

THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE ELIHU SPEECHES IN JOB 32-37

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A unique perspective on the dilemma and suffering of Job is presented in Job 32-37 by a man named Elihu.¹ These six chapters, covering five separate speeches² attributed to this young "wise man," seem to hold an exceptionally important position in the overall argument of the book, specifically in understanding ~ Job's struggle with undeserved suffering. If the speeches in these six chapters are not deemed authentic, their contribution to the subject of Job's suffering and the overall argument of the book is in question.

However, if it can be demonstrated that Elihu's speeches are genuine and that their place in the Book of Job is integral, then the reader may confidently conclude that the message Elihu offered is applicable to the purpose and argument of the book. It is important to deal with the question of the genuineness of Elihu's - speeches because of (a) the extent of the textual material that is "

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¹ The proper name אֱלִיָּהוּ means "He is my God" or "My God is He." The latter is adopted by E. W. Bullinger (*The Book of Job* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990], 161). Elihu is similar to the name Elijah, "Yahweh is my God." Elihu's name bears witness to אֱלֹהִים as the highest God. Elihu's name may even be "an expression of his theological program": It is Yahweh who speaks through his speeches. Wisdom says that as it turned out, "the message epitomized in his name became an integral part of Elihu's message to Job (e.g., 33:12-13; 34:18-19, 23,31-32; 35:2-11; 36:26; 37:22-24)" (Thurman Wisdom, "The Message of Elihu: Job 32-37," *Biblical Viewpoint* 21 [1987]: 29). Elihu's identity is also connected with three other names, Barachel, Buz, and Ram. Elihu is therefore the only character in the book with a recorded genealogy, which "may point to his aristocratic heritage" (Robert L. Alden, *Job, New American Commentary* [Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1993], 316; also see David McKenna, *Job* [Dallas, TX: Word, 1982], 225).

² Job 32:6-22; 33:1-33; 34:2-37; 35:2-16; 36:2-37:24. Scholars differ in their opinion on the division of the speeches. For a detailed representation of this five-part division see David Allen Diewert, "The Composition of the Elihu Speeches: A Poetic and Structural Analysis" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1991), 576-79.

allotted to Elihu (in comparison to the four chapters assigned to Eliphaz, the three to Bildad, and the two to Zophar), (b) the placement of the Elihu speeches in the book, and (c) the reaction the speeches have drawn from critical circles on the question of authenticity.

OPPONENTS OF ELIHU'S AUTHENTICITY

Before the nineteenth century both Jewish and Christian scholars held a number of differing opinions on the Elihu speeches.³ The negative opinions suggested that Elihu was a figure inspired by Satan,⁴ or that he was a false prophet like Balaam.⁵ By the end of the eighteenth century the structure and authenticity of the Elihu speeches were still the focus of diverse opinions. Elihu, his speeches, and his importance suffered severely at the hands of critics.⁶ In the nineteenth century Stuhlmann, whose evaluation was based on the sudden appearance and subsequent disappearance of Elihu in the book, was the first to suggest that the speeches of Elihu were a later addition.⁷ He was followed by Ewald in 1836 and a considerable number of scholars after him.⁸ Stuhlmann, however, set the stage for research that culminated with a thorough and influential critical analysis by Nichols in 1911.

Nichols approached the Elihu speeches largely from the standpoint of authenticity. She cited over forty authors from Stuhlmann to Peake, who considered them secondary additions, and twenty-seven others from Jahn to Posselt, who defended the

³ Although a full examination of this question cannot be presented beyond the needs of the topic here, three thorough investigations have been made: Robert V. McCabe Jr., "The Significance of the Elihu Speeches in the Context of the Book of Job" (Th.D. diss., Grace Theological Seminary, 1985), 1-36; David Arvid Johns, "The Literary and Theological Function of the Elihu Speeches in the Book of Job" (Ph.D. diss., Saint Louis University, 1983), 1-9; and Diewert, "The Composition of the Elihu Speeches: A Poetic and Structural Analysis," 1-23). Also see Helen Hawley Nichols, "The Composition of the Elihu Speeches (Job Chaps. 32-37)," *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 27 (January 1911): 97-186.

⁴ Testament of Job 41:5; 42:2; 43:4-17. See R. P. Spittler, "Testament of Job," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 1:861-63.

⁵ Otto Zockler, "The Book of Job," in *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, ed. John Peter Lange (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1960), 562-63.

⁶ For example J. G. Eichhorn, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (Göttingen: Rosenbusch, 1780-1783), 3:630.

⁷ Matthias H. Stuhlmann, *Hiob, ein religiöses Gedicht aus dem Hebraischen neu übersetzt, geprüft und erläutert* (Hamburg: Friedrich Perthes, 1804), 14-24, 40-44.

⁸ Heinrich Ewald, *Commentary on the Book of Job*, trans. J. Smith (Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1882).

speeches as part of the original work.⁹ Even Nichols, who did not accept the Elihu speeches as original to the poem, admitted that "those who have defended Elihu in the critical debate have usually found in his words the positive solution of the problem [of Job's suffering], which the poem without them fails to give, and a preparation for the Theophany."¹⁰ In regard to recent investigations "it would be fair to say that the studies of Job 32-37 since Nichols have also been chiefly dominated by this issue of their relationship to the rest of the book."¹¹

Janzen lists four objections to the authenticity of the speeches. "(1) Elihu is mentioned nowhere else, not even in the epilogue, his long speeches interrupt the continuity between chapters 31 and 38, and he contributes little if anything to the content or dramatic movement of the book; (2) the literary style is diffuse and pretentious, inferior to that of the rest of the book; (3) the linguistic usage differs from that in the rest of the poetry; and (4) the speeches offer an alternative resolution to Job's problem from that of the (baffling) divine speeches."¹²

Although Janzen views the speeches of Elihu as taxing on the reader, he states that "the Elihu speeches present no critical problem," and he sees "no cogent reason to view them as other than integral to the book."¹³ In addition to the objections summarized

⁹ Nichols, "The Composition of the Elihu Speeches (Job Chaps. 32-37)," 99-103. Also see Arthur s. Peake, *Job: Introduction, Revised Version with Notes and Index*, Century Bible (Edinburgh: Clark and Jack, 1904); Johann Jahn, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (n.p., n.d., cited in Nichols, "The Composition of the Elihu Speeches (Job Chaps. 32-37)," 99; and Wenzel Posse It, "Der Verfasser der Elihu-Reden," *Biblische Studien* (FreiburgJ 14 (1909): 1-111.

¹⁰ Nichols, "The Composition of the Elihu Speeches (Job Chaps. 32-37)," 101.

¹¹ Diewert, "The Composition of the Elihu Speeches: A Poetic and Structural Analysis," 4. Also see McCabe, "The Significance of the Elihu Speeches in the Context of the Book of Job," 1-36; Nonnan C. Habel, "The Role of Elihu in the Design of the Book of Job," in *In the Shelter of Elyon*, ed. W. Boyd Barrick and John R. Spencer (Sheffield: JSOT, 1984); and Johns, "The Literary and Theological Function of the Elihu Speeches in the Book of Job," 7-9.

¹² J. Gerald Janzen, *Job, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Atlanta: Knox, 1985), 217-18. Cf. Johns, "The Literary and Theological Function of the Elihu Speeches in the Book of Job," 2. William T. Davidson gives three similar reasons why many commentators reject Job 32-37 as original to the text of Job and he also states that the Elihu speeches confuse rather than clarify the poem (*The Wisdom-Literature of the Old Testament* [London: Kelly, 1900], 52). Also see John Briggs Curtis, "Why Were the Elihu Speeches Added to the Book of Job?" *Proceedings* 8 (1988): 93-99; and Robert Gordis, "Elihu the Intruder," in *Biblical and Other Studies*, ed. Alexander Altmann (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 60-78. Zockler, after citing nine different arguments, which he attempted to refute, finally accepted the Elihu speeches as secondary, describing the linguistic argument as "the most weighty of all" ("The Book of Job," 272).

¹³ Janzen, *Job*, 218.

by Janzen, other scholars maintain an intermediate position by holding to one original author who made an addition to his book in later life.¹⁴ Others do not reject the authenticity of the Elihu speeches but simply maintain either that they are a later addition by an unknown author,¹⁵ or that they are a compilation by a later author, editor, or series of editors.¹⁶

Once the authenticity or position of the speeches of Elihu was doubted, it seemed only logical that the next critical step was to dissect them,¹⁷ rearrange their position,¹⁸ or reject all or portions

¹⁴ Diewert, "The Composition of the Elihu Speeches: A Poetic and Structural Analysis," 4. This intermediate position has been recently advocated by Norman H. Snaith (*The Book of Job: Its Origin and Purpose*, Studies in Biblical Theology [London: SCM, 1968], 72-91) and Gordis ("Elihu the Intruder," 60-78). Gordis suggests that the original author/poet added Elihu and his insight on moral discipline as one solution to the problem of suffering (*The Book of God and Man: A Study of Job* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965], 110-16; cf. idem, *The Book of Job* [New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1978], 548-53).

¹⁵ See comments by Johns, "The Literary and Theological Function of the Elihu Speeches in the Book of Job," 4-5.

¹⁶ Rowley sees the Book of Job as canonical without the Elihu speeches (H. H. Rowley, *The Book of Job*, New Century Bible Commentary [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976], 13:206). Nichols says two authors were involved in the Elihu speeches ("The Composition of the Elihu Speeches [Job Chaps. 32-37]," 116-22). Nichols's inquiry into the "composition" of the Elihu speeches is primarily a source-critical analysis, and in this she stands in the tradition of Julius Wellhausen. According to Diewert, Nichols's main theory is that the speeches, as they presently exist, are two different works, each constituting reactions to Job and his theology. Nichols's faith in the testimony of the Septuagint is the basis for her theory (Diewert, "The Composition of the Elihu Speeches: A Poetic and Structural Analysis," 19). Jastrow and Irwin see four authors at work in the Book of Job (Morris Jastrow, *The Book of Job: Its Origin, Growth and Interpretation* [Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1920], 77-82); William A. Irwin, "The Elihu Speeches in the Criticism of the Book of Job," *Journal of Religion* 17 [January 1937]: 37-47). Samuel Terrien holds that the Elihu section was written by a different author. But unlike those above, Terrien says Elihu is essential to the book and is beneficial as a contribution to an understanding of Job's suffering; he says it is an "educational and revelatory process." He also sees Elihu as preparatory to the Yahweh speeches (*Job: Poet of Existence* [New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957], 189-90). See also Westermann, *The Structure of the Book of Job: A Form-Critical Analysis* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 139.

¹⁷ Moses Bultmann, *The Book of Job* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1922), 77-86, 162-67, 347-57. For instance Bultmann reduced the Elihu speeches from 165 to 72 verses, half of which contain Elihu's self-introduction.

¹⁸ David Noel Freedman suggests that Elihu's speeches were added to "refute or counterbalance a speech or assertion of Job, and to be placed in juxtaposition with it" ("The Elihu Speeches in the Book of Job: A Hypothetical Episode in the Literary History of the Work," *Harvard Theological Review* 61 [January 1968]: 52-59). In other words Freedman proposes that the speeches of Elihu were originally intended to be inserted at various points in the earlier dialogue to refute a specific discourse or assertion of Job, but somehow failed to be inserted. Gary W. Martin, who accepts Freedman's basic thesis, gives a "Table of Proposed Reconstruction of Elihu's Responses to the Three Cycles of Discourse" and says the speeches need to

of the speeches outright.¹⁹ Form-critical studies often involve a reorganization of the text to conform to a particular subjective and reasonably consistent structural pattern. The result is that insufficient attention is given to the uniqueness of Elihu's individual speeches and their importance to the theological argument of the book especially in regard to suffering. In fact, the critical approach seems to neglect the positive contributions of stylistic and poetic analysis in marking structural patterns within Elihu's speeches.²⁰ For instance Bittenwieser,²¹ Pope,²² Stier,²³ and Nairne²⁴ hold that the speeches are identical or similar to the views of the three antagonists, adding little or nothing to the argument regarding Job's suffering. Nichols and Rowley suggest that Elihu offered a solution for suffering that is irrelevant to Job's relationship with God and that does not address the initial cause for Job's suffering.²⁵

be rearranged ("Elihu and the Third Cycle in the Book of Job" [Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1972], 108). Pages 248-60 of Martin's dissertation are filled with various proposals for dissecting and rearranging the first thirty-one chapters of the Book of Job. Most of his efforts focus on placing thirteen "fragments" from chapters 24-27 into chapters 32-37 and seeking to determine the original order of the speeches. Smick points out that Pope holds to a theory that the author deliberately scrambled the material to confuse the picture (Elmer B. Smick, "Job," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988J, 4:845; and Marvin Pope, *Job*, Anchor Bible [Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1973], xxiii-xxx).

¹⁹ Some writers simply regard Job 32-37 as insignificant and counterfeit and do not accept them as part of the original text. Examples include Archibald MacLeish, J. B. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986); Stephen Mitchell, *The Book of Job* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992); and Luis Alonso Schokel, "Toward a Dramatic Reading of the Book of Job," *Semeia* 7 (1977): 45-61. Schokel eliminates the Elihu section completely.

²⁰ Diewert observes that "inevitably the monologue is reduced to or at least limited to those passages where Elihu seems to be saying something novel, while the majority of the discourse is passed over as a virtual restatement of the position of the friends. There have been very few serious students of these speeches which treat them as a whole and deal with their content evenly throughout, paying attention to the argument in its entirety. Judgments concerning the contribution of ES [Elihu's Speeches] to the Joban poem can only carry weight when they take into account every element of Elihu's monologue and the function of each part in the argument as a whole" (Diewert, "The Composition of the Elihu Speeches: A Poetic and Structural Analysis," 18).

²¹ Bittenwieser, *The Book of Job*, 85.

²² Pope, *Job*, xxvi.

²³ Fridolin Stier, *Das Buch [job hebräisch und deutsch]* (Munich: Kosel, 1954), 240--41.

²⁴ Alexander Nairne, *The Book of Job*, Edited with an Introduction (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935), xv.

²⁵ See Nichols, "The Composition of the Elihu Speeches (Job Chaps. 32-37)," 108; and Rowley, *The Book of Job*, 206.

ADVOCATES OF ELIHU'S AUTHENTICITY

A number of scholars defend the speeches of Elihu as an original part of the composition of the Book of Job. Early positive opinions considered Elihu as exalted above Job and his friends, or the representative of the authentic Jewish view of providence,²⁶ or as an antitype of Christ.²⁷ Early church historians and the Reformers generally accepted the authenticity of Elihu's speeches.²⁸ John Calvin was extremely complimentary toward Elihu for "there are few people in the Bible Calvin admires more."²⁹ In reaction to the early nineteenth century opposition, Rosenmtiller and Umbreit, as well as other early conservatives like Stickel³⁰ and Deutsch,³¹ were among the first to maintain Elihu's authenticity.³² Cornill refers to the Elihu speeches as "the summit and crown of the Book of Job, and says they provide the only solution to the problem of suffering."³³ Godet calls the speeches "an indispensable feature"

²⁶ Moses Maimonides, *Guide to the Perplexed*, trans. M. Friedlander (New York: Dover, n.d.), 296. Maimonides lived from A.D. 1135 to 1204. See also Solmon B. Freehof, *Book of Job: A Commentary, Jewish Commentary for Bible Readers* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1958), 205. Freehof states that this was the view of Abraham ibn Ezra. Also see a similar view in Jacob S. Lavinger, "Maimonides' Exegesis of the Book of Job," in *Creative Biblical Exegesis: Christian and Jewish Hermeneutics through the Centuries*, ed. Benjamin Uffenheimer and Henning G. Reventlow, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series* 59 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1988), 81-88. See also Israel J. Gerber, *Job on Trial: A Book for Our Time* (Gastonia, NC: E. P. Press, 1982), 104-39; Diewert, "The Composition of the Elihu Speeches: A Poetic and Structural Analysis," 3; and Shimon Bakon, "The Enigma of Elihu," *Dor le Dor* 12 (1984): 221.

²⁷ Diewert simply states this as one view ("The Composition of the Elihu Speeches: A Poetic and Structural Analysis," 3).

²⁸ Although they accepted his authenticity, they were not always complimentary to Elihu. Gregory, for instance, argued that Elihu was orthodox in his teaching but guilty of pride. Thomas Aquinas believed that Elihu's knowledge was superior to the opinion of the other friends but that he was moved by "vainglory" so that he misinterpreted Job's words and did not express the whole truth. Calvin, on the other hand, would not accept this criticism (Susan E. Schreiner, *Where Shall Wisdom Be Found? Calvin's Exegesis of Job from Medieval and Modern Perspectives* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994], 131-34).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 131. For Calvin, Elihu's teaching was essentially the same truth declared in God's whirlwind speeches.

³⁰ Johann Gustav Stickel, *Das Buch Hiob rhythmisch gegliedert und ubersetzt mit exegetischen und kritischen Bemerkungen* (Leipzig: Weidmann'sche Buchhandlung, 1842), 195-219.

³¹ Cited in Nichols, "The Composition of the Elihu Speeches (Job Chaps. 32-37)," 54), 99.

³² Earnest Rosenmtiller, *Iobus latine vertit et annotatione perpetua*, 765, quoted in Rowley, *Job*, 13; and Friedrich Carl Umbreit, *Das Buch Hiob: Uebersetzung und Auslegung* (Heidelberg: Mohr, 1832), xxvi-xxvii.

³³ Carl Cornill, *Introduction to the Canonical Books of the Old Testament*, trans. 108; G. H. Box, *Theological Translation Library*, vol. 23 (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1907), 428.

of the book,³⁴ and Marshall puts them "on an immeasurably higher plane than the dialogue."³⁵ More recent conservative advocates of the authenticity of the Elihu speeches include Young,³⁶ Harrison,³⁷ Bullock,³⁸ Archer,³⁹ and Zuck.⁴⁰ These are joined by other scholars who defend Elihu's authenticity, viewing his speeches as primary to the Book of Job and to a proper understanding of the problem of suffering.⁴¹ These scholars also include

³⁴ F. Godet, "The Book of Job," in *Biblical Studies on the Old Testament* (London: Parker, 1875), 217.

³⁵ John T. Marshall, *Job and His Comforters: Studies in Theology of the Book of Job* (London: Kingsgate, 1905), 6.

³⁶ Edward J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 329-30.

³⁷ R. K. Harrison, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 1034-35.

³⁸ C. Hassell Bullock, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetic Books: The Wisdom and Songs of Israel* (Chicago: Moody, 1979), 75-77.

³⁹ Gleason L. Archer, *A Survey of the Old Testament: Introduction*, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody, 1994), 513-14.

⁴⁰ luck offers four answers to the major critical objections stated above. "(1) Elihu need not have been mentioned earlier in the book since he was a silent onlooker not yet involved in the disputation. And Elihu was not condemned by God in 42:7-8 along with Eliphaz and his two companions probably because Elihu was closer to the truth than were the three. (2) Admittedly Elihu's style differed from that of the other four debaters. He used 'el for God more than did the others (his 19 uses of 'el compare with Job's 17, Eliphaz's 8, Bildad's 6, and Zophar's 2). . . . Elihu also used a number of Aramaic words more than the three counselors did. . . . These differences, however, simply point to his distinctive character. (3) Elihu's view of suffering differed from that of the three. They had claimed that Job was suffering because he was sinning (in an attitude of pride) but Elihu said Job was sinning because he was suffering. Elihu pointed out that God can use suffering to benefit people (33:17, 28, 30; 36:16). Elihu put his finger on Job's wrong attitude of complaining against God (33:13; 34:17) and suggested that Job humble himself before God (33:27; 36:21; 37:24). (4) True, Job did not answer Elihu. But this may be because Elihu silenced him. . . . Elihu's orations provided a bridge from Job's insistence for vindication (chap. 31) to God's speeches. If the Elihu portion is not original, then God responded immediately to Job's demand, an action which is inconsistent with God. Also the Elihu speeches create an added element of suspense, as the reader awaits God's answer" (Roy B. Zuck, "Job," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Luck [Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1985], 754-55).

Zuck points to Dhorme in support of his second point (Edouard Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job* [Nashville: Nelson, 1984], ciii). The number of Aramaic words used by Elihu in relation to the three counselors originates from a study done by Samuel Rolles Driver and George Buchanan Gray (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job*, International Critical Commentary [Edinburgh: Clark, 1921], xlii-iii, xlvi-vii). These numbers regarding Aramaic words were contested by Snaith, who concludes that the numbers are not convincing enough to warrant two authors.

⁴¹ For instance see Dhonne, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, liv-lvii; ciii, who treats the Elihu speeches as genuine, but sees a later hand in the writing. This is also the basic stance of Tate, who argues that the normal critical objections are not

McKay who sees the Elihu speeches as pivotal to the other chapters of the Book of Job, providing a bridge between Job's conversations and God's speeches.⁴² As noted earlier, both Diewert⁴³ and Bakon⁴⁴ hold to the importance and integrity of the speeches. Beeby argues for authenticity and sees Elihu as a mediator whose main function was prophetic, much like that of Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Jeremiah, and Isaiah.⁴⁵ Carstensen also argues that Elihu is important in that he exercised a mediatorial function in his approach to Job (33:23; cf. 33:7, 31-33; 36:2).⁴⁶ Johns has made

convincing (Marvin Tate, "The Speeches of Elihu," *Review and Expositor* [Fall 1971]: 487-95). Also see Robert L. Alden, who simply assumes the genuineness of the Elihu chapters (Job, 23-24, 314-15). Budde, Snaith, and Gordis consider the speeches to be from a later author or period, but argue for their authenticity (Karl Budde, *Das Buch Hiob, Handbuch zum Alten Testament* [Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1896]; Snaith, *The Book of Job: Its Origin and Purpose*, 72-91; and Gordis, *The Book of God and Man*, 104-16). Snaith carefully compared the alleged differences in vocabulary between the Elihu speeches and the other major sections of the book. He did not find the variations significant and he concluded that it is not necessary to postulate that another author wrote the section (*The Book of Job: Its Origin and Purpose*, 77). Zuck argues for the authenticity, originality, and placement in the text ("Job," 140-42), as does Hartley (John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job, New International Commentary on the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988], 28-30). Answers to the four objections summarized by Janzen are argued by Hartley, who concludes that "the Elihu speeches are an integral part of the final edition of the work. It is improper to judge them as a clumsy later addition or a sanctification of the heretical ideas that Job has entertained" (*ibid.*, 29). Still, Hartley struggles with the speeches being a part of the original composition and speculates that the author of Job could have added them later to the final edition or that one of his students, possibly a redactor, inserted them where his teacher might have suggested they belonged.

⁴² John W. McKay, "Elihu: A Proto-Charismatic?" *Expository Times* 90 (March 1979): 167-71.

⁴³ Diewert, "The Composition of the Elihu Speeches: A Poetic and Structural Analysis," 1-23.

⁴⁴ Bakon says Elihu offered a unique contribution to the problem of suffering ed ("The Enigma of Elihu," 217-28).

⁴⁵ H. D. Beeby, "Elihu-Job's Mediator?" *Southeast Asian Journal of Theology* 7 (October 1969): 33-54. Beeby mentions five objections to the authenticity of Elihu's speeches and answers each one satisfactorily (*ibid.*, 48-50). He concludes that "there is a unity throughout the book as we have it now, no matter when the various parts originated or when they were assembled. Second, that within this unity the figure of Elihu plays a necessary part, justifying Job's earlier faith in an 'umpire' and being the instrument of Job's eventual justification by heralding the 'theophany.' Finally, that after an examination of Elihu's contribution and in the light of the similarities with earlier covenantal formulations, we conclude that Elihu was a man with divine gifts, who can only be described as a covenant mediator, transformed to accord with the Wisdom literature and the book's dominant question of 'how the good non-Israelite can stand before Israel's God'" (*ibid.*, 50). Hans Ehrenberg presents his arguments in the form of a dramatic play and identifies Elihu as an "advocate" ("Elihu the Theologian," in *The Dimensions of Job: A Study and Selected Readings*, ed. Nahum N. Glatzer [New York: Schocken, 1969], 99).

⁴⁶ Roger N. Carstensen, "The Persistence of the 'Elihu' Tradition in Later Jewish Writings," *Lexington Theological Quarterly* 2 (1967): 41.

a well-supported investigation, concluding that "Elihu does play significant literary and theological roles" in the Book of Job.⁴⁷ Also Hofman demonstrates that in the "present text of Job two artistic features are so clearly and persistently manifested, that there can be no doubt as to their immanency and authenticity."⁴⁸ Miller insists that Elihu "does indeed carry the insights of the book above that of the dialogue."⁴⁹ Interestingly a counselor and an educator both accept the authenticity of the Elihu speeches and find great value in their pastoral significance and guidelines for theological teaching.⁵⁰ Steinmann inadvertently makes a case for chapters 32-37 being authentic and an original part of the text by comparing the four numerical sayings in the Book of Job, two of which are found in the Elihu speeches (33:14, 29).⁵¹

Posselt, Gray, and Staples made independent studies of the language especially in vocabulary, names of God, and Aramaisms in Job.⁵² Snaith answers these with his own investigation. His study criticized Gray's conclusions concerning the five areas Gray suggested are noticeable differences between the Elihu speeches and the rest of the book: (a) unusual prepositions and suffixes, (b) the use of the divine names, (c) first-person pro-

⁴⁷ Johns, *The Literary and Theological Function of the Elihu Speeches in the Book of Job*, 1,2-12.

⁴⁸ The two features Hofman incorporates to answer the critical activity surrounding Job are (a) a very difficult and obscure language and (b) a strong artistic sense of form, structure, and symmetry. The vague language is for the purpose of obscuring the possible misunderstanding of the "heretical potential of the theological implications of his work." Hofman's summary includes five statements that support the authenticity and integral nature of the Book of Job. He also gives five guidelines for handling criticism, which include reasons for not rearranging the speeches in order to make them more coherent (Yair Hofman, "Ancient Near Eastern Literary Conventions and the Restoration of the Book of Job," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 103 [1991]: 399-411).

⁴⁹ Ward S. Miller, "Job: Creator's Apprentice," *Chicago Studies* 26 (1987): 176.

⁵⁰ Kathleen Rusnak, "The Pastor as Enabler," *Pastoral Psychology* 28 (1979): 53-61; and Alfred von Rohr Sauer, "Salvation by Grace: The Heart of Job's Theology," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 37 (1966): 259-70.

⁵¹ Andrew E. Steinmann, "The Graded Numerical Sayings in Job," in *Fortunate the Eyes That See*, ed. Astrid B. Beck et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 288-97. Two of the four numerical sayings are found in the Elihu speeches. This would tend to argue for agreement with the two other sayings found in different sections of the book, and therefore could be construed as support for one author. The four numerical sayings are (1) Job 5:17-27 (v. 19); (2) and (3) 33:13-30 (vv. 14,29); and (4) 40:3-5 (v. 5).

⁵² Posselt, Gray, and Staples all concluded that the Elihu speeches were from a different author (Posselt, "Der Verfasser der Elihu-Reden," 1-111; Driver and Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job*, xli-xlvi; and William E. Staples, *The Speeches of Elihu*, University of Toronto Studies, Philological Series no. 8 [Toronto: University of Toronto, 1924], 13).

nouns, (d) Aramaisms, and (e) unique expressions.⁵³ Regarding Aramaisms, which are often a major focus of opposition to the authenticity of Job 32-37, Snaith concludes that the book contains virtually no true Aramaisms. Furthermore he sees no significant degree of variation in prepositions and suffixes, the use of divine names, first-person pronouns, or unique expressions in the Elihu speeches to support the theory of a separate author for those chapters.⁵⁴

Also Gordis is an advocate of the unity of the book.⁵⁵ He accepts a single author for the book, although he says the original author wrote the Elihu section "at a later period in his life."⁵⁶ Gordis asserts that the Elihu speeches are similar in style to the dialogue and that the different names of God, the pronouns, the grammatical forms, and other elements in the speeches are not out of proportion with the rest of the book. He agrees with Snaith that they do not contain an excessive number of Aramaisms or rare words.⁵⁷ He finds fewer here than in other sections of the book. He also views the citation by Elihu of arguments already expressed by Job's friends as further support for the authenticity of this section, since the use of quotations is common practice in wisdom literature. Gordis concludes that the Elihu speeches make a significant contribution to the essence of the book,⁵⁸ and he provides support for the view that the speeches were composed by the book's original author.

Several authors also maintain that the Elihu speeches add to the argument of the book in regard to Job's suffering. Budde, Cornill, and Dubarle see Elihu's view of suffering as central to the book, pointing out that suffering warns a person of the hidden sin of pride.⁵⁹ Posselt suggests that Elihu offers a theological

⁵³ Snaith, *The Book of Job: Its Origin and Purpose*, 75-85.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* Harris provides a convincing study on the language of Job (R. Laird Harris, "The Doctrine of God in the Book of Job," in *Sitting with Job: Selected Studies on the Book of Job*, ed. Roy B. Zuck [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992], 15s-62).

⁵⁵ Gordis is considered by many as making the most succinct and beneficial contribution to the Elihu speeches' authenticity in recent years ("Elihu the Intruder," 69-72).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 681.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 74-75. Also see comments on Gordis's article in Gerber, *Job on Trial: A Book for Our Time*, 161-62.

⁵⁹ See Budde, *Das Buch Hiob*, xlv-xlvi; Cornill, *Introduction to the Canonical Books of the Old Testament*, 425-31; and Andre M. Dubarle, *Les Sages d'Israel* (Paris: du Cerf, 1946), 86-88.

solution to suffering, namely, purification.⁶⁰ Snaith says Elihu's concept of a gracious, compassionate intercessor is a contribution to the problem of suffering.⁶¹ Peters and Dennefeld both recognize Elihu's observation that Job was guilty of presumptuous speech and lack of humility, while Dubarle and Staples both say Elihu pointed to Job's wrong attitude, but did not condemn him for any specific acts of evil, as did the three antagonists.⁶²

ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS TO THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE ELIHU SPEECHES

Regarding the criticisms that Elihu is mentioned nowhere else in the Book of Job, not even in the epilogue, that his long speeches seem to interrupt the continuity between chapters 31 and 38, and that he seems to have contributed little if anything to the content or dramatic movement of the book, this investigation counters with the following observations.

First, it would seem unlikely that Elihu would be mentioned in the prologue (chaps. 1-2) since Yahweh, Satan, and Job are the major focus of those chapters. Neither the wife nor the three counselors are mentioned until chapter 2.

Second, it would also seem unlikely that a young bystander would interrupt the serious discussions found in the dialogue (chaps. 3-31) between three elderly "wise men" and a prominent Near Eastern sovereign. Elihu was led into the conversation by his frustration with the inadequate answers offered by the three spokesmen to Job's dilemma and was constrained to speak, as the text suggests, by the Spirit (33:4).

Third, neither the three friends, the wife, Satan, nor Elihu is mentioned in chapters 38-41 since God and Job are the focus.⁶³ Fourth, the epilogue is reserved primarily for Job's response to the speeches of Yahweh and to Yahweh's response to Job's repentance. The epilogue also voices a condemnation of the false repre-

⁶⁰ Posselt, "Der Verfasser der Elihu-Reden," 49-50.

⁶¹ Snaith says the Septuagint of 33:23 refers to the "death angel" who intercedes on behalf of the sufferer, and that Elihu was teaching the necessity and role of an intercessor (*The Book of Job: Its Origin and Purpose*, 88-90).

⁶² See Norbert Peters, *Das Buch Job ubersetzt und erklart*, Exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament (Munster: AschendorfT, 1928), 26; Louis Dennefeld, "Les discours d'Elihu (Job xxxii-xxxvii)," *Revue biblique* 48 (1939): 163-80; Dubarle, *Les Sages d'Israel*, 87-88; and Staples, who sees Job's sin as ignorance of the true reason for his suffering (*The Speeches of Elihu*, 14-16).

⁶³ Objections to the originality and authenticity of chapters 38-41 essentially follow the same pattern as those suggested for chapters 32-37.

sentation of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. Elihu's absence from the condemnation can be explained by Yahweh's own words, "After the LORD had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, 'I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has' " (42:7, NIV). Yahweh's anger was not extended to Elihu, and although it is an argument from silence, the implication is that if Elihu had been in full agreement with the three, then he would have been equally condemned. Elihu claimed to give a different message from that of the three and either he did or he did not (32:14). The implication from God's silence concerning Elihu is that he did. Therefore there is no need for Job to have offered sacrifices on Elihu's behalf as he did for the three, for Elihu had not misrepresented Yahweh.

Furthermore it was not necessary for Yahweh to praise Elihu,⁶⁴ because the speeches of Yahweh, the response of Job, and the correction of the three suggest strongly that Elihu was correct and that his speeches were compatible with those of Yahweh. It is therefore not surprising that God was silent with regard to Elihu. It might also be noted that Job's wife and Satan are absent from the epilogue. Since the wife's statement was countered originally and finally by Job's faith, and since Satan's accusation was proved invalid by Job's response in 42:1-6, there seems to be no reason for further mention of either Job's wife or Satan. Concerning the second criticism-that the literary style⁶⁵ is diffuse and pretentious, inferior⁶⁶ to that of the rest of the book-it can be demonstrated that the basis for this criticism sometimes rests in the presuppositions the reader brings to the text. For instance a modern reading of Job 32-33 is that these are the preten-

⁶⁴ Dhorme asks, "If it is Elihu who expounds the author's thesis, why is it that Job, who is constantly rebuked by Elihu, should receive the praises of the Epilogue" (Dhorme, *A Commentary on Job*, cviii). However, it should be remembered that Job was rebuked by Yahweh in chapter 38 and that Job expressed initial repentance in chapter 40 and final repentance in 42, which preceded any praises on the part of Yahweh. That is, Job was rebuked, he repented, and then he was praised. It would seem logical to conclude that Elihu had no need to repent because he was not rebuked by the Lord.

⁶⁵ Janzen admits that "the argument from style is difficult to control" (Janzen, *Job*, 218). Andersen observes that the author may be deliberately portraying Elihu in a light best suited to his argument (Francis I. Andersen, *Job: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1976], 51-52).

⁶⁶ Nichols is very critical of the composition ("The Composition of the Elihu Speeches [Job Chaps. 32-37]," 97-99). John Briggs Curtis, who is not necessarily complimentary to Elihu, does not accept his speeches as part of the original text of Job; yet he refutes the allegation of artistic inferiority in the Elihu material ("Word Play in the Speeches of Elihu [Job 32-37]," *Proceedings* 12 [1992]: 23-30).

tious words of an arrogant young fool.⁶⁷ Yet Elihu approached Job and the three antagonists in the manner required by ancient Near Eastern custom. As to the literary style of the Elihu speeches, Budde, Gordis, Snaith, Zuck, and others present adequate explanations. Basically they conclude that a change in authors is not a definitive answer to Elihu's vocabulary and other literary differences in his speeches. Furthermore, if Elihu is a new character with a youthful personality, different vocabulary would naturally be expected. The wide and varied critical theories mentioned above seem subjective;⁶⁸ they are not a convincing argument for a change of authorship nor for the manipulation or mutilation of the existing text.

With regard to the observation that linguistic usage seems to differ greatly from that of the rest of the poetry of the book, recent studies have demonstrated that these differences are not as extensive as previously thought. Diewert, Gordis, Johns, McCabe, Snaith, and others have suggested equally compelling arguments that support strong similarities in form throughout the existing text. In addition, Elihu's speeches contain interaction with and deductions from the quotations of Job's statements (33:8-11, 13; 34:5-6, 9; 35:2-3). Elihu used summaries and quotations to refute several of Job's claims; therefore a new methodology is introduced: quotation, refutation, and defense. This means that much of what Elihu said corresponds to the words of Job in the preceding chapters.⁶⁹ Elihu also dealt with the same subjects and addressed the same issues as Job and the three counselors, but he stressed God's majesty and justice more than any of them. This could explain Elihu's frequent use of אָלֹהִים.

The charge that the speeches seem "to offer an alternative resolution to Job's problem from that of the (baffling) divine speeches"⁷⁰ begs the question. This statement assumes that there

⁶⁷ Habel, "The Role of Elihu in the Design of the Book of Job," 87. Although Habel regards Elihu as an arrogant fool, he states that "Elihu's speeches are . . . both logical and significant in the sequence of the Joban story." Donald E. Gowan refers to Elihu as a "buffoon," and "a brilliant young fool," but he contends that it was "normal to expect Elihu to come on the scene and give the ultimate answer to the dilemma and problem of suffering" ("Reading Job as a 'Wisdom Script,'" *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 55 [1992]: 94-95). Skehan argues that "the long-winded introduction of Elihu is a deliberate and a formal rhetorical device for em-

phasis" (Patrick William Skehan, "I Will Speak Up! Job 32," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 31 [July 1969]: 380-82).

⁶⁸ Andersen states that "style is also a quality whose assessment can be highly subjective" (Job: An Introduction and Commentary, 51).

⁶⁹ Freedman, "The Elihu Speeches in the Book of Job," 51-59.

⁷⁰ Janzen, Job, 218.

is a wide difference between the resolution offered by Elihu and that offered by Yahweh. Actually several similarities exist between the speeches by Elihu and those by God.⁷¹

Possibly the most judicious of the arguments in favor of the authenticity of the Elihu speeches is suggested by Carson, who posits that breaking the book up, as "such source theories [suggest], even if right, [does] not solve the theological problem: the book as we have it stands or falls as a literary whole, for that is the only form in which it has come down to us."⁷² This is supported by Michel, who states that "the tradition has never known a book of Job without the Elihu speeches."⁷³ Also Smick concludes that "it is just as satisfactory to work with the text as it is" for "there is as much reason to believe that the book, substantially as we have it, was the work of a single literary and theological genius as it is to assume it is the product of numerous hands often with contrary purposes."⁷⁴

CONCLUSION

Having demonstrated that the major objections to the Elihu speeches' authenticity can be positively answered, confidence in his contribution to the argument of the book can be established. Therefore one can assume not only that chapters 32-37 of the Book of Job are structurally, theologically, stylistically, and linguistically an original, genuine part of the text, but also that they play a significant interpretive, explanatory, and theological role in understanding Job's suffering and his relationship with Yahweh.

⁷¹ For example see (a) 36:25-26; 37:5, 23 and 38:4, 33; (b) 33:8-11; 34:5-6, 9; 35:2-3 and 38:2; 40:2; 41:11; (c) 32:14, 34:10-12; 35:4-8, 36:31 and 41:10b-11; (d) 37:1-13 and 38:26-27; (e) 34:10-12; 36:5; 37:23 and 40:2; (f) 37:6, 9-10, 15-16 and 38:25--30.

⁷² D. A. Carson, *How Long, O Lord? Reflections on Suffering and Evil* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 156.

⁷³ Walter L. Michel, "Job's Real Friend: Elihu," *Criterion* 21 (Spring 1982): 29-32.

⁷⁴ Smick, "Job," 846-47.

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