

1. The speeches of Eliphaz

First speech: Job 4 – 5

Eliphaz ventures to speak (4:1–6)

Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied:

- ²If someone ventures a word with you, will you be impatient?
but who can keep from speaking?
³Think how you have instructed many,
how you have strengthened feeble hands.
⁴Your words have supported those who stumbled;
you have strengthened faltering knees.
⁵But now trouble comes to you, and you are discouraged;
it strikes you, and you are dismayed.
⁶Should not your piety be your confidence
and your blameless ways your hope?

'You reap what you sow' (4:7–11)

- ⁷Consider now: Who, being innocent, has ever perished?
Where were the upright ever destroyed?
⁸As I have observed, those who plough evil
and those who sow trouble reap it.

⁹At the breath of God they are destroyed;
at the blast of his anger they perish.
¹⁰The lions may roar and growl,
yet the teeth of the great lions are broken.
¹¹The lion perishes for lack of prey,
and the cubs of the lioness are scattered.

Eliphaz's vision and its meaning (4:12 – 5:7)

- ¹²A word was secretly brought to me,
my ears caught a whisper of it.
¹³Amid disquieting dreams in the night,
when deep sleep falls on men,
¹⁴fear and trembling seized me
and made all my bones shake.
¹⁵A spirit glided past my face,
and the hair on my body stood on end.
¹⁶It stopped,
but I could not tell what it was.
A form stood before my eyes,
and I heard a hushed voice:
¹⁷"Can a mortal be more righteous than God?
Can a man be more pure than his Maker?
¹⁸If God places no trust in his servants,
if he charges his angels with error,
¹⁹how much more those who live in houses of clay,
whose foundations are in the dust,
who are crushed more readily than a moth!
²⁰Between dawn and dusk they are broken to pieces;
unnoticed, they perish for ever.
²¹Are not the cords of their tent pulled up,
so that they die without wisdom?"

- ^{5:1}Call if you will, but who will answer you?
To which of the holy ones will you turn?
²Resentment kills a fool,
and envy slays the simple.
³I myself have seen a fool taking root,
but suddenly his house was cursed.
⁴His children are far from safety,
crushed in court without a defender.
⁵The hungry consume his harvest,
taking it even from among thorns,
and the thirsty pant after his wealth.

- ⁶For hardship does not spring from the soil,
nor does trouble sprout from the ground.
⁷Yet man is born to trouble
as surely as sparks fly upward.

Eliphaz extols the goodness of God (5:8–16)

- ⁸But if it were I, I would appeal to God;
I would lay my cause before him.
⁹He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed,
miracles that cannot be counted.
¹⁰He bestows rain on the earth;
he sends water upon the countryside.
¹¹The lowly he sets on high,
and those who mourn are lifted to safety.
¹²He thwarts the plans of the crafty,
so that their hands achieve no success.
¹³He catches the wise in their craftiness,
and the schemes of the wily are swept away.
¹⁴Darkness comes upon them in the daytime;
at noon they grope as in the night.
¹⁵He saves the needy from the sword in their mouth;
he saves them from the clutches of the powerful.
¹⁶So the poor have hope,
and injustice shuts its mouth.

The happiness of the person who responds to suffering in the right spirit (5:17–27)

- ¹⁷Blessed is the man whom God corrects;
so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.
¹⁸For he wounds, but he also binds up;
he injures, but his hands also heal.
¹⁹From six calamities he will rescue you;
in seven no harm will befall you.
²⁰In famine he will ransom you from death,
and in battle from the stroke of the sword.
²¹You will be protected from the lash of the tongue,
and need not fear when destruction comes.
²²You will laugh at destruction and famine,
and need not fear the beasts of the earth.
²³For you will have a covenant with the stones of the field,
and the wild animals will be at peace with you.
²⁴You will know that your tent is secure;
you will take stock of your property and find nothing missing.
²⁵You will know that your children will be many,
and your descendants like the grass of the earth.
²⁶You will come to the grave in full vigour,
like sheaves gathered in season.
²⁷We have examined this, and it is true.
So hear it and apply it to yourself.'

Second speech: Job 15

Eliphaz rebukes Job for his irreverence (15:1–6)

Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied:

- ²Would a wise man answer with empty notions
or fill his belly with the hot east wind?
³Would he argue with useless words,
with speeches that have no value?
⁴But you even undermine piety
and hinder devotion to God.
⁵Your sin prompts your mouth;
you adopt the tongue of the crafty.
⁶Your own mouth condemns you, not mine;
your own lips testify against you.

Who does Job think he is? (15:7-16)

- ⁷Are you the first man ever born?
Were you brought forth before the hills?
⁸Do you listen in on God's council?
Do you limit wisdom to yourself?
⁹What do you know that we do not know?
What insights do you have that we do not have?
¹⁰The grey-haired and the aged are on our side,
men even older than your father.
¹¹Are God's consolations not enough for you,
words spoken gently to you?
¹²Why has your heart carried you away,
and why do your eyes flash,
¹³so that you vent your rage against God
and pour out such words from your mouth?
¹⁴What is man, that he could be pure,
or one born of woman, that he could be righteous?
¹⁵If God places no trust in his holy ones,
if even the heavens are not pure in his eyes,
¹⁶how much less man, who is vile and corrupt,
who drinks up evil like water!

The traditional picture of the evil-doer (15:17-35)

- ¹⁷Listen to me and I will explain to you;
let me tell you what I have seen,
¹⁸what wise men have declared,
hiding nothing received from their fathers
¹⁹(to whom alone the land was given
when no alien passed among them):
²⁰All his days the wicked man suffers torment,
the ruthless through all the years stored up for him.
²¹Terrifying sounds fill his ears;
when all seems well, marauders attack him.
²²He despairs of escaping the darkness;
he is marked for the sword.
²³He wanders about – food for vultures;
he knows the day of darkness is at hand.
²⁴Distress and anguish fill him with terror;
they overwhelm him, like a king poised to attack,
²⁵because he shakes his fist at God
and vaunts himself against the Almighty,
²⁶defiantly charging against him
with a thick, strong shield.
²⁷Though his face is covered with fat
and his waist bulges with flesh,
²⁸he will inhabit ruined towns
and houses where no-one lives,
houses crumbling to rubble.
²⁹He will no longer be rich and his wealth will not endure,
nor will his possessions spread over the land.
³⁰He will not escape the darkness;
in flame will wither his shoots,
and the breath of God's mouth will carry him away.
³¹Let him not deceive himself by trusting what is worthless,
for he will get nothing in return.
³²Before his time he will be paid in full,
and his branches will not flourish.
³³He will be like a vine stripped of its unripe grapes,
like an olive tree shedding its blossoms.
³⁴For the company of the goddess will be barren,
and fire will consume the tents of those who love bribes.
³⁵They conceive trouble and give birth to evil;
their womb fashions deceit.'

Third speech: Job 22

Eliphaz says God is not really concerned with Job (22:1-4)

Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied:

- ²Can a man be of benefit to God?
Can even a wise man benefit him?
³What pleasure would it give the Almighty if you were
righteous?
What would he gain if your ways were blameless?
⁴Is it for your piety that he rebukes you
and brings charges against you?

This must prove Job's wickedness (22:5-11)

- ⁵Is not your wickedness great?
Are not your sins endless?
⁶You demanded security from your brothers for no reason;
you stripped men of their clothing, leaving them naked.
⁷You gave no water to the weary
and you withheld food from the hungry,
⁸though you were a powerful man, owning land –
an honoured man, living on it.
⁹And you sent widows away empty-handed
and broke the strength of the fatherless.
¹⁰That is why snares are all around you,
why sudden peril terrifies you,
¹¹why it is so dark and you cannot see,
and why a flood of water covers you.

Eliphaz thinks Job must believe God is unconcerned (22:12-20)

- ¹²Is not God in the heights of heaven?
And see how lofty are the highest stars!
¹³Yet you say, "What does God know?
Does he judge through such darkness?"
¹⁴Thick clouds veil him, so he does not see us
as he goes about in the vaulted heavens."
¹⁵Will you keep to the old path
that evil men have trod?
¹⁶They were carried off before their time,
their foundations washed away by a flood.
¹⁷They said to God, "Leave us alone!
What can the Almighty do to us?"
¹⁸Yet it was he who filled their houses with good things,
so I stand aloof from the counsel of the wicked.
¹⁹The righteous see their ruin and rejoice;
the innocent mock them, saying,
²⁰"Surely our foes are destroyed,
and fire devours their wealth."

Eliphaz appeals to Job to agree with God and be at peace (22:21-30)

- ²¹Submit to God and be at peace with him;
in this way prosperity will come to you.
²²Accept instruction from his mouth
and lay up his words in your heart.
²³If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored:
If you remove wickedness far from your tent
²⁴and assign your nuggets to the dust,
your gold of Ophir to the rocks in the ravines,
²⁵then the Almighty will be your gold,
the choicest silver for you.
²⁶Surely then you will find delight in the Almighty
and will lift up your face to God.
²⁷You will pray to him, and he will hear you,
and you will fulfil your vows.
²⁸What you decide on will be done,
and light will shine on your ways.
²⁹When men are brought low and you say, "Lift them up!"
then he will save the downcast.
³⁰He will deliver even one who is not innocent,
who will be delivered through the cleanness of your
hands.'

2. The speeches of Bildad

First speech: Job 8

Bildad affirms the justice of God (8:1-7)

Then Bildad the Shuhite replied:

- ²How long will you say such things?
Your words are a blustering wind.
- ³Does God pervert justice?
Does the Almighty pervert what is right?
- ⁴When your children sinned against him,
he gave them over to the penalty of their sin.
- ⁵But if you will look to God
and plead with the Almighty,
- ⁶if you are pure and upright,
even now he will rouse himself on your behalf
and restore you to your rightful place.
- ⁷Your beginnings will seem humble,
so prosperous will your future be.

Bildad appeals to ancient wisdom (8:8-22)

- ⁸Ask the former generations
and find out what their fathers learned,
⁹for we were born only yesterday and know nothing,
and our days on earth are but a shadow.
- ¹⁰Will they not instruct you and tell you?
Will they not bring forth words from their
understanding?
- ¹¹Can papyrus grow tall where there is no marsh?
Can reeds thrive without water?
- ¹²While still growing and uncut,
they wither more quickly than grass.
- ¹³Such is the destiny of all who forget God;
so perishes the hope of the godless.
- ¹⁴What he trusts in is fragile;
what he relies on is a spider's web.
- ¹⁵He leans on his web, but it gives way;
he clings to it, but it does not hold.
- ¹⁶He is like a well-watered plant in the sunshine,
spreading its shoots over the garden;
- ¹⁷it entwines its roots around a pile of rocks

and looks for a place among the stones.
- ¹⁸But when it is torn from its spot,
that place disowns it and says, "I never saw you."
- ¹⁹Surely its life withers away,
and from the soil other plants grow.

- ²⁰Surely God does not reject a blameless man
or strengthen the hands of evildoers.
- ²¹He will yet fill your mouth with laughter
and your lips with shouts of joy.
- ²²Your enemies will be clothed in shame,
and the tents of the wicked will be no more.?

Second speech: Job 18

How long will Job go on like this? (18:1-4)

Then Bildad the Shuhite replied:

- ²When will you end these speeches?
Be sensible, and then we can talk.
- ³Why are we regarded as cattle
and considered stupid in your sight?
- ⁴You who tear yourself to pieces in your anger,
is the earth to be abandoned for your sake?
Or must the rocks be moved from their place?

Bildad portrays the fate of the wicked (18:5-21)

- ⁵The lamp of the wicked is snuffed out;
the flame of his fire stops burning.
- ⁶The light in his tent becomes dark;
the lamp beside him goes out.
- ⁷The vigour of his step is weakened;
his own schemes throw him down.
- ⁸His feet thrust him into a net
and he wanders into its mesh.
- ⁹A trap seizes him by the heel;
a snare holds him fast.
- ¹⁰A noose is hidden for him on the ground;
a trap lies in his path.
- ¹¹Terrors startle him on every side
and dog his every step.
- ¹²Calamity is hungry for him;
disaster is ready for him when he falls.
- ¹³It eats away parts of his skin;
death's firstborn devours his limbs.
- ¹⁴He is torn from the security of his tent
and marched off to the king of terrors.
- ¹⁵Fire resides in his tent;
burning sulphur is scattered over his dwelling.
- ¹⁶His roots dry up below
and his branches wither above.
- ¹⁷The memory of him perishes from the earth;
he has no name in the land.
- ¹⁸He is driven from light into darkness
and is banished from the world.
- ¹⁹He has no offspring or descendants among his people,
no survivor where once he lived.
- ²⁰Men of the west are appalled at his fate;
men of the east are seized with horror.
- ²¹Surely such is the dwelling of an evil man;
such is the place of one who knows not God.?

Third speech: Job 25

How can a person be righteous before this God? (25:1-6)

Then Bildad the Shuhite replied:

- ²Dominion and awe belong to God;
he establishes order in the heights of heaven.
- ³Can his forces be numbered?
Upon whom does his light not rise?
- ⁴How then can a man be righteous before God?
How can one born of woman be pure?
- ⁵If even the moon is not bright
and the stars are not pure in his eyes,
⁶how much less man, who is but a maggot –
a son of man, who is only a worm!?
- ⁸He wraps up the waters in his clouds,
yet the clouds do not burst under their weight.
- ⁹He covers the face of the full moon,
spreading his clouds over it.
- ¹⁰He marks out the horizon on the face of the waters
for a boundary between light and darkness.
- ¹¹The pillars of the heavens quake,
aghast at his rebuke.
- ¹²By his power he churned up the sea;
by his wisdom he cut Rahab to pieces.
- ¹³By his breath the skies became fair;
his hand pierced the gliding serpent.
- ¹⁴And these are but the outer fringe of his works;
how faint the whisper we hear of him!
Who then can understand the thunder of his power??

3. The speeches of Zophar

First speech: Job 11

Zophar rebukes Job and calls on God to speak (11:1-6)

Then Zophar the Naamathite replied:

- ¹Are all these words to go unanswered?
Is this talker to be vindicated?
- ²Will your idle talk reduce men to silence?
Will no-one rebuke you when you mock?
- ³You say to God, "My beliefs are flawless
and I am pure in your sight."
- ⁴Oh, how I wish that God would speak,
that he would open his lips against you
and disclose to you the secrets of wisdom,
for true wisdom has two sides.
Know this: God has even forgotten some of your sin.

Zophar extols God's wisdom (11:7-12)

- ⁷Can you fathom the mysteries of God?
Can you probe the limits of the Almighty?
- ⁸They are higher than the heavens - what can you do?
They are deeper than the depths of the grave - what can
you know?
- ⁹Their measure is longer than the earth
and wider than the sea.
- ¹⁰If he comes along and confines you in prison
and convenes a court, who can oppose him?
- ¹¹Surely he recognises deceitful men;
and when he sees evil, does he not take note?
- ¹²But a witless man can no more become wise
than a wild donkey's colt can be born a man.

Zophar sets out the way of repentance and the blessings of the penitent (11:13-20)

- ¹³Yet if you devote your heart to him
and stretch out your hands to him,
- ¹⁴if you put away the sin that is in your hand
and allow no evil to dwell in your tent,
- ¹⁵then you will lift up your face without shame;
you will stand firm and without fear.
- ¹⁶You will surely forget your trouble,
recalling it only as waters gone by.
- ¹⁷Life will be brighter than noonday,
and darkness will become like morning.
- ¹⁸You will be secure, because there is hope;
you will look about you and take your rest in safety.
- ¹⁹You will lie down, with no-one to make you afraid,
and many will court your favour.
- ²⁰But the eyes of the wicked will fail,
and escape will elude them;
their hope will become a dying gasp.'

Second speech: Job 20

Zophar's impatience (20:1-3)

Then Zophar the Naamathite replied:

- ²My troubled thoughts prompt me to answer
because I am greatly disturbed.
- ³I hear a rebuke that dishonours me,
and my understanding inspires me to reply.

Zophar describes the fate of the wicked (20:4-11)

- ⁴Surely you know how it has been from of old,
ever since man was placed on the earth,
- ⁵that the mirth of the wicked is brief,
the joy of the godless lasts but a moment.
- ⁶Though his pride reaches to the heavens
and his head touches the clouds,
- ⁷he will perish for ever, like his own dung;
those who have seen him will say, "Where is he?"
- ⁸Like a dream he flies away, no more to be found,
banished like a vision of the night.
- ⁹The eye that saw him will not see him again;
his place will look on him no more.
- ¹⁰His children must make amends to the poor;
his own hands must give back his wealth.
- ¹¹The youthful vigour that fills his bones
will lie with him in the dust.

'Sin brings its rewards' (20:12-22)

- ¹²Though evil is sweet in his mouth
and he hides it under his tongue,
- ¹³though he cannot bear to let it go
and keeps it in his mouth,
- ¹⁴yet his food will turn sour in his stomach;
it will become the venom of serpents within him.
- ¹⁵He will spit out the riches he swallowed;
God will make his stomach vomit them up.
- ¹⁶He will suck the poison of serpents;
the fangs of an adder will kill him.
- ¹⁷He will not enjoy the streams,
the rivers flowing with honey and cream.
- ¹⁸What he toiled for he must give back uneaten;
he will not enjoy the profit from his trading.
- ¹⁹For he has oppressed the poor and left them destitute;
he has seized houses he did not build.
- ²⁰Surely he will have no respite from his craving;
he cannot save himself by his treasure.
- ²¹Nothing is left for him to devour;
his prosperity will not endure.
- ²²In the midst of his plenty, distress will overtake him;
the full force of misery will come upon him.

Zophar speaks of God's fierce anger (20:23-29)

- ²³When he has filled his belly,

God will vent his burning anger against him
and rain down his blows upon him.
- ²⁴Though he flees from an iron weapon,
a bronze-tipped arrow pierces him.
- ²⁵He pulls it out of his back,
the gleaming point out of his liver.
Terrors will come over him,
total darkness lies in wait for his treasures.
A fire unfanned will consume him
and devour what is left in his tent.
- ²⁷The heavens will expose his guilt;
the earth will rise up against him.
- ²⁸A flood will carry off his house,
rushing waters on the day of God's wrath.
- ²⁹Such is the fate God allots the wicked,
the heritage appointed for them by God.'