
The First Speech of Eliphaz | Job 4-5

- Job 4:1-2 - The Introduction
 - Eliphaz asks, **wilt thou be grieved** if he and his friends **assay to commune with thee** (venture to stay). However, he is not really asking permission, because he is going to speak even if it does bring grief, for **who can withhold himself from speaking?**
 - Have you noticed that anytime someone says, "I probably shouldn't say this, but..." --that they probably shouldn't have said it? Or if they say, "I just have to say..." --it was something that shouldn't have been said?
- Job 4:3-5 - Eliphaz chastises Job.
 - Job's "friend" accuses job of hypocrisy, stating that he has encouraged many people (no doubt with words of faith and strength), but **now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest**.
 - Rather than saying, "I know how you feel," or "I think I understand where you are coming from," Eliphaz says, "You should just man up and take it. You should get over it already."
 - Note that it is easy to grow weary with those who grieve.
 - Compare 2 Corinthians 2:4-6 and 7:8-10 for a more tender view of confronting those who have issues which need to be addressed.
- Job 4:6 - Eliphaz accuses Job.
 - The Hebrew is difficult, and thus a wide range of translations, but all with an accusatory tone consistent with the context.
 - The Hebrew does not say what Job's **fear** is.
 - Is this a reference to the *fear of God* (NASB/ESV), or *reverence/piety* in general (NIV) or his fear of Job 3:25 (which would be most in immediate context)?
 - If the text is referring to Job's fears, then it should perhaps be translated as the word is in Psalm 85:8, *folly*.
 - The second half of the verse could be (as in Darby), "[is not] the perfection of thy ways thy hope?"
 - A possible interpretation, then, could be, "Were you foolishly trusting in your own ability to keep your fears from coming to pass? Was your hope built on the uprightness of your ways?"
- Job 4:7-11 - Eliphaz expresses the reason for Job's pain.
 - Eliphaz clearly believes his friend is guilty, for no **innocent** man would ever be punished like this. Eliphaz is convinced that God does not **cut off the righteous**.
 - One should always take care not to assume to know the mind of God.
- Job 4:12-17 - Eliphaz' Vision
 - Here Eliphaz expresses the voice he heard and the vision he saw.
 - The voice came **secretly** and seemed to be uncertain, for his testimony was, **mine hear received a little thereof**, and in the vision he **could not discern the form** of the spirit (v. 16).

- The vision was in the form of **thoughts...When deep sleep falleth on men**. It brought him **fear** and **trembling** so that his **bones** began to **shake** and **the hair of my flesh stood up**.
 - Did he really have this vision?
 - There is nothing to indicate otherwise.
 - He had physical (or psychosomatic) responses.
 - It was certainly a very real experience for Eliphaz.
 - However, the mind can create such experiences and make them seem *very real*, as anyone who has had a nightmare can attest.
 - Was this vision from God?
 - Eliphaz did not share specifically that it was from God, though he implied such.
 - There is no textual evidence it was from God.
 - There is nothing in Eliphaz' speech that indicates he was sharing God's wisdom.
 - This vision could have been from:
 - Satan - who was attacking Job, possibly even using his three friends to do so.
 - Eliphaz - who, desperate for answers, dreamed up his own vision.
 - It is difficult to determine where the vision ends. I have chosen to take the words of v. 17 as the totality of the vision, and v. 18 is the commentary of Eliphaz.
- Job 4:18-21 - Eliphaz shares his theology.
 - In these verses one can make a conclusion that Eliphaz' vision was not from God because God does not give flawed theology.
 - Eliphaz says that God **put no trust in his servants** (presumably angelic servants), yet even Satan was entrusted with Job's life (Job 2:6). Compare Psalm 103:20-21, 104:4.
 - Eliphaz says that God **charged** [the angels] **with folly** and that **them that dwell in houses of clay, Whose foundation is in the dust** (i.e.: mankind) get **much less** responsibility.
 - In Psalm 8:4-5, the incarnate Messiah was **made a little lower than the angels** for a time, but will soon restore the created order and **have dominion over the works of thy hands**.
 - So, any supremacy of angels over humans is temporary and related to the fall, for in the age to come **we shall judge angels** (1 Cor. 6:3).
 - Eliphaz displays a hopelessness for mankind that causes us to believe that he had no faith in a coming Redeemer (vv. 20-21).
- Job 5:1-8 - Eliphaz incorrectly calls Job to turn to God.
 - Once again, Eliphaz makes clear his conviction that Job suffers because of his sin.
 - He incorrectly instructs Job to **call now** to any **of the saints** that will help him.
 - Note that **saints** is *holy ones* and, in context, likely a reference to angels (again displaying his bad theology).
 - Beginning with Jerome's Latin translation, this verse began to be used by Catholics to justify (even command) prayers to *saints* (as defined by Roman theology).
 - In vv. 2 and following he accuses Job of **wrath** and **envy** and foolishness, these being the source of his suffering.
 - Eliphaz' negative outlook on life is that **man is born unto trouble** and that turning to God is the remedy. Is man **born into trouble**? Only the book of Ecclesiastes gives such a view, and only in the days of Solomon's folly (Ecc. 1:8, 2:22, 5:15-17).