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# *Job*

## *Chapter Thirty Two:*



I know that my Redeemer lives, and that  
in the end he will stand upon the earth.

- Job 19:25 -

*The Discourse of Eliud*

*The commentary on the Book of Job, is by Saint Thomas Aquinas and was translated by Brian Mulladay and edited by Rev. Joseph Kenny, O.P.  
The book shows how human affairs are ruled by divine providence using probable arguments.*

## **CHAPTER THIRTY TWO: THE DISCOURSE OF ELIUD**

### **The Lesson: Introductory Remarks**

1 So these three men gave up answering Job because he seemed righteous to them. 2 But Eliud, the son of Barachiel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, was angry and indignant. He was angry against Job because he said he was just before God. 3 Further, he was indignant against his three friends because they had not found a reasonable answer but had merely condemned Job. 4 Therefore, Eliud waited for Job to speak because those who spoke were his elders. 5 Since he had seen that the three could not answer, he was violently angry; 6 and Eliud, the son of Barachiel, the Buzite answered: I am younger in years and you are older. On that account, I lowered my head and was reluctant to express my opinion to you. 7 For I was hoping that a greater length of years would speak and a great number of years would speak wisdom. 8 But as I see the spirit is in men, and the inspiration of the Almighty gives understanding. 9 It is not the old that are wise nor the aged that understand what is right. 10 Therefore, I will speak: Listen to me and I will show you, even I, my learning. 11 For I have listened for your prudence, I have heard your practical wisdom as long as you debated in your arguments 12 and as long as I thought you would say something, I waited for you to speak. But as I see it, there is no one who can argue with Job and answer his arguments among you. 13 Lest perhaps you should say: We have found wisdom, God threw him down and not man. 14 He has spoken nothing to me and I will not answer him according to your discourses. 15 They have been terrified and they did not answer him further, and abstained from speaking by their own will. 16 Therefore, as I waited and they did not speak, they stood still and did not respond further, 17 I will answer for my part and I will show my knowledge. 18 For I am full of speeches and the spirit of my womb confines me. 19 Behold, my womb is like must which breaks new casks without a vent. 20 I will speak and I will breathe a little. I will open my lips and I will answer. 21 I will not show respect of persons to any man and I will not equate God with any man. 22 Truly I do not know for how long I will live and if my maker will take me away after a little while.

After the dispute between Job and his friends had ended, the argument of Eliud against Job is introduced. He uses more penetrating arguments against Job than the prior speeches and approaches nearer the truth. So Job does not answer him, although he still deviates a little from the truth and interprets the words of Job in the wrong sense, as we shall clearly see.

He now shows what he wants to say continuing, “I will open my lips and I will answer,” the words of Job. He shows the measure he should observe in answering when he says, “I will not show respect of persons to any man.” For one shows partiality in answering someone when he abandons the truth to defer to the man. He shows, therefore, he does not want to do this saying, “and I will not equate God with man.” For the present dispute seemed to him to be of such a character that, if he should defer to man, he would not guard the reverence due to divine excellence. He shows the reason he fears to do this saying, “Truly I do not know for how long I will live,” in this mortal life, to be able to promise myself a long period of time to do penance, “and if my maker will take me away after a little while,” if he will take me by death to judgment. From this it is clear that Eliud agreed with Job in the fact that the retribution of sins was after death. Otherwise, it would seem vain to fear to offend God because of the proximity of death.

***END OF JOB CHAPTER 32***

He intends to excuse himself in the answer he will give, not only in their eyes, but also in the eyes of others, and therefore, he turns his discourse to others saying, "They have been terrified," to speak further lest they be more clearly convinced, "and they did not answer further," the arguments of Job. He shows that this silence was the result of their laziness, and not due to the effective character of the arguments of Job, saying, "and abstained from speaking by their own will," for they kept silence from negligence. For when someone is convinced by effective argument, he does not stop speaking by his own will, but rather is stopped from speaking by another. Since, therefore, they had failed, he says that he wants to make up for their defect, and so he says, "Therefore, as I waited," for a long time in deferring to them, "and as they did not speak," in answer to the discourses of Job, "I will answer for my part," because the defense of the truth is everyone's task, and each one should devote to it what he can as though from his part.

However, he was not moved only by the zeal to defend the truth, but also by vain glory, and so he says, "and I will of show my knowledge." In fact, someone who desires vain glory wants to show off his excellence clearly if he has it and therefore he shows that he has the greatest ability to answer when he says, "For I am full of words," as if to say: Abundant answers occur to me. Since the faculty does not suffice for a man to act unless he is aroused by something he says, "and the spirit of my womb confirms me." The womb is the place of conception, and so here the womb metaphorically means the intellect conceiving various intelligible objects. Therefore the spirit of the uterus is the will impelling man to manifest the conceptions of his heart by speech. It is annoying to a man to not realize what he desires, and so he shows the anxiety which he suffered in silence by a comparison saying, "Behold my womb," my mind, "is like must," which ferments, and "without a vent breaks new casks." For unless the gas caused fermenting new wine escapes in some opening, the gas is so increased inside that it sometimes breaks the casks. So he also compares himself to new wine because of his youth, and therefore, from his great desire to speak he thinks there is danger which threatens unless he can express himself, and so he says, "I will speak and I will breathe a little," as if to say: In speaking words I will evaporate the interior ferment so that I can calm the anxiety of my desire.

He begins by stating that the reason which moved him to speak was indignation against Job and against his friends. The text begins with the premise beforehand of the silence of the friends when it says, "So these three men about whom the text has already spoken, "gave up answering Job." It is noteworthy here that the text would not call them men if it were not an actual event and only a made up parable. The text next indicates the cause of the silence saying, "because he seemed righteous to them." For Job had said many things in showing his own justice, which these men could not contradict. For both of these reasons, the silence of his friends and the fact that Job seemed to them to be righteous, Eliud, who stood by was agitated to anger. So the text continues, "But angry," in heart, "and indignant," in showing exterior signs of anger, "there was Eliud," which describes his name, "the son of Barachiel," which describes his anger, "The Buzite," described by his native land, and "of the family of Ram," which describes his tribe. This whole description suffices to show that this was an actual event.

The text next explains the cause of his anger against Job first when it says, "He was angry against Job because he said he was just before God," according to divine testimony. This is especially against what Job said, "He knows my way," and later, "My feet followed in his steps." (23:10) As to his friends, the text continues, "Further, he was indignant against his three friends because they had not found a reasonable answer," with which they might respond to his words in which he asserted that he was righteous, "but they merely condemned Job," saying that he was evil.

The text shows the reason why Eliud had previously not answered Job in anyway when it says, "Therefore Eliud waited for Job to speak," without contradicting his speeches, "because those who spoke were his elders," deferring to them as though to wiser men, and because their old age required it. But since it did not seem to him that reverence for someone should prejudice the truth, he, though younger, began to answer angrily the three elders, and so the text continues, "Since he had seen that the three could not answer," the arguments of Job, "he was violently angry," because he thought that the truth would perish by their laziness. So he wanted to defend the truth as he understood it in their place. The text therefore continues, "and Eliud, the son of Barachiel, the Buzite, answered," to the discourses and arguments of Job.

In his anger he first excuses his former silence, both because of his age, "And he said, 'I am younger in years,'" and because of the old age of the others, and so he says, "and you are older." Young men ought to defer in reverence to their elders, and so he says, "on that account I lowered my head," as a sign of reverence and humility, "and I was reluctant to express my opinion to you," so as not to seem presumptuous in hindering the words of wiser men by my discourses. It seems probable that old men speak more wisely for two reasons. First, because young men from the fervor of the soul frequently propose many things without any order, whereas old men because of the gravity of age speak more maturely. So he says, "For I was hoping that a greater length of years would speak," with more seriousness and with greater effect. Second, because old men by the experience of a long life-time can experience many things, and consequently, speak with more wisdom. So the text continues, "and a great number of years," because of which one can acquire experience, "would teach wisdom," received from experience.

As a consequence he excuses the fact that he is now going to begin to speak because he has experienced the fact that age is not the sufficient cause of wisdom, but rather divine inspiration, and so he says, "But as I see," that is, I consider, the effect, "the spirit," of God, "is in men," in as much as he operates in them. This is why he adds, "and the inspiration of the Almighty," by which he breathes the Holy Spirit into men, who "is the spirit of wisdom and understanding," (Is. 11:2) "gives understanding," of the truth which is the beginning of wisdom in those who are inspired. He shows that this inspiration is the special cause of wisdom on the basis of the fact that age does not perfectly cause wisdom. So he says, "It is not the old that are wise," as to the knowledge of divine truth, "nor the aged that understand what is right," as to the ordering of human acts. Because although he was not aged, he nevertheless was confident that he was inspired by God. Therefore, he dared to speak, and so he says, "Therefore, I will speak."

In his speech, he first induces them to listen on the authority of God, by whose inspiration he was speaking, and so he says, "Listen to me," so that they would not interrupt his discourse. To those listening he promises dogmas of science, and so he then says, "and I will show you, even I," although I am young, "my learning," from which I will answer the arguments of Job. It was just that they listen to him because he had listened to them, and so he continues, "For I have waited," for a long time, "for your discourses," which you pronounced against Job. Since he thought he could discern what had been said well and what had not been said well he then says, "I have heard your practical arguments," as if to say: In listening I judged what in your words pertained to prudence. He had waited not a short, but a long time. He determines the end of his waiting by two things. First, from their decision, and so he says, "as long as you debated in your arguments," as long as it pleased you to argue against Job. Second, he determines the limit from the hope that he had in their wise teaching. He says, "and as long as I thought that you would say something I waited for you to speak." There is no need to listen any longer to someone on a subject when he does not hope he is going to say something useful. He saw that the words which they used against Job were not efficacious. First, certainly, because they were not able to convince him, and so he says, "But as I see it, there is no one who can argue with Job," and convince him with arguments. Second, because they could not resist his arguments, and so he then says, "and answer," sufficiently, "among you," from your understanding. Or this can mean there is no one, "among you," of your number to answer "his arguments," the arguments he uses against you. Their principal arguments against Job were founded on the adversities of Job which they attributed to divine judgment which is not able to err. He consequently shows that this answer is not sufficient saying, "Lest perhaps you should say, 'We have found wisdom,'" a sufficiently wise response, "God (who cannot err) threw him down," into adversities, "and not man," who can deceive and be deceived. He intended to answer more efficaciously, and so he then says, "He has spoken nothing to me," for he wants to show that he does not speak because he has been provoked, "and I will not answer him according to your discourses," because I will not follow your ways in answering him, but I will find another more effective way to respond.