



The Sunday called Sexagesima, or the
second Sunday before Lent.

The Collect.

O LORD God, who seest that we put not our trust in any thing that we do; Mercifully grant that by thy power we may be defended against all adversity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

1 So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. 2 Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God. 3 Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job. 4 Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken, because they were elder than he. 5 When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, then his wrath was kindled. 6 And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion. 7 I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom. 8 But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. 9 Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment. 10 Therefore I said, Hearken to me; I also will shew mine opinion. 11 Behold, I waited for your words; I gave ear to your reasons, whilst ye searched out what to say. 12 Yea, I attended unto you, and, behold, there was none of you that convinced Job, or that answered his words: 13 Lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom: God thrusteth him down, not man. 14 Now he hath not directed his words against me: neither will I answer him with your speeches. 15 They were amazed, they answered no more: they left off speaking. 16 When I had waited, (for they spake not, but stood still, and answered no more;) 17 I said, I will answer also my part, I also will shew mine opinion. 18 For I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me. 19 Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles. 20 I will speak, that I may be refreshed: I will open my lips and answer. 21 Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man. 22 For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my maker would soon take me away. (Job 32:1-22)

An interesting new personality comes into the picture though he seemingly was present to hear the arguments of Job and his three friends. Though he has listened

patiently to all discussion, he can no longer remain silent. The meaning of the name, ELIHU, is "God is Jehovah" and he is the son of Barachel (meaning God has blessed). He seems to suggest a prefigure of Christ as an intermediary for Job. This is hinted at in the next chapter: *If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness: Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom. His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth: He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness.* (Job 33:23-26 KJV) He is young in years (as was Christ), he speaks true theology (Christ was its Author), and he comes into the scene after the debate has reached a failure to resolve the matter of Job. So Christ came in the fullness of time to redeem those who had proven their failure to be righteous.

The three friends stopped their arguments against Job, not because they felt defeated by Job's words, but because they failed to convince Job of his unrighteousness. Jesus could not convince the Pharisees of truth for the same reason. They were righteous in their own eyes. *And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* (Luke 18:9-14)

Wisdom knows no parents. Whether uttered by a five year old, or an elderly lady or gentleman, it still wears the same uniform of truth and reason. Out of customary respect, Elihu has held his tongue during the exchange but having heard not even a single answer to Job's argument from his three friends, he can remain silent no more. When you know a sure truth but do not hear it applied when it should be, don't we all break the silence with our declarations of it?

In verses 1-5, Elihu is introduced and the reasons for his silence given. This entire chapter is truly introductory only to a longer discourse by Elihu. After stating his reasons for remaining silent thus far, Elihu launches into the three friends for not answering Job's arguments point by point. It should be pointed out that Job admits that none are righteous before God, but his insistence upon his own righteousness in the cardinal points of the law does not give evidence of humility. We are all the same. We will all agree that all men fall short in righteousness, but we then embark to show how we are somehow righteous anyway. What nonsense! Please read again the parable above of the Pharisee and the publican. In his personal works, the Pharisee may have had more outward signs of righteousness than the publican. The publican was admittedly a gross sinner, **but he KNEW it!** He appealed to God out of humility while the Pharisee made no appeal at all, but boasted out of his prideful presumed righteousness.

7 I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom. 8 But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. 9 Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment. It would normally be expected that gray hairs speak greater wisdom than youth, so Elihu has maintained his silence, but he now articulates a great truth: Age does not hold a monopoly on wisdom and is often devoid of it. Even great men are often woefully

lacking of it. In such a case, age becomes irrelevant to the point that the God-given wisdom of youth must speak. Wisdom needs no parchment of certification to prove itself. It bears its own authority and credibility. A Doctorate of Divinity, or of Law, simply means that the printing press has been a benefit in the making. Its only worth is the wisdom that perchance was gained in the earning of it. I have known Christians with very little formal education whose knowledge of Holy Scripture, and the wisdom to apply it, exceed greatly the biblical knowledge and wisdom of those who stand as professors of Divinity in seminaries. How can this be? It is because God gives the wisdom, and He always has. Have you ever been taught wisdom from the lips of a child? I have – over and over again.

12 Yea, I attended unto you, and, behold, there was none of you that convinced Job, or that answered his words: 13 Lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom: God thrusteth him down, not man. The wisdom of man is no match for that of God; or, a more accurate way to declare it is: there is NO WISDOM apart from that which comes from God. No man can thrust another down – that role belongs to the Lord his God. Elihu claims his wisdom on the authority of God and not his own. *The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life..... Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead: I also am formed out of the clay* (Job 33:4, 6) Jesus, too, was formed of clay in his Body, but He stood in the stead of the Father, and was God. Elihu begins this dialogue with a spirit of humility armed with the courage of Godly wisdom. Such wisdom is recognized even by fools and will often still their words in their mouths: 14 Now he hath not directed his words against me: neither will I answer him with your speeches. 15 They were amazed, they answered no more: they left off speaking. Elihu will not answer the arguments Job mad to his friends since their words lacked wisdom and would not be used by Elihu in response to Job.

Though youthful, Elihu is full of the confidence of that which wisdom instills. He has waited and been just 'busting' to speak truth where none other have spoken it though they have used many words empty of meaning. . 16 When I had waited, (for they spake not, but stood still, and answered no more;) 17 I said, I will answer also my part, I also will shew mine opinion. 18 For I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me. 19 Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles

Oppression of free speech is a debilitating force. We grow desperate to speak a word of wisdom where only words of foolishness have been spoken. It is even refreshing to share deep and life-changing truths of the Gospel to those who have heard only error preached from America's pulpits. 20 I will speak, that I may be refreshed: I will open my lips and answer. Elihu will not have his speech suppressed.

21 Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man. Wisdom needs not flowery window dressing. It does not respect one person over another – just like the effects of gravity pull on the Emperor in the same way as the vassal. 22 For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my maker would soon take me away. If we are respecters of persons, we lose the credibility of wisdom and honor. It may tickle our ears to be called 'Guvenuh' by the doorman, but are we any more the Governor than before we were addressed. Actually we become less so if we have not corrected the error on the spot. Rather than correct the title, the doorman, no doubt, got a handsome tip.

This concludes Elihu's introduction to his following clams in wisdom. But we have learned that self-righteousness, even in a good man, creates unrighteousness. Any well articulated arguments that do not lift up the truth of God, no matter how well meaning, are not wise.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. AMEN.