of mere words, such that have nothing solid and substantial in them; this is the character of a fool, (<sup><2104></sup>Ecclesiastes 10:14); nor was Elihu a loquacious talkative man, as Job is charged to be, a man full of talk, (<sup><3102></sup>Job 11:2); but he was full of words, which had fulness of matter in them, which were to the purpose, and contained strong reasonings and solid arguments; his mind was full of them, and he could easily fill his mouth with them, and was not easy until he had uttered them: so an able minister of the word may be said to be full of words, of the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus, of useful doctrines, when the word of Christ dwells richly in him, and he has a rich treasure in an earthen vessel, is full of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ; has a large knowledge of Gospel truths, a real experience of them in the heart, great gifts to express them to others, and is full of power and of the Spirit of God to declare them, as this good man was:

*the spirit within me constraineth me*, or “the spirit of my belly”<sup>f1170</sup>; alluding to wind pent up therein, which, unless expelled, gives great uneasiness and pain: he either means the Spirit of God within him, as in (<sup><3318></sup>Job 32:8), by whom the prophets were inspired and spoke, by whom ordinary ministers of the word are qualified for their work, and by whom they are led into all truth, and who presses and obliges them to speak what they know; there is a necessity upon them to preach the Gospel wholly and faithfully, and a woe unto them if they do not: or else his own spirit, influenced and actuated by the Spirit of God; as the spirit of the Apostle Paul was stirred up in him to speak, when he saw the idolatry and superstition of the people of Athens, (<sup><4476></sup>Acts 17:16); so love to God and Christ, and the souls of men, the honour of God, and interest of religion, constrain the ministers of Christ to speak in his name, notwithstanding all the opposition made unto them, and reproach cast upon them.

**Ver. 19.** *Behold, my belly [is] as wine, [which] hath no vent*, etc.] Or, “is not opened”<sup>f1171</sup>, like a bottle of wine, as Ben Gersom, which is stopped close, and the wine in it new; which is most apt to ferment, and should have vent given it; so the Targum,

“as new wine, which is not opened:”

in the same manner Jarchi and Bar Tzemach interpret it; in these words Elihu illustrates, by a metaphor taken from new wine put into bottles and tightly stopped, what he had before more literally and properly expressed, and so in the following clause:

*it is ready to burst like new bottles*; or perhaps it may be better rendered, “like bottles of new wine”<sup>f1172</sup>; for new bottles are not so apt to burst as old ones, and especially when they have new wine in them; the bottles of the ancients, and in the eastern countries, being made of skin, which better agrees with what our Lord says, (<sup>4197</sup>Matthew 9:17); by his belly he means his mind, which was full of matter, and that matter he compares to new wine in bottles, tightly stopped, which need vent, and are in danger of bursting: the doctrine of the Gospel is like to wine, (<sup>2170</sup>Song of Solomon 7:9); to wine neat and clean, being free from all human mixtures; to wine of a good flavour and pleasant taste, as the Gospel is to those whose taste is changed; to generous wine, which revives, and refreshes, and comforts; all which effects the doctrines of the Gospel have, when attended with a divine influence: and it may be compared to new wine; not that it is a new and upstart doctrine, it is the everlasting Gospel, made known immediately on the fall of Adam, and was ordained before the world for our glory; but because it is newly, or of late, under the Gospel dispensation, more clearly revealed: ministers of the word are like vessels, into which it is put; they are but vessels, even earthly vessels, and have nothing but what is put into them; and they are like vessels stopped up, when they are straitened in themselves, or shut up by the Lord, that they cannot come forth freely in their ministry, and when any outward restraint is laid upon them by persecuting magistrates, and when there is no open door for them in Providence; which gives them great pain and uneasiness, and, let the consequence be what it will, they are weary of forbearing, and cannot stay, but must speak the things they see and know; (see <sup>3411</sup>Jeremiah 20:9 <sup>408</sup>Acts 4:18,20).

**Ver. 20.** *I will speak, that I may be refreshed*, etc.] That his mind might be made easy; the matter it was full of lay with much weight upon it, pressed him hard, and gave him pain; and therefore he determines to speak his mind, and disburden himself: so a minister of the word speaks sometimes to the refreshment of others, the Gospel being a word in season to weary souls, bread to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, even wine to them that are of an heavy heart; and especially it is refreshing when the love of God is shed abroad in the heart through it, and the presence of God is enjoyed

under it; and sometimes he speaks to the refreshment of himself with others, ( <6152>Romans 15:32); and whether it be so, one or the other, yet a faithful minister eases his mind, discharges his conscience, and is clear from the blood of all, when he truly and fully declares the whole counsel of God, so far as he is acquainted with it:

*I will open my lips and answer*; speak freely and boldly what was upon his mind, and he had to say, and which he judged would be a sufficient answer to Job; the opening of his lips is a phrase used by him in allusion to the opening of a bottle, full of new wine, the metaphor before expressed by him.

**Ver. 21.** *Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person*, etc.] Neither the person of Job, because of his poverty and affliction, indulging too much to pity and commiseration, and affecting to get a good name from others for it; nor the persons of his three friends, on account of their wealth and grandeur; for neither the persons of the poor, nor of the rich, are to be regarded in judgment, or in the decision of any matter between them, but truth and justice are to be attended to; (see <0238>Exodus 23:3 <08915>Leviticus 19:15). Elihu was determined with himself not to respect the person of any, and he hopes that Job and his friends would bear with him, and excuse him on that account:

*neither let me give flattering titles unto men*; he does not mean titles of civil honour and respect, which belong to men, and are in common use among men, according to the different stations of life, men are in; for honour is to be given to whom it is due; and it is no piece of flattery to give men their proper and usual titles, as it was not in the Evangelist Luke, and in the Apostle Paul, (<0003>Luke 1:3 <0025>Acts 26:25); but he means such titles that do not belong to men, and are unsuitable unto them, and only given them by way of flattery; as to call a man wise and prudent when he is the reverse; or a holy, just, and good man, when he is a very wicked one. Elihu was resolved not to act such a part, and he hopes the persons he had to deal with would not take it amiss that he spake his mind plainly and freely, and called a spade a spade; not must they or any other expect to be complimented by him with the characters of wise and prudent, just and good, if they did not appear to him to be so. According to Ben Gersom the sense is, that he would not hide a man's name under epithets, but call him by his proper name; he would not do as they had done by Job, who, under covert names, meant him; as when they described a wicked man, and an

hypocrite, designed him, but did not say so express words; now Elihu suggests, that, should Job or they appear to him to have acted a wrong part, he should tell them plainly of it, and say, thou art the man.

**Ver. 22.** *For I know not to give flattering titles*, etc.] He had not been brought up in such a manner, nor taught to use them; he had not been inured to them, nor did he know or approve of them; nor could he in conscience give them;

*[in so doing], my Maker would soon take me away*; it being such a piece of wickedness, so abominable to him, and so highly resented by him, that I might justly expect he would, as he could, strike me dead at once; just as Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead for lying, (~~4RE~~ Acts 5:5,10): or he knew that it would be but a short time at most, and he should be taken out of the world by death, when he must appear before his Maker, his Judge, to whom he must give an account of his words, as well as actions; the awe of this being continually on his mind would not admit him to flatter any man. Some render it, “will burn me”<sup>f1173</sup>, as in (~~4RE~~ 2 Samuel 5:21); so Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom, that is, in hell fire; (see ~~4RE~~ Psalm 12:2,3).