

Lessons from the Story of Job

The First Discourse of Eliphaz (Job 4-5)

Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar are the original “Pharisees”. They had their doctrines mostly right, but they didn’t know God, and so couldn’t speak from knowing Him. The result was that much of what they said may have been correct, but their influence was “ungodly” because they didn’t know God.

1. (4:1-6) What aspect of Job’s past does Eliphaz bring up, and why? Do you recognize this tactic?

His past faithfulness to God: “What happened to your past devotion?”

“Shouldn’t your devout life give you confidence now? Shouldn’t your exemplary life give you hope?”

2. (4:7-11) What does Eliphaz claim is the root of all evil and suffering? How does this compare with the way you tend to analyze suffering in your own life and the lives of others?

He states that the reaping of trouble is a result of sowing evil.

3. (4:12-16) How does Eliphaz try to self-validate his words? Do you recognize this tactic?

By claiming to have received a word through a vision.

4. (4:17-21) According to Eliphaz, can Man be blameless before God? What was God’s opinion of whether Man could be blameless before Him (specifically with regard to Job)?

No, because our bodies are temporary.

But, God had already attested that Job was blameless (1:8, 2:3).

5. (5:1-16) What is Eliphaz’s reason for Job’s problems? What solution does he propose?

His hot temper and folly.

“Throw yourself at the mercy of God.”

6. (5:17-26) What does Eliphaz say about receiving God’s correction? Is what he says true?

“Mind you, don’t despise the discipline of Almighty God! True, he wounds, but he also dresses the wound.”

7. (5:27) How does Eliphaz sign off his argument? Do you recognize this tactic?

Very piously: “My thoughts are all correct. If you don’t listen to me, you’ll go astray.”