

The Book of Job Chapters 15-21

Chapter 15 begins the second round of the three friends responding to Job. The three friends take turns again in the same order. Eliphaz starts the second round beginning in chapter 15, Bildad speaks again in chapter 18, and Zophar speaks again in chapter 20.

Eliphaz Responds to Job a Second Time

Job 15:1-3 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said: ² "Should a wise man answer with empty knowledge, and fill himself with the east wind? ³ Should he reason with unprofitable talk, or by speeches with which he can do no good?"

Comments:

1. Eliphaz is saying in verse 1-3 is that Job is not talking as a wise man.
2. In blunt terms, Eliphaz does not think Job knows what he is talking about.

Job 15:4-10 ⁴ Yes, you cast off fear, and restrain prayer before God. ⁵ For your iniquity teaches your mouth, and you choose the tongue of the crafty. ⁶ Your own mouth condemns you, and not I; Yes, your own lips testify against you. ⁷ "Are you the first man *who* was born? Or were you made before the hills? ⁸ Have you heard the counsel of God? Do you limit wisdom to yourself? ⁹ What do you know that we do not know? *What* do you understand that *is* not in us? ¹⁰ Both the gray-haired and the aged *are* among us, Much older than your father.

Comments:

1. Eliphaz thinks that Job is speaking as though he is the wisest man on earth, as though he knows as much as God.
2. Notice in verses 4-6, Eliphaz says to Job, you are speaking from a sinful perspective and he is condemning himself.
3. Also notice that Eliphaz is no longer comforting Job, he is debating him.

Job 15:11-29 ¹¹ Are the consolations of God too small for you, And the word *spoken* gently with you? ¹² Why does your heart carry you away, and what do your eyes wink at, ¹³ That you turn your spirit against God, and let *such* words go out of your mouth? ¹⁴ "What *is* man, that he could be pure? And *he who is* born of a woman, that he could be righteous? ¹⁵ If *God* puts no trust in His saints, And the heavens are not pure in His sight, ¹⁶ How much less man, *who is* abominable and filthy, who drinks iniquity like water! ¹⁷ "I will tell you, hear me; What I have seen I will declare, ¹⁸ What wise men have told, Not hiding *anything received* from their fathers, ¹⁹ To whom alone the land was given, and no alien passed among them: ²⁰ The wicked man writhes with pain all *his* days, And the number of years is hidden from the oppressor. ²¹ Dreadful sounds *are* in his ears; In prosperity the destroyer comes upon him. ²² He does not believe that he will return from darkness, for a sword is waiting for him. ²³ He wanders about for bread, *saying*, `Where *is it*?' He knows that a day of darkness is ready at his hand. ²⁴ Trouble and anguish make him afraid; They overpower him, like a king ready for battle. ²⁵ For he stretches out his hand against God, and acts defiantly against the Almighty, ²⁶ Running stubbornly against Him With his strong, embossed shield. ²⁷ "Though he has covered his face with his fatness, and made *his* waist heavy with fat, ²⁸ He dwells in desolate cities, in houses which no one inhabits, which are destined to become ruins. ²⁹ He will not be rich, nor will his wealth continue, nor will his possessions overspread the earth.

Comments & Questions:

1. Is Eliphaz saying a truthful statement in verse 11 when he says to Job that he should be content with the consolations of God in his situation?
2. Is it true that words have been spoken to Job gently as Eliphaz says in verse 11?
3. Shouldn't Eliphaz know why Job's heart is carried away as he says in verse 12?
4. Given what Job has been saying about himself, why do you think Eliphaz feels the need to say what he says in verses 14-16?
5. Notice that Eliphaz correctly states that even the heavens are not pure.

Hebrews 9:23-24 Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

Revelation 21:1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also, there was no more sea. (Rev. 21:1)

6. Notice in verses 20-29, that Eliphaz has an appropriate understanding of humankind's problems. He does not see man as having a minor problem that he can resolve. He sees humankind as incurable, completely defiant towards God, and experiencing unavoidable consequences.

Job 15:30-35 ³⁰ He will not depart from darkness; The flame will dry out his branches, and by the breath of His mouth he will go away. ³¹ Let him not trust in futile *things*, deceiving himself, for futility will be his reward. ³² It will be accomplished before his time, and his branch will not be green. ³³ He will shake off his unripe grape like a vine, and cast off his blossom like an olive tree. ³⁴ For the company of hypocrites *will be* barren, and fire will consume the tents of bribery. ³⁵ They conceive trouble and bring forth futility; Their womb prepares deceit."

Comments

1. Eliphaz is correct in verses 30-35. We cannot depart from darkness and over time we dry up and go away.

Psalm 34:19 ¹⁹ Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of them all.

Isaiah 40:6-7 ⁶ The voice said, "Cry out!" And he said, "What shall I cry?" "All flesh *is* grass, and all its loveliness *is* like the flower of the field. ⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades, Because the breath of the LORD blows upon it; Surely the people *are* grass.

Job Responds to Eliphaz a Second Time

Job 16:1-10 Then Job answered and said: ² "**I have heard many such things; Miserable comforters *are* you all!** ³ Shall words of wind have an end? Or what provokes you that you answer? ⁴ I also could speak as you *do* if your soul were in my soul's place. I could heap up words against you, and shake my head at you; ⁵ *But* I would strengthen you with my mouth, And the comfort of my lips would relieve *your grief*. ⁶ "Though I speak, my grief is not relieved; And *if* I remain silent, how am I eased? ⁷ But now He has worn me out; You have made desolate all my company. ⁸ You have shriveled me up, and it is a witness *against me*; My leanness rises up against me *and* bears witness to my face. ⁹ He tears *me* in His wrath, and hates me; He gnashes at me with His teeth; My adversary sharpens His gaze on me. ¹⁰ They gape at me with their mouth, they strike me reproachfully on the cheek, they gather together against me.

Comments & Questions:

1. Notice how irritated Job has become with his friends in verse two.
2. What is Job saying in verses four and five?
3. Verse six says something interesting. Job feels that if the shoe were on the other foot, his words would comfort his friends. However, the words that he speaks in his own case do not comfort him; but if he remains silent, he would not be eased.
4. This expresses the importance of a person encouraging him or herself **in truth**. Job is not speaking word that encourages him because he is justifying himself instead of seeing himself in the light of truth.

Romans 12:3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

1 Corinthians 4:4 For I know nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.

5. What is Job saying in verse seven?
6. Who is Job blaming for these miserable friends?

Job 16:11-22 ¹¹ God has delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over to the hands of the wicked. ¹² I was at ease, but He has shattered me; He also has taken *me* by my neck, and shaken me to pieces; He has set me up for His target, ¹³ His archers surround me. He pierces my heart and does not pity; He pours out my gall on the ground. ¹⁴ He breaks me with wound upon wound; He runs at me like a warrior. ¹⁵ "I have sewn sackcloth over my skin, and laid my head in the dust. ¹⁶ My face is flushed from weeping, and on my eyelids *is* the shadow of death; ¹⁷ Although no violence *is* in my hands, and my prayer *is* pure. ¹⁸ "O earth, do not cover my blood, and let my cry have no *resting* place! ¹⁹ Surely even now my witness *is* in heaven, and my evidence *is* on high. ²⁰ My friends scorn me; My eyes pour out *tears* to God. ²¹ Oh, that one might plead for a man with God, as a man *pleads* for his neighbor! ²² For when a few years are finished, I shall go the way of no return.

Comments & Question:

1. Job feels like the actions of these friends are God's way of furthering His assault on Job.

2. His Job being fair towards his friends in verse 11?
3. Notice verse 17, that Job sees no fault in himself. This is part of Job's problem.

Job 17:1-6 ¹"My spirit is broken, my days are extinguished, the grave *is ready* for me. ² *Are* not mockers with me? And does not my eye dwell on their provocation? ³ "Now put down a pledge for me with Yourself. Who *is* he *who* will shake hands with me? ⁴ For You have hidden their heart from understanding; Therefore, You will not exalt *them*. ⁵ He who speaks flattery to *his* friends, Even the eyes of his children will fail. ⁶ "But He has made me a byword of the people, And I have become one in whose face men spit.

Comments:

1. Job again speaks of his friends as mockers in verse two.
2. Also notice in verse two that Job sees his friends as provoking him.
3. Verse three shows Job is looking for a friend, someone who will shake his hands. But because God has hidden understanding from the hearts of his friends, Job is a disgrace to everyone he knows.

Job 17:7-16 ⁷ My eye has also grown dim because of sorrow, and all my members *are* like shadows. ⁸ Upright *men* are astonished at this, And the innocent stirs himself up against the hypocrite. ⁹ Yet the righteous will hold to his way, and he who has clean hands will be stronger and stronger. ¹⁰ "But please, come back again, all of you, For I shall not find *one* wise *man* among you. ¹¹ My days are past, my purposes are broken off, *Even* the thoughts of my heart. ¹² They change the night into day; `The light *is* near,' *they say*, in the face of darkness. ¹³ If I wait *for* the grave *as* my house, If I make my bed in the darkness, ¹⁴ If I say to corruption, `You *are* my father,' And to the worm, `You *are* my mother and my sister,' ¹⁵ Where then *is* my hope? As for my hope, who can see it? ¹⁶ *Will* they go down to the gates of Sheol? Shall *we* *have* rest together in the dust?"

Comments:

1. In these verses, Job feels like he is on his death bed.
2. This shows the value of good friends. He requests in verse 10 that his friends "come back again." Start from the beginning because none of them are wise.

Bildad Responds to Job a Second Time

Job 18:1-4 ¹Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said: ² "How long *till* you put an end to words? Gain understanding, and afterward we will speak. ³ Why are we counted as beasts, *and* regarded as stupid in your sight? ⁴ You who tear yourself in anger, Shall the earth be forsaken for you? Or shall the rock be removed from its place?

Comments:

1. Notice how Bildad starts his second round of discussion. In verse two, Bildad is basically saying "When are you going to shut up?" Bildad further says, gain understanding and then we can talk.
2. Verse three shows how this conversation has deteriorated. Bildad shows that Job considers them stupid animals.
3. Notice that Bildad is correct that Job is only hurting himself in his anger. However, his anger is caused by his friends' false accusations.

James 1:19-20 ¹⁹ So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; ²⁰ for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Job 18:5-21 ⁵ "The light of the wicked indeed goes out, And the flame of his fire does not shine. ⁶ The light is dark in his tent, and his lamp beside him is put out. ⁷ The steps of his strength are shortened, And his own counsel casts him down. ⁸ For he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he walks into a snare. ⁹ The net takes *him* by the heel, *and* a snare lays hold of him. ¹⁰ A noose *is* hidden for him on the ground, And a trap for him in the road. ¹¹ Terrors frighten him on every side, and drive him to his feet. ¹² His strength is starved, and destruction *is* ready at his side. ¹³ It devours patches of his skin; The firstborn of death devours his limbs. ¹⁴ He is uprooted from the shelter of his tent, and they parade him before the king of terrors. ¹⁵ They dwell in his tent *who are* none of his; Brimstone is scattered on his dwelling. ¹⁶ His roots are dried out below, and his branch withers above. ¹⁷ The memory of him perishes from the earth, and he has no name among the renowned. ¹⁸ He is driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world. ¹⁹ He has neither son nor posterity among his people, Nor any remaining in his dwellings. ²⁰ Those in the west are astonished at his day, as those in the east are frightened. ²¹ Surely such *are* the dwellings of the wicked, and this *is* the place *of him* who does not know God."

Comment:

1. These statements from Bildad are similar to his first discourse. Although they are true statements, they are true of the wicked. Job is not wicked.

Job Responds to Bildad a Second Time

Job 19:1-12 Then Job answered and said: ² "How long will you torment my soul, and break me in pieces with words? ³ These ten times you have reproached me; You are not ashamed *that* you have wronged me. ⁴ And if indeed I have erred, my error remains with me. ⁵ If indeed you exalt *yourselves* against me, and plead my disgrace against me, ⁶ Know then that God has wronged me, and has surrounded me with His net. ⁷ "If I cry out concerning wrong, I am not heard. If I cry aloud, *there is* no justice. ⁸ He has fenced up my way, so that I cannot pass; And He has set darkness in my paths. ⁹ He has stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown *from* my head. ¹⁰ He breaks me down on every side, and I am gone; My hope He has uprooted like a tree. ¹¹ He has also kindled His wrath against me, And He counts me as *one of* His enemies. ¹² His troops come together and build up their road against me; They encamp all around my tent.

Comments & Question:

1. There is an expression, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me." Job shows the falseness of this saying. His friends' words are tormenting him and tearing him apart.
2. It is hard not to defend yourself when people are exalting themselves against you (verse five).
3. Job continues to see God as taking his hope away and thinking that God counts Job as his enemy (verse 11).
4. Who might Job be referring to in verse 12 when he says: "His troops come together and build up their road against me; they encamp all around my tent."?

Job 19:13-22 ¹³ "He has removed my brothers far from me, and my acquaintances are completely estranged from me. ¹⁴ My relatives have failed, and my close friends have forgotten me. ¹⁵ Those who dwell in my house, and my maidservants, count me as a stranger; I am an alien in their sight. ¹⁶ I call my servant, but he gives no answer; I beg him with my mouth. ¹⁷ My breath is offensive to my wife, And I am repulsive to the children of my own body. ¹⁸ Even young children despise me; I arise, and they speak

against me. ¹⁹ All my close friends abhor me, and those whom I love have turned against me. ²⁰ My bone clings to my skin and to my flesh, And I have escaped by the skin of my teeth. ²¹ "Have pity on me, have pity on me, O you my friends, For the hand of God has struck me! ²² Why do you persecute me as God *does*, and are not satisfied with my flesh?

Comments:

1. Job feels like he is a disgrace to everyone, friends, relatives, his wife, servants, and even young children.
2. Job feels all alone and cries out for pity from friends (verse 21).
3. The lack of support and pity from people feels like persecution to Job (verse 22).

Job 19:23-29 ²³"Oh, that my words were written! Oh, that they were inscribed in a book! ²⁴ That they were engraved on a rock with an iron pen and lead, forever! ²⁵ **For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth;** ²⁶ **And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God,** ²⁷ **Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!** ²⁸ If you should say, 'How shall we persecute him?'-- Since the root of the matter is found in me, ²⁹ Be afraid of the sword for yourselves; For wrath *brings* the punishment of the sword, that you may know *there is* a judgment."

Comment & Question:

1. Verses 25-27 represent one of the greatest faith statements in the Bible. What makes it so great is that it is said by someone who has lost everything and is experiencing one of the worse calamities in the Bible. Despite what Job is going through, he has not turned from God nor cursed Him. Job may not understand what has happened in his life, but he is certain he shall be redeemed and he will see God. This yearns within Job.
2. What is Job saying in verses 28-29?

Zophar Responds to Job a Second Time

Job 20:1-18 Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said: ² "Therefore my anxious thoughts make me answer, Because of the turmoil within me. ³ I have heard the rebuke

that reproaches me, And the spirit of my understanding causes me to answer. ⁴ "Do you *not* know this of old, since man was placed on earth, ⁵ That the triumphing of the wicked is short, And the joy of the hypocrite is *but* for a moment? ⁶ Though his haughtiness mounts up to the heavens, and his head reaches to the clouds, ⁷ *Yet* he will perish forever like his own refuse; Those who have seen him will say, 'Where is he?' ⁸ He will fly away like a dream, and not be found; Yes, he will be chased away like a vision of the night. ⁹ The eye *that* saw him will *see him* no more, nor will his place behold him anymore. ¹⁰ His children will seek the favor of the poor, and his hands will restore his wealth. ¹¹ His bones are full of his youthful vigor, but it will lie down with him in the dust. ¹² "Though evil is sweet in his mouth, *and* he hides it under his tongue, ¹³ *though* he spares it and does not forsake it, but still keeps it in his mouth, ¹⁴ *yet* his food in his stomach turns sour; It becomes cobra venom within him. ¹⁵ He swallows down riches and vomits them up again; God casts them out of his belly. ¹⁶ He will suck the poison of cobras; The viper's tongue will slay him. ¹⁷ He will not see the streams, The rivers flowing with honey and cream. ¹⁸ He will restore that for which he labored, and will not swallow *it* down; From the proceeds of business He will get no enjoyment.

Comments:

1. Zophar is repeating his same previous arguments that Job has greatly sinned and his sin has caught up to him. Zophar repeats a basic truth that wealth and comfort acquired through wickedness will turn to waste and poison. The problem is that Job has not done anything wicked.
2. Notice that Zophar is offended at the things Job has said about him and the other two friends (verses 1-3). This offense caused Zophar to continue the debate. This is in line with the proverb:

Proverbs 15:1 A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Job 20:19-29 ¹⁹ For he has oppressed *and* forsaken the poor, He has violently seized a house which he did not build. ²⁰ "Because he knows no quietness in his heart, He will not save anything he desires. ²¹ Nothing is left for him to eat; therefore, his well-being will not last. ²² In his self-sufficiency he will be in distress; every hand of misery will come against him. ²³ *When* he is about to fill his stomach, *God* will cast on him the fury of His wrath, and will rain *it* on him while he is eating. ²⁴ He will flee from the iron weapon; A bronze bow will pierce him through. ²⁵ It is drawn, and comes out of the body; Yes, the glittering *point comes* out of his gall. Terrors *come* upon him; ²⁶ Total darkness *is* reserved for his treasures. An unfanned fire will consume him; It shall go ill

with him who is left in his tent. ²⁷ The heavens will reveal his iniquity, and the earth will rise up against him. ²⁸ The increase of his house will depart, *and his goods* will flow away in the day of His wrath. ²⁹ This *is* the portion from God for a wicked man, The heritage appointed to him by God."

Comments:

1. In verse 19, Zophar is accusing Job of acquiring wealth by oppression and forsaking the poor.
2. Zophar claims that because of Job's sinfulness, his wealth has disappeared and turned to darkness (verses 26-28). According to Zophar, this is the portion from God for a wicked man (verse 29).

Job Responds to Zophar a Second Time

Job 21:1-15 Then Job answered and said: ² "Listen carefully to my speech, and let this be your consolation. ³ Bear with me that I may speak, and after I have spoken, keep mocking. ⁴ "As for me, *is* my complaint against man? And if *it were*, why should I not be impatient? ⁵ Look at me and be astonished; Put *your* hand over *your* mouth. ⁶ Even when I remember I am terrified, and trembling takes hold of my flesh. ⁷ **Why do the wicked live *and* become old, yes, become mighty in power?** ⁸ Their descendants are established with them in their sight, and their offspring before their eyes. ⁹ Their houses *are* safe from fear, **neither is the rod of God upon them.** ¹⁰ Their bull breeds without failure; Their cow calves without miscarriage. ¹¹ They send forth their little ones like a flock, And their children dance. ¹² They sing to the tambourine and harp, and rejoice to the sound of the flute. ¹³ They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. ¹⁴ Yet they say to God, `Depart from us, for we do not desire the knowledge of Your ways. ¹⁵ Who *is* the Almighty, that we should serve Him? And what profit do we have if we pray to Him?"

Comments & Questions:

1. In verses 7-13, Job makes a great argument to refute the three friends. He said, if I am receiving what is due to me for being wicked, how do you explain that many wicked people prosper (verse 7)? They live and become old, their animals multiply, their houses are safe, they sing and rejoice. But in verses 14-15 the wicked see no need to serve God.

2. How do Job's friends explain that wickedness does not always result in destruction in this life?

Jeremiah 12:1-2 ¹Righteous are You, O LORD, when I plead with You; Yet let me talk with You about Your judgments. Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why are those happy who deal so treacherously? ² You have planted them, yes, they have taken root; They grow, yes, they bear fruit. You are near in their mouth but far from their mind.

Ecclesiastes 8:14 ¹⁴ There is a vanity which occurs on earth, that there are just *men* to whom it happens according to the work of the wicked; again, there are wicked *men* to whom it happens according to the work of the righteous. I said that this also *is* vanity.

Job 21:16-34 ¹⁶ Indeed their prosperity *is* not in their hand; The counsel of the wicked is far from me. ¹⁷ "How often is the lamp of the wicked put out? *How often* does their destruction come upon them, the sorrows *God* distributes in His anger? ¹⁸ They are like straw before the wind, and like chaff that a storm carries away. ¹⁹ *They say,* 'God lays up one's iniquity for his children'; Let Him recompense him, that he may know *it*. ²⁰ Let his eyes see his destruction, and let him drink of the wrath of the Almighty. ²¹ For what does he care about his household after him, When the number of his months is cut in half? ²² "Can *anyone* teach God knowledge, Since He judges those on high? ²³ One dies in his full strength, being wholly at ease and secure; ²⁴ His pails are full of milk, And the marrow of his bones is moist. ²⁵ Another man dies in the bitterness of his soul, never having eaten with pleasure. ²⁶ They lie down alike in the dust, and worms cover them. ²⁷ "Look, I know your thoughts, And the schemes *with which* you would wrong me. ²⁸ For you say, 'Where *is* the house of the prince? And where *is* the tent, The dwelling place of the wicked?' ²⁹ Have you not asked those who travel the road? And do you not know their signs? ³⁰ For the wicked are reserved for the day of doom; They shall be brought out on the day of wrath. ³¹ Who condemns his way to his face? And who repays him *for what* he has done? ³² Yet he shall be brought to the grave, and a vigil kept over the tomb. ³³ The clods of the valley shall be sweet to him; Everyone shall follow him, as countless *have gone* before him. ³⁴ How then can you comfort me with empty words since falsehood remains in your answers?"

Comments & Questions:

1. Job continues to make the argument, how often do the wicked see their destruction in this life (verse 17)?

2. Job further states in verses 19-21 that the wicked seem to know that the sins of the fathers pass on to the children, and the fathers don't seem to care. The wicked don't care about his household after him. Why don't the wicked know their destruction now, in their lifetime?
3. In verses 22-25, Job observes the age old issues of life that some people live in ease and some in bitterness, but it is not always explained by how someone lives their lives.
4. Job tells his friends in verse 27, that you have wronged me because you cannot assume that I am wicked because something bad has happened to me. The bottom line is that the wicked may prosper in this life, but they are reserved for the day of doom. Therefore, Job concludes that his friends are speaking empty words of falsehood (verse 34).

Malachi 2:17 ¹⁷ You have wearied the LORD with your words; Yet you say, "In what way have we wearied *Him*?" In that you say, "Everyone who does evil *is* good in the sight of the LORD, And He delights in them," Or, "Where *is* the God of justice?"

Malachi 3:13-18 ¹³ "Your words have been harsh against Me," Says the LORD, "Yet you say, 'What have we spoken against You?' ¹⁴ You have said, 'It is useless to serve God; What profit *is it* that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked as mourners Before the LORD of hosts? ¹⁵ So now we call the proud blessed, for those who do wickedness are raised up; They even tempt God and go free.'" ¹⁶ Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard *them*; So a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who meditate on His name. ¹⁷ "They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him." ¹⁸ Then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.