

Eliphaz's First Speech (c. 2200 BC)

Job 4–5

Eliphaz's Surprise at Job's Bitter Words

4:1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered:

- 2 “If someone should attempt a word with you,
will you be impatient?
But who can refrain from speaking?
- 3 Look, you have instructed many;
you have strengthened feeble hands.
- 4 Your words have supported those
who stumbled,
and you have strengthened the knees
that gave way.
- 5 But now the same thing comes to you,
and you are discouraged;
it strikes you,
and you are terrified.
- 6 Is not your piety your confidence,
and your blameless ways your hope?

Eliphaz Voices His Worldview

- 7 Call to mind now:
Who, being innocent, ever perished?
And where were upright people ever destroyed?
- 8 Even as I have seen, those who plow iniquity
and those who sow trouble reap the same.
- 9 By the breath of God they perish,
and by the blast of his anger they are consumed.
- 10 There is the roaring of the lion
and the growling of the young lion,
but the teeth of the young lions are broken.
- 11 The mighty lion perishes for lack of prey,
and the cubs of the lioness are scattered.

Eliphaz's Vision

- 12 “Now a word was secretly brought to me,
and my ear caught a whisper of it.
- 13 In the troubling thoughts of the dreams in the night
when a deep sleep falls on men,
14 a trembling gripped me—and a terror!—
and made all my bones shake.
- 15 Then a breath of air passes by my face;
it makes the hair of my flesh stand up.
- 16 It stands still,
but I cannot recognize its appearance;
an image is before my eyes,
and I hear a murmuring voice:
- 17 “Is a mortal man righteous before God?
Or a man pure before his Creator?
- 18 If God puts no trust in his servants
and attributes folly to his angels,
19 how much more to those who live in houses of clay,
whose foundation is in the dust,
who are crushed like a moth?
- 20 They are destroyed between morning and evening;
they perish forever without anyone regarding it.
- 21 Is not their excess wealth taken away from them?

They die, yet without attaining wisdom.

“Man is born to trouble”

- 5:1 “Call now! Is there anyone who will answer you?
To which of the holy ones will you turn?
2 For wrath kills the foolish person,
and anger slays the silly one.
3 I myself have seen the fool taking root,
but suddenly I cursed his place of residence.
4 His children are far from safety,
and they are crushed at the place where judgment is rendered,
nor is there anyone to deliver them.
5 The hungry eat up his harvest,
and take it even from behind the thorns,
and the thirsty swallow up their fortune.
6 For evil does not come up from the dust,
nor does trouble spring up from the ground,
7 but people are born to trouble,
as surely as the sparks fly upward.

Eliphaz’s Advice—Appeal to the God of Justice

- 8 “But as for me, I would seek God,
and to God I would set forth my case.
9 He does great and unsearchable things,
marvelous things without number;
10 he gives rain on the earth,
and sends water on the fields;
11 he sets the lowly on high,
that those who mourn are raised to safety.
12 He frustrates the plans of the crafty
so that their hands cannot accomplish
what they had planned!
13 He catches the wise in their own craftiness, [cf. [1 Cor 3:19](#)]
and the counsel of the cunning is brought to a quick end.
14 They meet with darkness in the daytime,
and grope about in the noontime as if it were night.
15 So he saves from the sword that comes from their mouth,
even the poor from the hand of the powerful.
16 Thus the poor have hope,
and iniquity shuts its mouth.

Eliphaz’s Advice—The God Who Disciplines Also Restores

- 17 “Therefore, blessed is the man whom God corrects,
so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. [cf. [Prov 3:11–12](#); [Heb 12:5–6](#)]
18 For he wounds, but he also bandages;
he strikes, but his hands also heal.
19 He will deliver you from six calamities;
yes, in seven no evil will touch you.
20 In time of famine he will redeem you from death,
and in time of war from the power of the sword.
21 You will be protected from malicious gossip,
and will not be afraid of the destruction when it comes.
22 You will laugh at destruction and famine
and need not be afraid of the beasts of the earth.
23 For you will have a pact with the stones of the field,
and the wild animals will be at peace with you.
24 And you will know that your home will be secure,
and when you inspect your domains,

- you will not be missing anything.
- 25 You will also know that your children will be numerous,
and your descendants like the grass of the earth.
- 26 You will come to your grave in a full age,
As stacks of grain are harvested in their season.
- 27 Look, we have investigated this, so it is true.
Hear it, and apply it for your own good.”

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

Job 6–7

Job Defends His Bitter Words

6:1 Then Job responded:

- 2 “Oh, if only my grief could be weighed,
and my misfortune laid on the scales too!
- 3 But because it is heavier than the sand of the sea,
that is why my words have been wild.
- 4 For the arrows of the Almighty are within me;
my spirit drinks their poison;
God's sudden terrors are arrayed against me.
- 5 “Does the wild donkey bray when it is near grass?
Or does the ox low near its fodder?
- 6 Can food that is tasteless be eaten without salt?
Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?
- 7 I have refused to touch such things;
they are like loathsome food to me.

Job's Desire for Death

- 8 “Oh that my request would be realized,
and that God would grant me what I long for!
- 9 And that God would be willing to crush me,
that he would let loose his hand
and kill me.
- 10 Then I would yet have my comfort,
then I would rejoice,
in spite of pitiless pain,
for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One.
- 11 What is my strength, that I should wait?
and what is my end,
that I should prolong my life?
- 12 Is my strength like that of stones?
or is my flesh made of bronze?
- 13 Is not my power to help myself nothing,
and has not every resource been driven from me?

Job's Disappointment With His Former Friends and Acquaintances

- 14 “To the one in despair, kindness should come from his friend
even if he forsakes the fear of the Almighty.
- 15 My brothers have been as treacherous as a seasonal stream,
and as the riverbeds of the intermittent streams
that flow away.
- 16 They are dark because of ice;
snow is piled up over them.
- 17 When they are scorched, they dry up,
when it is hot, they vanish from their place.
- 18 Caravans turn aside from their routes;
they go into the wasteland and perish.

- 19 The caravans of Tema looked intently for these streams;
the traveling merchants of Sheba hoped for them.
- 20 They were distressed,
because each one had been so confident;
they arrived there, but were disappointed.

Job's Disappointment With Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar

- 21 For now you have become like these streams that are no help;
you see a terror, and are afraid.
- 22 "Have I ever said, 'Give me something,
and from your fortune make gifts in my favor'?
- 23 Or 'Deliver me from the enemy's power,
and from the hand of tyrants ransom me'?

Job Pleads for Genuine Help

- 24 "Teach me and I, for my part, will be silent;
explain to me how I have been mistaken.
- 25 How painful are honest words!
But what does your reproof prove?
- 26 Do you intend to criticize mere words,
and treat the words of a despairing man as wind?
- 27 Yes, you would gamble for the fatherless,
and auction off your friend.

Job Insists that He is Innocent

- 28 "Now then, be good enough to look at me;
and I will not lie to your face!
- 29 Relent, let there be no falsehood;
reconsider, for my righteousness is intact!
- 30 Is there any falsehood on my lips?
Can my mouth not discern evil things?

Job Describes His Suffering

- 7:1 "Does not humanity have hard service on earth?
Are not their days also
like the days of a hired man?
- 2 Like a servant longing for the evening shadow,
and like a hired man looking for his wages,
3 thus I have been made to inherit
months of futility,
and nights of sorrow
have been appointed to me.
- 4 If I lie down, I say, 'When will I arise?',
and the night stretches on
and I toss and turn restlessly
until the day dawns.
- 5 My body is clothed with worms and dirty scabs;
my skin is broken and festering.
- 6 My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle
and they come to an end without hope.

Job Speaks to God—Remember How Brief My Life Is!

- 7 Remember that my life is but a breath,
that my eyes will never again see happiness.
- 8 The eye of him who sees me now will see me no more;
your eyes will look for me, but I will be gone.
- 9 As a cloud is dispersed and then disappears,
so the one who goes down to the grave

does not come up again.

- 10 He returns no more to his house,
nor does his place of residence know him any more.

Job Speaks to God—Why Do You Torture Me? Leave Me Alone!

- 11 “Therefore, I will not refrain my mouth;
I will speak in the anguish of my spirit;
I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.
12 Am I the sea, or the creature of the deep,
that you must put me under guard?
13 If I say, “My bed will comfort me,
my couch will ease my complaint,”
14 then you scare me with dreams
and terrify me with visions,
15 so that I would prefer strangling,
and death more than life.
16 I loathe it; I do not want to live forever;
leave me alone, for my days are a vapor!

Job Speaks to God—Why Do You Put Men Under Such Intense Scrutiny?

- 17 “What is mankind that you make so much of them,
and that you pay attention to them?
18 And that you visit them every morning,
and try them every moment?
19 Will you never look away from me,
will you not let me alone
long enough to swallow my spittle?
20 If I have sinned—what have I done to you,
O watcher of men?
Why have you set me as your target?
Have I become a burden to you?
21 And why do you not pardon my transgression,
and take away my iniquity?
For now I will lie down in the dust,
and you will seek me diligently,
but I will be gone.”

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