

Day 53 - WEDNESDAY: December 21st

Job 4 & 5

Job 4:1-21 NKJV

Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said: "If one attempts a word with you, will you become weary? But who can withhold himself from speaking? Surely you have instructed many, And you have strengthened weak hands. Your words have upheld him who was stumbling, And you have strengthened the feeble knees; But now it comes upon you, and you are weary; It touches you, and you are troubled. Is not your reverence your confidence? And the integrity of your ways your hope? "Remember now, who ever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright ever cut off? Even as I have seen, Those who plow iniquity And sow trouble reap the same. By the blast of God they perish, And by the breath of His anger they are consumed. The roaring of the lion, The voice of the fierce lion, And the teeth of the young lions are broken. The old lion perishes for lack of prey, And the cubs of the lioness are scattered. "Now a word was secretly brought to me, And my ear received a whisper of it. In disquieting thoughts from the visions of the night, When deep sleep falls on men, Fear came upon me, and trembling, Which made all my bones shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; The hair on my body stood up. 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: 'Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can a man be more pure than his Maker? If He puts no trust in His servants, If He charges His angels with error, How much more those who dwell in houses of clay, Whose

foundation is in the dust, Who are crushed before a moth? They are broken in pieces from morning till evening; They perish forever, with no one regarding. Does not their own excellence go away? They die, even without wisdom.'

Job 5:1-27 NKJV

"Call out now; Is there anyone who will answer you? And to which of the holy ones will you turn? For wrath kills a foolish man, And envy slays a simple one. I have seen the foolish taking root, But suddenly I cursed his dwelling place. His sons are far from safety, They are crushed in the gate, And there is no deliverer. Because the hungry eat up his harvest, Taking it even from the thorns, And a snare snatches their substance. For affliction does not come from the dust, Nor does trouble spring from the ground; Yet man is born to trouble, As the sparks fly upward. "But as for me, I would seek God, And to God I would commit my cause— Who does great things, and unsearchable, Marvelous things without number. He gives rain on the earth, And sends waters on the fields. He sets on high those who are lowly, And those who mourn are lifted to safety. He frustrates the devices of the crafty, So that their hands cannot carry out their plans. He catches the wise in their own craftiness, And the counsel of the cunning comes quickly upon them. They meet with darkness in the daytime, And grope at noontime as in the night. But He saves the needy from the sword, From the mouth of the mighty, And from their hand. So the poor have hope, And injustice shuts her mouth. "Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects; Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty. For He bruises, but He binds up; He wounds, but His

hands make whole. He shall deliver you in six troubles, Yes, in seven no evil shall touch you. In famine He shall redeem you from death, And in war from the power of the sword. You shall be hidden from the scourge of the tongue, And you shall not be afraid of destruction when it comes. You shall laugh at destruction and famine, And you shall not be afraid of the beasts of the earth. For you shall have a covenant with the stones of the field, And the beasts of the field shall be at peace with you. You shall know that your tent is in peace; You shall visit your dwelling and find nothing amiss. You shall also know that your descendants shall be many, And your offspring like the grass of the earth. You shall come to the grave at a full age, As a sheaf of grain ripens in its season. Behold, this we have searched out; It is true. Hear it, and know for yourself."

Daily Deep Dive:

We are about to receive a crash course in what not to do when someone has lost a loved one, or is in the midst of a great trial.

Verse 5 – After seeming to praise Job in verse 3 and 4 for helping others who were in difficult positions, the praise turns to criticism. Eliphaz essentially says, “you can talk the talk, but not walk the walk.”

Verse 7 – In this verse begins the real argument of Eliphaz. He and his friends are confident that Job must have sinned and brought this on himself, because they believe

confidently, that God would not let this happen to Job if he was innocent. Their assumption is completely wrong. We already know that from the first couple chapters.

Verse 8 – Much of these words are a mixture of truth and falsehood. It is true that God’s Word says we essentially “reap what we sow”. Of course we also see in God’s Word that not everything bad that happens is because someone brought it upon oneself.

The UCG reading plan states: “Among Job's friends, Eliphaz the Temanite speaks first, showing him probably to be the oldest and likely reckoned as the wisest. As we will see, Eliphaz is the kindest of the three in his remarks to Job. This, however, is not to say that his remarks are kind. He begins by saying that Job, a counselor and comforter to others, is not able be bolstered by his own typical consolation (Job 4:1–6). We then see that Eliphaz is convinced that God would not punish the truly righteous or sustain the wicked, and that he believes Job must have sinned to be deserving of such calamitous experiences.”

[END]

Verses 10 & 11 – Jamieson–Faucet–Brown states: “Five different *Hebrew* terms here occur for “lion.” The raging of the lion (*the tearer*), and the roaring of the *bellowing lion* and

the teeth of the *young lions*, not *whelps*, but grown up enough to hunt for prey. The *strong* lion, the whelps of the *lioness* (not the *stout lion*, as in *English Version*) [Barnes and Umbreit]. The various phases of wickedness are expressed by this variety of terms: obliquely, Job, his wife, and children, may be hinted at by the lion, lioness, and whelps. The one verb, “are broken,” does not suit both subjects; therefore, supply “the roaring of the bellowing lion *is silenced*.” The strong lion dies of want at last, and the whelps, torn from the mother, are scattered, and the race becomes extinct.” [END]

Here's what the UCG reading program states about these verses: “The “lions” of verse 10 are figuratively the wicked—though whether this is a statement about the wicked in general or one intended to directly identify Job is not clear. Of course, even if generalized, Job and his family seem to be at least indirectly likened to the decimated pride of lions here. Indeed, this begins to exemplify the whole problem with Job's friends, as we will see. We later are told that Job's three friends have not spoken what is right concerning God (Job 42:7–8). While many of the ideas they express are true in a general sense, these concepts do not apply universally

—and they did not apply in Job's case, as God declared him blameless and upright.” [END]

The UCG reading concludes this chapter with these remarks: “To bolster his case, Eliphaz remarkably points to some sort of night vision or dream wherein a spirit communicated with him (Job 4:12–17). Whether this was a made-up story, his imagination or a real encounter—be it with God, a heavenly angel or a demonic imposter—we have no way of knowing. The statement of verse 17 has traditionally been translated as asking if a mortal man can be more righteous and purer than God. However, there would hardly seem to be a question about that. “Many grammarians...render it 'Can a mortal be found righteous in the presence of God?’” (Expositor's Bible Commentary, note on verses 12–21; compare NRSV). The point would be that Job was certainly guilty of some sin. While this idea was true on the face of it—and is even part of what Job comes to understand more fully at the end of the book—Eliphaz's application of this truth with respect to Job was wrong, as he was trying to prove that Job's suffering was directly related to some particular sin or sins he had committed.” [END]

Chapter 5:

The UCG Reading adds this about chapter 5: “Eliphaz's advice in Job 5:8—that Job should turn to God for help—was probably rather condescending. Given even the little we know of Job from the narrative so far, we would have to assume that he was a praying person. Surely Eliphaz, an actual companion of this righteous man, knew this too. “How strange to assume that Job hasn't sought God. The advice to 'just pray about it' must seem terribly trite to someone who has been pouring out his heart to God in utter anguish” (*Bible Reader's Companion*, note on verse 8).”

Verses 9 – 16: It's not that everything Eliphaz states is wrong. We see here many true statements, but their assumptions about Job are off base.

The UCG reading plan brings out the following:

“Interestingly, the apostle Paul quoted the words of Eliphaz in Job 5:13—about God catching the wise in their own craftiness—as authoritative Scripture, introducing them with the phrase “It is written” (1 Corinthians 3:19). “This serves as a reminder,” notes Gleason Archer in the *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, “that many of the general principles the comforters brought up in their

dialogue with Job were quite true in themselves, even though they may not have been appropriate to Job's situation, and may by inference have been grossly unfair to him. But we should remember that Job himself declared to them, 'Who does not know such things as these?' (12:3)—i.e., those religious platitudes that they had been preaching to him" (p. 396). *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* suggests that all of Eliphaz's words in Job 5:9–16 (including verse 13, quoted by Paul) constitute a creedal hymn. Indeed, these words may have been part of a psalm already extant within Abraham's family that Eliphaz himself was just quoting...

...Once more, the sentiments here are true when applied generally. But Eliphaz was misapplying them—not just in perceiving Job as having sinned to deserve punishment but in the heartless, tactless proclamation of these truths to one who needed comfort. Eliphaz says, for instance, that as part of the results of accepting God's discipline, "You will know that your children will be many" (Job 5:25, NIV)—thoughtless of the awful fact that Job's children were dead. This should serve as a lesson to us of what not to do when people are deeply hurting. Job's friends were at their best when they wept for him and kept quiet. It's when they opened their mouths and started "preaching" at him—with

terribly wrong assumptions moreover—that they went off course. We should never approach others suffering loss of loved ones or terminal illness and start in on them with what they should do to prevent such problems or how to get straightened out.

Eliphaz's patronizing attitude in verse 27 made the situation all the worse—and totally misrepresented God. As *The Bible Reader's Companion* notes: "Eliphaz has neatly packaged his God as one who must act according to his understanding. After all, if the innocent never perish, and if God hears their appeals, all Job has to do is pray and be healed! Eliphaz never stops to think how presumptuous it is to limit God by his own fallible reasoning. How foolish are the many Eliphazes among us, whose assurances that 'if you only have enough faith you'll be healed' are just as superficial, harmful, and wrong." [END]