

Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:

2 "If one ventures a word with you, will you be impatient?

Yet who can keep from speaking?

3 Behold, you have instructed many,
and you have strengthened the weak hands.

4 Your words have upheld him who was stumbling,
and you have made firm the feeble knees.

5 But now it has come to you, and you are impatient;
it touches you, and you are dismayed.

6 Is not your fear of God your confidence,
and the integrity of your ways your hope?

7 "Remember: who that was innocent ever perished?
Or where were the upright cut off?

8 As I have seen, those who plough iniquity
and sow trouble reap the same.

9 By the breath of God they perish,
and by the blast of his anger they are consumed.

10 The roar of the lion, the voice of the fierce lion,
the teeth of the young lions are broken.

11 The strong lion perishes for lack of prey,
and the cubs of the lioness are scattered.

12 "Now a word was brought to me stealthily;
my ear received the whisper of it.

13 Amid thoughts from visions of the night,
when deep sleep falls on men,

14 dread came upon me, and trembling,
which made all my bones shake.

15 A spirit glided past my face;
the hair of my flesh stood up.

16 It stood still,
but I could not discern its appearance.

A form was before my eyes;
there was silence, then I heard a voice:

17 'Can mortal man be in the right before God?
Can a man be pure before his Maker?

18 Even in his servants he puts no trust,
and his angels he charges with error;

19 how much more those who dwell in houses of clay,
whose foundation is in the dust,
who are crushed like the moth.

20 Between morning and evening they are beaten to pieces;
they perish forever without anyone regarding it.

21 Is not their tent-cord plucked up within them,
do they not die, and that without wisdom?'

5 "Call now; is there anyone who will answer you?
To which of the holy ones will you turn?

2 Surely vexation kills the fool,
and jealousy slays the simple.

3 I have seen the fool taking root,

but suddenly I cursed his dwelling.

4 His children are far from safety;
they are crushed in the gate,
and there is no one to deliver them.

5 The hungry eat his harvest,
and he takes it even out of thorns,
and the thirsty pant after his wealth.

6 For affliction does not come from the dust,
nor does trouble sprout from the ground,

7 but man is born to trouble
as the sparks fly upward.

8 "As for me, I would seek God,
and to God would I commit my cause,
9 who does great things and unsearchable,
marvellous things without number:

10 he gives rain on the earth
and sends waters on the fields;

11 he sets on high those who are lowly,
and those who mourn are lifted to safety.

12 He frustrates the devices of the crafty,
so that their hands achieve no success.

13 He catches the wise in their own craftiness,
and the schemes of the wily are brought to a quick end.

14 They meet with darkness in the daytime
and grope at noonday as in the night.

15 But he saves the needy from the sword of their mouth
and from the hand of the mighty.

16 So the poor have hope,
and injustice shuts her mouth.

17 "Behold, blessed is the one whom God reproves;
therefore despise not the discipline of the Almighty.

18 For he wounds, but he binds up;
he shatters, but his hands heal.

19 He will deliver you from six troubles;
in seven no evil shall touch you.

20 In famine he will redeem you from death,
and in war from the power of the sword.

21 You shall be hidden from the lash of the tongue,
and shall not fear destruction when it comes.

22 At destruction and famine you shall laugh,
and shall not fear the beasts of the earth.

23 For you shall be in league with the stones of the field,
and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with you.

24 You shall know that your tent is at peace,
and you shall inspect your fold and miss nothing.

25 You shall know also that your offspring shall be many,
and your descendants as the grass of the earth.

26 You shall come to your grave in ripe old age,
like a sheaf gathered up in its season.

27 Behold, this we have searched out; it is true.
Hear, and know it for your good."

Ch4-5- Eliphaz 1st Speech

V2- intro

He is polite, but he has an agenda¹ and he cannot wait to speak it. From 5v27, it seems that they have all discussed and made-up their mind about Job; Eliphaz is going to tell him what that is.

V3-6 - practice what you preach.

'Behold', he says, 'you have instructed many, have strengthened the weak hands', 'Your words have upheld him he was stumbling, you have made firm the feeble knees', it seems that Job had been a great help to others who have went through difficulty, (all pictures of fear, depression, loss of morale, being tired all the time.) in keeping them trusting in God and getting through life.

But then the 'big but' comes. 'Now it has come to you' and you are 'impatient... dismayed', you droop, you collapse² v5. 'Is not your fear of God', your previous worship and life lived for God, your worship, 'your confidence, your hope'. Job is being hypocritical, 'you comforted others, but you cannot comfort yourself'³.

V7-11 – what you sow you reap.

He starts off with a 'universal rule', trouble comes to those who have sinned; for after all 'remember, recall, think clearly', 'who that was innocent ever perished? Or where were the upright cut off?' v7. Job, give me one example of someone cut down in their prime that was innocent? What they sow they reap (v8), God will consume them, either slowly like the plant in the ground over time reaping what they sow (v8); or by the 'blast of his anger' (v9) in a night like the lion of whatever age being 'consumed' (v10-11). This for Eliphaz is not only a universal principle but an observed fact (v8), and by implication Job has done something wrong to deserve what he's got.

V12-21 'a vision in the night, something I have seen'.

Eliphaz is convinced of his position because he had a vision in the night(v12-17). This dreadful, nightmare-like image that made the hair stand up on the back of his neck, said; 'can mortal man be in the right before God? Can a man be pure before his maker?'⁴ (v17) It is not clear how long in the speech the spirit speaks for, translators usually continue to 4v21. I think personally v17 is what the 'spirit' said, and the rest of the chapter is Eliphaz adding to the experience his interpretation and application to Job. As such, I think his premise is right, his conclusion wrong.

To amplify the spirits point, Eliphaz compares God with the angelic world and the human realm (v-18-19). The best of created beings (angels, the higher beings and man, made in the image of God⁵), are still created beings under God, from angels that can be wrong (v18), to humans whose 'foundation is dust' v19. God exercises judgment over it all. Compared to God, we are *fragile*, 'houses of clay, that can be crushed like a moth' v19, we are *changeable*, rising in the morning full of hope only to finish out day 'beaten to pieces' v20a, we are *doomed* to die unnoticed 'without anyone regarding it' v20b and when we die, we die *not having attained full wisdom* v21. What Eliphaz's application does is to create a further wedge between Job and God at a time when Job needs the nearness of God more than ever and God is more willing than ever to be near.

Eliphaz says that 'he has seen the fool⁶ taking root' (v3), that is that he grows and develops and seems to be at ease in his life, until 'suddenly I cursed his dwelling'⁷; that Eliphaz, a good man secures the bringing down of his 'house'. Has this happened previously? Has he prayed for a 'dirty sinner' to be downed, then it has happened? Whatever the previous experience, the result of this downfall of the fool is; their children die⁸ (v4), they starve for food (v5). The universal principle stands, 'man is born to trouble' as certain as lighting a fire will bring 'sparks flying upwards'⁹ (v7). Trouble comes to man because man is man, sinful!

Through his 'experience', the vision in 4v12-5v2 and his 'observation', what he 'had seen' in 5v3-7; Eliphaz somewhat cruelly drives home his universal law that what a man sows he reaps, man is sinful, God is holy and man cannot be right before God, God punishes sin like a 'blast' from his mouth and can 'crush' us like a moth (4v19). , so Jobs situation is obvious to Eliphaz; he must be a dirty sinner!

¹ Altar translates this; 'if speech were tried against you, could you stand it?', in the sense that Eliphaz knows what he is going to say Job is not going to like. P23

² Moffatt Translation

³ Ash p103

⁴ Translational issue here: 'be *more* righteous, *more* pure than God' AV/NIV. Either can work, the plain idea being that man is inherently sinful before God, in his personal holiness and in his wisdom of the situation!

⁵ Two words are used to describe man in v17 'mortal man' and 'man' in his dignity of imaging God.

⁶ In the Bible 'fool' is moral not mental Prov14v9; Ps14v1, Job2v10

⁷ Or NIV 'his house was cursed'

⁸ This is a cruel taunt, in light of Job losing ten children in one night 1v19, 'suddenly' 5v3

⁹ Alternatively, and maybe historically and culturally correct- v6 the 'not' can be read 'surely', so 'surely affliction comes from the ground'. How? The word 'sparks' is literally 'sons of Reshef', the⁹ god of destruction with his traditional arrows of trouble. So, the idea being that we are born to trouble because the underworld is shooting arrows our way. This world is under curse, this world is under attack. I am not sure about this, as Eliphaz has seemed so sound, if not unbalanced in his view of God also his emphasis in on Job having sinned; but then again, he is a bit of a mystic and has just had a vision from a spirit?

V8-16- God is Great

'As for me', if I was in your shoes Job, this is what I would do. 'I would seek God', meaning a deliberate 'act', not just letting things slide in hope. No, the inference is you need to get right with God Job and 'commit you cause to him', to literally 'submit to him'¹⁰. He goes on to speak of his *ability*; doing 'great things and unsearchable, marvellous things without number: rain on the earth, water in the field'. So, what this means is he can lift you up Job (v11), if you 'seek' and 'commit' to him! Not only is God able to lift you up, but he also has *wisdom*, to thwart any enemies attempt to outwit him (v12-13) for they will be met with bewildering darkness that will hide the way forward so they will 'grope at noonday as in the daytime' (v14). So, if God is wise Job, he can 'save the needy from sword (their arguments and cutting words) ...a mighty hand (their force and strength)' (v15); 'seek' and 'commit' yourself to God and have 'hope, as injustice shuts her mouth' v16.

V17-26- What this is...¹¹

Don't despise this chastening Job, accept it, repent of whatever is wrong and God will work it out and you will be 'blessed' v17 He will bind up, what he has wounded, heal the shattered (v18), deliver you from your six troubles, the Sabaeans (1v15), the fire of God (1v16), the Chaldeans (1v17), the great wind (1v19), the loathsome sores (2v7) the broken wife (2v9). Just repent Job and a seventh, you will not see¹²(19b). In famine there will be food and you will laugh at it, war will not harm you, no lash from a tongue, no fear of destruction or of beast (v20-22), just repent Job. No agricultural troubles, of stoney fields or animals rioting (v23), your tent, in context, body¹³ will have peace and you will have many offspring and descendants on the earth and death will be a peaceful experience, like the soft gathering of a sheaf. (v23-26).

We have search this out Job. Notice the 'we'. It is true, yes, but is it right (v27)? All three of these men have got together to discuss Job and have concluded that because of the sheer amount of devastation that has come into his life, there must be some opposite and equal sin rampant in the life. His universal principle, his vision in the night, his observations from life, his knowledge of God and his speculations about what this is, all build to tell Job 'Seek God' and 'commit your cause' to him. Get right with God you sinner!

¹⁰ Anderson p129

¹¹ The tense in the Hebrew switches to the second person, Eliphaz 'comes nearer to preaching' to Job. Anderson P130

¹² Ironically the writer depict the friends as the seventh (2v11)

¹³ 4v21