

Eliphaz's Second Speech (c. 2200 BC)

Job 15

Eliphaz Attacks—Your Own Words Prove Your Guilt

1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered:

- 2 “Does a wise man answer with blustery knowledge,
or fill his belly with the east wind?
3 Does he argue with useless talk,
with words that have no value in them?
4 But you even break off piety,
and hinder meditation before God.
5 Your sin inspires your mouth;
you choose the language of the crafty.
6 Your own mouth condemns you, not I;
your own lips testify against you.

Eliphaz Attacks—Who Do You Think You Are?

- 7 “Were you the first man ever born?
Were you brought forth before the hills?
8 Do you listen in on God's secret council?
Do you limit wisdom to yourself?
9 What do you know that we don't know?
What do you understand that we don't understand?
10 The gray-haired and the aged are on our side,
men far older than your father.
11 Are God's consolations too trivial for you;
or a word spoken in gentleness to you?
12 Why has your heart carried you away,
and why do your eyes flash,
13 when you turn your rage against God
and allow such words to escape from your mouth?

Eliphaz Lectures—The Sinfulness of Man

- 14 What is man that he should be pure,
or one born of woman, that he should be righteous?
15 If God places no trust in his holy ones,
if even the heavens are not pure in his eyes,
16 how much less man, who is abominable and corrupt,
who drinks in evil like water!

Eliphaz Lectures—The Fate of the Wicked

- 17 “I will explain to you;
listen to me,
and what I have seen, I will declare,
18 what wise men declare,
hiding nothing,
from the tradition of their ancestors,
19 to whom alone the land was given
when no foreigner passed among them.
20 All his days the wicked man suffers torment,
throughout the number of the years
that are stored up for the tyrant.
21 Terrifying sounds fill his ears;
in a time of peace marauders attack him.
22 He does not expect to escape from darkness;
he is marked for the sword;
23 he wanders about—food for vultures;
he knows that the day of darkness is at hand.

- 24 Distress and anguish terrify him;
they prevail against him
like a king ready to launch an attack,
25 for he stretches out his hand against God,
and vaunts himself against the Almighty,
26 defiantly charging against him
with a thick, strong shield!
27 Because he covered his face with fat,
and made his hips bulge with fat,
28 he lived in ruined towns
and in houses where no one lives,
where they are ready to crumble into heaps.
29 He will not grow rich,
and his wealth will not endure,
nor will his possessions spread over the land.
30 He will not escape the darkness;
a flame will wither his shoots
and he will depart
by the breath of God's mouth.
31 Let him not trust in what is worthless,
deceiving himself;
for worthlessness will be his reward.
32 Before his time he will be paid in full,
and his branches will not flourish.
33 Like a vine he will let his sour grapes fall,
and like an olive tree
he will shed his blossoms.
34 For the company of the godless is barren,
and fire consumes the tents of those who accept bribes.
35 They conceive trouble and bring forth evil;
their belly prepares deception."

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

Job 16–17

Job Wishes He Could Be His Own Friend

16:1 Then Job replied:

- 2 "I have heard many things like these before.
What miserable comforters are you all!
3 Will there be an end to your windy words?
Or what provokes you that you answer?
4 I also could speak like you,
if you were in my place;
I could pile up words against you
and I could shake my head at you.
5 But I would strengthen you with my words;
comfort from my lips would bring you relief.

Job Graphically Describes How God Has Treated Him

- 6 "But if I speak, my pain is not relieved,
and if I refrain from speaking
—how much of it goes away?
7 Surely now he has worn me out,
you have devastated my entire household.
8 You have seized me,
and it has become a witness;
my leanness has risen up against me

and testifies against me.

- 9 His anger has torn me and persecuted me;
he has gnashed at me with his teeth;
my adversary locks his eyes on me.
- 10 People have opened their mouths against me,
they have struck my cheek in scorn;
they unite together against me.
- 11 God abandons me to evil men,
and throws me into the hands of wicked men.
- 12 I was in peace, and he has shattered me.
He has seized me by the neck and crushed me.
He has made me his target;
- 13 his archers surround me.
Without pity he pierces my kidneys
and pours out my gall on the ground.
- 14 He breaks through against me, time and time again;
he rushes against me like a warrior.

Job's Response to God's Destruction is Humility

- 15 I have sewed sackcloth on my skin,
and buried my horn in the dust;
- 16 my face is reddened because of weeping,
and on my eyelids there is a deep darkness,
although there is no violence in my hands
and my prayer is pure.

Job Longs for an Intercessor Between Him and God

- 18 "O earth, do not cover my blood,
nor let there be a secret place for my cry.
- 19 Even now my witness is in heaven;
my advocate is on high.
- 20 My intercessor is my friend
as my eyes pour out tears to God;
- 21 and he contends with God on behalf of man
as a man pleads for his friend.

Job's Thoughts Return to Death...

- 22 For the years that lie ahead are few,
and then I will go on the way of no return.
- 17:1 My spirit is broken,
my days have faded out,
the grave awaits me.

...And He Looks Once More at His Friends

- 2 Surely mockery is with me;
my eyes must dwell on their hostility.
- 3 Make then my pledge with you.
Who else will put up security for me?
- 4 Because you have closed their minds to understanding,
therefore you will not exalt them.
- 5 If a man denounces his friends for personal gain,
the eyes of his children will fail.
- 6 He has made me a byword to people,
I am the one in whose face they spit.
- 7 My eyes have grown dim with grief;
my whole frame is but a shadow.
- 8 Upright men are appalled at this;
the innocent man is troubled with the godless.

9 But the righteous man holds to his way,
and the one with clean hands grows stronger.

Job Sarcastically Asks His Friends to Share Their Wisdom

10 “But turn, all of you, and come now!
I will not find a wise man among you.

11 My days have passed, my plans are shattered,
even the desires of my heart.

12 These men change night into day;
they say, ‘The light is near
in the face of darkness.’

13 If I hope for the grave to be my home,
if I spread out my bed in darkness,

14 If I cry to corruption, ‘You are my father,’
and to the worm, ‘My Mother,’ or ‘My sister,’

15 where then is my hope?
And my hope, who sees it?

16 Will it go down to the barred gates of death?
Will we descend together into the dust?”

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