

Eliphaz's Third and Last Speech (c. 2200 BC)

Job 22

Eliphaz Accuses Job of Specific Sins

1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered:

- 2 "Is it to God that a strong man is of benefit?
Is it to him that even a wise man is profitable?
- 3 Is it of any special benefit to the Almighty
that you should be righteous,
or is it any gain to him
that you make your ways blameless?
- 4 Is it because of your piety that he rebukes you
and goes to judgment with you?
- 5 Is not your wickedness great
and is there no end to your iniquity?
- 6 "For you took pledges from your brothers
for no reason,
and you stripped the clothing from the naked.
- 7 You gave the weary no water to drink
and from the hungry you withheld food.
- 8 Although you were a powerful man, owning land,
an honored man living on it,
- 9 you sent widows away empty-handed,
and the arms of the orphans you crushed.
- 10 That is why snares surround you,
and why sudden fear terrifies you,
- 11 why it is so dark you cannot see,
and why a flood of water covers you.

You Cannot Escape Punishment for Sin

- 12 "Is not God on high in heaven?
And see the lofty stars, how high they are!
- 13 But you have said, 'What does God know?
Does he judge through such deep darkness?
- 14 Thick clouds are a veil for him, so he does not see us,
as he goes back and forth in the vault of heaven.'
- 15 Will you keep to the old path
that evil men have walked—
- 16 men who were carried off before their time,
when the flood was poured out
on their foundations?
- 17 They were saying to God, 'Turn away from us,'
and 'What can the Almighty do to us?'
- 18 But it was he who filled their houses
with good things—
yet the counsel of the wicked
was far from me.
- 19 The righteous see their destruction and rejoice;
the innocent mock them scornfully, saying,
- 20 'Surely our enemies are destroyed,
and fire consumes their wealth.'

Eliphaz Urges Job to Repent

- 21 "Reconcile yourself with God,
and be at peace with him;
in this way your prosperity will be good.
- 22 Accept instruction from his mouth
and store up his words in your heart.

- 23 If you return to the Almighty, you will be built up;
if you remove wicked behavior far from your tent,
24 and throw your gold in the dust—
your gold of Ophir
among the rocks in the ravines—
25 then the Almighty himself will be your gold,
and the choicest silver for you.
26 Surely then you will delight yourself in the Almighty,
and will lift up your face toward God.
27 You will pray to him and he will hear you,
and you will fulfill your vows to him.
28 Whatever you decide on a matter,
it will be established for you,
and light will shine on your ways.
29 When people are brought low and you say
'Lift them up!'
then he will save the downcast;
30 he will deliver even someone who is not innocent,
who will escape through the cleanness of your hands."

Job's Response to Eliphaz (c. 2200 BC)

Job 23–24

Job Ignores Eliphaz and Yearns for an Audience With God

23:1 Then Job answered:

- 2 "Even today my complaint is still bitter;
his hand is heavy despite my groaning.
3 O that I knew where I might find him,
that I could come to his place of residence!
4 I would lay out my case before him
and fill my mouth with arguments.
5 I would know with what words he would answer me,
and understand what he would say to me.
6 Would he contend with me with great power?
No, he would only pay attention to me.
7 There an upright person
could present his case before him,
and I would be delivered forever from my judge.

I May Not Know Where God Is, But He Knows Where I Am—"I Shall Come Forth as Gold"

- 8 "If I go to the east, he is not there,
and to the west, yet I do not perceive him.
9 In the north when he is at work,
I do not see him;
when he turns to the south,
I see no trace of him.
10 But he knows the pathway that I take;
if he tested me, I would come forth like gold.
11 My feet have followed his steps closely;
I have kept to his way and have not turned aside.
12 I have not departed from the commands of his lips;
I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my allotted portion.

Job Believes That God Decreed His Suffering

- 13 But he is unchangeable, and who can change him?
Whatever he has desired, he does.
14 For he fulfills his decree against me,

and many such things are his plans.

- 15 That is why I am terrified in his presence;
when I consider, I am afraid because of him.
- 16 Indeed, God has made my heart faint;
the Almighty has terrified me.
- 17 Yet I have not been silent because of the darkness,
because of the thick darkness
that covered my face.

Job Describes the Suffering Caused by Greed, Exploitation and Injustice

- 24:1 “Why are times not appointed by the Almighty?
Why do those who know him not see his days?
- 2 Men move boundary stones;
they seize the flock and pasture them.
- 3 They drive away the orphan’s donkey;
they take the widow’s ox as a pledge.
- 4 They turn the needy from the pathway,
and the poor of the land hide themselves together.
- 5 Like wild donkeys in the desert
they go out to their labor,
seeking diligently for food;
the wasteland provides food for them
and for their children.
- 6 They reap fodder in the field,
and glean in the vineyard of the wicked.
- 7 They spend the night naked because they lack clothing;
they have no covering against the cold.
- 8 They are soaked by mountain rains
and huddle in the rocks because they lack shelter.
- 9 The fatherless child is snatched from the breast,
the infant of the poor is taken as a pledge.
- 10 They go about naked, without clothing,
and go hungry while they carry the sheaves.
- 11 They press out the olive oil between the rows of olive trees;
they tread the winepresses while they are thirsty.
- 12 From the city the dying groan,
and the wounded cry out for help,
but God charges no one with wrongdoing.
- 13 There are those who rebel against the light;
they do not know its ways
and they do not stay on its paths.
- 14 Before daybreak the murderer rises up;
he kills the poor and the needy;
in the night he is like a thief.
- 15 And the eye of the adulterer watches for the twilight,
thinking, ‘No eye can see me,’
and covers his face with a mask.
- 16 In the dark the robber breaks into houses,
but by day they shut themselves in;
they do not know the light.
- 17 For all of them, the morning is to them
like deep darkness;
they are friends with the terrors of darkness.

Let the Wicked Be Accursed

- 18 “You say, ‘He is foam on the face of the waters;
their portion of the land is cursed
so that no one goes to their vineyard.’

- 19 The drought as well as the heat carry away
the melted snow;
so the grave takes away those who have sinned.
- 20 The womb forgets him,
the worm feasts on him,
no longer will he be remembered.
Like a tree, wickedness will be broken down.
- 21 He preys on the barren and childless woman,
and does not treat the widow well.
- 22 But God drags off the mighty by his power;
when God rises up against him, he has no faith in his life.
- 23 God may let them rest in a feeling of security,
but he is constantly watching all their ways.
- 24 They are exalted for a little while,
and then they are gone,
they are brought low like all others,
and gathered in,
and like a head of grain they are cut off.'
- 25 "If this is not so, who can prove me a liar
and reduce my words to nothing?"

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