

The Book of Job

Chapters 4-7

After Job expresses his sorrow in chapter 3, his three friends respond to what Job says. Each person will say many things that are truthful, biblical by nature, and will exalt God, but in many ways their words will not be helpful to Job and they may not necessarily be true with respect to Job's case. Each one is ultimately saying that Job has done something wrong, he is not as righteous as he thinks, and this has resulted in his calamity. Each friend has a different tone than the other; nevertheless, they accuse Job of wrongdoing. The first friend to respond is Eliphaz.

Eliphaz Responds to Job in Chapters 4 and 5

Job 4:1-11

¹Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said: ²"If one attempts a word with you, will you become weary? But who can withhold himself from speaking? ³Surely you have instructed many, And you have strengthened weak hands. ⁴Your words have upheld him who was stumbling, And you have strengthened the feeble knees; ⁵But now it comes upon you, and you are weary; It touches you, and you are troubled. ⁶Is not your reverence your confidence? And the integrity of your ways your hope?" ⁷"**Remember now, who ever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright ever cut off?** ⁸**Even as I have seen, Those who plow iniquity And sow trouble reap the same.** ⁹**By the blast of God they perish, And by the breath of His anger they are consumed.** ¹⁰The roaring of the lion, The voice of the fierce lion, And the teeth of the young lions are broken. ¹¹The old lion perishes for lack of prey, And the cubs of the lioness are scattered."

Questions:

1. How would you describe Eliphaz' tone as he begins to speak in verse 2?
2. What are some of the positive things about Job that Eliphaz acknowledges in verses 3-4?
3. What is Eliphaz saying to Job in verse 5?
4. What is Eliphaz saying in verse 6?
5. What is Eliphaz' conclusion about Job's situation as stated in verses 7-9?
6. What is Eliphaz saying in verses 10-11?
7. Can you think of some verses in the Bible that seem to support or confirm what Eliphaz is saying in verses 7-9? (Look at Proverbs 22:8; Hosea 10:13; Romans 8:13; 2 Corinthians 9:6; Galatians 6:7-8)

8. Is Eliphaz right in his assessment of why Job is suffering as he is? If not, why not?

Job 4:12-21

¹² "Now a word was secretly brought to me, And my ear received a whisper of it. ¹³ In disquieting thoughts from the visions of the night, When deep sleep falls on men, ¹⁴ Fear came upon me, and trembling, Which made all my bones shake. ¹⁵ Then a spirit passed before my face; The hair on my body stood up. ¹⁶ It stood still, But I could not discern its appearance. A form was before my eyes; There was silence; Then I heard a voice saying: ¹⁷ *'Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can a man be more pure than his Maker? ¹⁸ If He puts no trust in His servants, If He charges His angels with error, ¹⁹ How much more those who dwell in houses of clay, Whose foundation is in the dust, Who are crushed before a moth? ²⁰ They are broken in pieces from morning till evening; They perish forever, with no one regarding. ²¹ Does not their own excellence go away? They die, even without wisdom.'*

Questions:

1. What is Eliphaz saying was secretly brought to him in verses 12-16?
2. Who is supposedly speaking in verses 17-21?
3. What is the purpose of Eliphaz describing the strange experience he had?
4. How is Eliphaz relating the strange occurrence he had to Job's situation?
5. Is there any truth to what Eliphaz heard and does it fit Job's situation?

Eliphaz Continues to Respond to Job

Job 5:1-7

¹"Call out now; Is there anyone who will answer you? And to which of the holy ones will you turn? ² For wrath kills a foolish man, And envy slays a simple one. ³ I have seen the foolish taking root, But suddenly I cursed his dwelling place. ⁴ His sons are far from safety, They are crushed in the gate, And *there is* no deliverer. ⁵ Because the hungry eat up his harvest, Taking it even from the thorns, And a snare snatches their substance. ⁶ For affliction does not come from the dust, Nor does trouble spring from the ground; ⁷ Yet man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward."

Questions:

1. Does it sound like Eliphaz is saying that Job is in the category of a foolish man in verses 1-3?
2. It sounds as though Eliphaz is saying that fools may prosper, but justice will eventually catch up to the fool (vv. 2-5). While this is a biblical truth, is it applicable in Job's case?

Job 5:8-16

⁸ "But as for me, I would seek God, And to God I would commit my cause-- ⁹ Who does great things, and unsearchable, Marvelous things without number. ¹⁰ He gives rain on the earth, And sends waters on the fields. ¹¹ He sets on high those who are lowly, And those who mourn are lifted to safety. ¹² He frustrates the devices of the crafty, So that their hands cannot carry out their plans. ¹³ He catches the wise in their own craftiness, And the counsel of the cunning comes quickly upon them. ¹⁴ They meet with darkness in the daytime, And grope at noontime as in the night. ¹⁵ But He saves the needy from the sword, From the mouth of the mighty, And from their hand. ¹⁶ So the poor have hope, and injustice shuts her mouth."

Questions:

1. Is there anything untrue with what Eliphaz is saying in verses 8-10 and 11-16?
2. Is it clear which category Eliphaz thinks Job belongs in: the poor and lowly, or the crafty and cunning?
3. What do you think Job may be thinking about this counsel from Eliphaz?

Job 5:17-27

¹⁷ "Behold, happy *is* the man whom God corrects; Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty. ¹⁸ For He bruises, but He binds up; He wounds, but His hands make whole. ¹⁹ He shall deliver you in six troubles, Yes, in seven no evil shall touch you. ²⁰ In famine He shall redeem you from death, And in war from the power of the sword. ²¹ You shall be hidden from the scourge of the tongue, And you shall not be afraid of destruction when it comes. ²² You shall laugh at destruction and famine, And you shall not be afraid of the beasts of the earth. ²³ For you shall have a covenant with the stones of the field, And the beasts of the field shall be at peace with you. ²⁴ You shall know that your tent *is* in peace; You shall visit your dwelling and find nothing amiss. ²⁵ You shall also know that your descendants *shall be* many, And your offspring like the grass of the earth. ²⁶ You shall come to the grave at a full age, As a sheaf of grain ripens in its season. ²⁷ Behold, this we have searched out; It *is* true. Hear it, and know for yourself."

Questions:

1. Compare Job 5:17-18 with Proverbs 3:10-11 -- ¹¹My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor detest His correction; ¹²For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights. Do they sound similar?
 - a. Although Job 5:17-18 are biblical statements, are they a source of comfort for Job? If not, why not?

2. Compare Job 5:20-27 with other passages of Scripture:
 - a. **Psalm 91:3-7** ³Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler And from the perilous pestilence. ⁴He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler. ⁵You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, Nor of the arrow that flies by day, ⁶Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday. ⁷A thousand may fall at your side, And ten thousand at your right hand; But it shall not come near you.
 - b. **Proverbs 3:25-26** ²⁵Do not be afraid of sudden terror, Nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes; ²⁶For the LORD will be your confidence, And will keep your foot from being caught.
3. Although Job 5:20-27 are biblical statements about God, are they a source of comfort for Job in his present state? If not, why not?

Job Responds to Eliphaz

Job 6:1-7

¹Then Job answered and said: ²"Oh, that my grief were fully weighed, And my calamity laid with it on the scales! ³For then it would be heavier than the sand of the sea-- Therefore my words have been rash. ⁴For the arrows of the Almighty are within me; My spirit drinks in their poison; The terrors of God are arrayed against me. ⁵Does the wild donkey bray when it has grass, Or does the ox low over its fodder? ⁶Can flavorless food be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg? ⁷My soul refuses to touch them; They are as loathsome food to me."

Questions:

1. What is Job admitting in Job 6:1-4, especially when he says, "Therefore my words have been rash."?
2. Can anyone understand the extent of Job's suffering?

Job 6:8-13

⁸"Oh, that I might have my request, That God would grant me the thing that I long for! ⁹That it would please God to crush me, That He would loose His hand and cut me off! ¹⁰Then I would still have comfort; Though in anguish, I would exult, He will not spare; For I have not concealed the words of the Holy One. ¹¹"What strength do I have, that I should hope? And what is my end, that I should prolong my life? ¹²Is my strength the strength of stones? Or is my flesh bronze? ¹³Is my help not within me? And is success driven from me?"

Questions:

1. What is Job's request from God (v. 8)?
2. Where is Job's strength at this point?
3. Does Job have any hope of deliverance from God?

Job 6:14-21

¹⁴"To him who is afflicted, kindness should be shown by his friend, even though he forsakes the fear of the Almighty. ¹⁵ My brothers have dealt deceitfully like a brook, like the streams of the brooks that pass away, ¹⁶ which are dark because of the ice, and into which the snow vanishes. ¹⁷ When it is warm, they cease to flow; when it is hot, they vanish from their place. ¹⁸ The paths of their way turn aside, They go nowhere and perish. ¹⁹ The caravans of Tema look, The travelers of Sheba hope for them. ²⁰ They are disappointed because they were confident; They come there and are confused. ²¹ For now you are nothing, You see terror and are afraid."

Questions:

1. In verse 14, what is Job saying should be expressed to him at the very least by his friend?
2. What is meant by Job in verses 15-20 concerning his friends (brothers)? What does he mean when he says that "My brothers have dealt deceitfully like a brook, like the streams of the brooks that pass away"?
3. What is Job's impression of his friends as stated in verse 21?

Job 6:22-30

²²"Did I ever say, 'Bring something to me'? Or, 'Offer a bribe for me from your wealth'? ²³Or, 'Deliver me from the enemy's hand'? Or, 'Redeem me from the hand of oppressors'? ²⁴"Teach me, and I will hold my tongue; Cause me to understand wherein I have erred. ²⁵ How forceful are right words! But what does your arguing prove? ²⁶ Do you intend to rebuke my words, And the speeches of a desperate one, which are as wind? ²⁷ Yes, you overwhelm the fatherless, And you undermine your friend. ²⁸ Now therefore, be pleased to look at me; For I would never lie to your face. ²⁹ Yield now, let there be no injustice! Yes, concede, my righteousness still stands! ³⁰ Is there injustice on my tongue? Cannot my taste discern the unsavory?"

Questions:

1. What are the two things Job is saying about himself in Job 6:22-23?
2. What is Job saying about his ability to be instructed if he hears "right words"? (vv. 24-25)

3. Does Job agree with what Eliphaz has said?
4. What is Job saying in verse 27 concerning Eliphaz' words for a friend?
5. In verses 28-30, what is Job re-emphasizing about himself?

Job 7:1-10

¹"Is there not a time of hard service for man on earth? Are not his days also like the days of a hired man? ² Like a servant who earnestly desires the shade, And like a hired man who eagerly looks for his wages, ³So I have been allotted months of futility, And wearisome nights have been appointed to me. ⁴ When I lie down, I say, 'When shall I arise, And the night be ended?' For I have had my fill of tossing till dawn. ⁵ My flesh is caked with worms and dust, My skin is cracked and breaks out afresh. ⁶ "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, And are spent without hope. ⁷ Oh, remember that my life is a breath! My eye will never again see good. ⁸ The eye of him who sees me will see me no more; While your eyes are upon me, I shall no longer be. ⁹ As the cloud disappears and vanishes away, So he who goes down to the grave does not come up. ¹⁰ He shall never return to his house, nor shall his place know him anymore."

Questions:

1. Reading verses 1-3:
 - a. What is Job saying about the harshness of life?
 - b. What is Job saying about the justice of life?
 - c. What is Job saying about fruitfulness of life?
2. Is Job speaking as a man with hope in verses 7-10?

Job 7:11-21

¹¹"Therefore I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. ¹² Am I a sea, or a sea serpent, That You set a guard over me? ¹³ When 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 my soul chooses strangling And death rather than my body. ¹⁶ I loathe my life; I would not live forever. Let me alone, For my days are but a breath. ¹⁷ "What is man, that You should exalt him, That You should set Your heart on him, ¹⁸ That You should visit him every morning, And test him every moment? ¹⁹ How long? Will You not look away from me, And let me alone till I swallow my saliva? ²⁰ Have I sinned? What have I done to You, O watcher of men? Why have You set me as Your target, So that I am a burden to myself? ²¹ Why then 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 no longer be."

Questions:

1. Compare verses 17-18 with Psalm 8:4 “⁴ What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?” Do they sound similar?
2. Job feels he has no resting place and would prefer death over life (vv. 13-16).
3. A major complaint of Job is, “**Why is God paying so much attention to me?**”
 - a. Job asks, “Am I a sea or a sea serpent, That You set a guard over me?” (v. 12)
 - b. How long? Will You not look away from me, and let me alone till I swallow my saliva? (v. 19)
 - c. Verse 20 has been translated in different ways, but most translations say “If I have sinned, how has it harmed You, O watcher of men? Why have You set me as Your target?”
4. Job asks the question, if I have sinned, why doesn’t God just forgive me for my transgression or take away my iniquity?
5. Has Job cursed God or is he complaining because he doesn’t understand why these things are happening?
6. Does Job’s complaint border on disrespect or cross the line with God in any way?