

Job and His Three Friends: The Introduction of Eliphaz

Chapters 4&5

WE now come to member “D” in the structure of Job.¹ It consists of twenty-nine chapters. Since God ultimately reproves Job’s words,² as well as those of his three friends,³ one might ask why such an extensive record is given to speeches and words that God later declares are full of error. The reason is simple—it is to show that human reason and thinking, no matter the time allotted them, will always come short of any true understanding of the ways of God.

We come, therefore, at once to the next member, “D.” It is a large one, consisting of twenty-nine chapters. It contains and records the conference of Job with his three friends; the design of which is to show that man, apart from Divine revelation; has not true wisdom and cannot find out or know God: and cannot understand or know himself. Until man has this knowledge, he will neither justify God nor condemn himself. He may understand Jehovah’s “works,” but His “ways” cannot be known. His works are seen by all; but His ways are secret and hidden, and can be known only by revelation to His People. Hence we read (Ps. ciii. 7):

¹ *The Book of Job: The Oldest Lesson in the World* by Dr. E.W. Bullinger

A | i. 1–5. Introduction. Historical.

B | i. 6—ii. 10. Satan’s assault. Job stripped of all.

C | ii. 11–13. The Three Friends. Their arrival.

D | iii. 1 —xxx. 40. Job and his friends.

E | xxxii.—xxxvii. Elihu.

D | xxxviii. 1. —xlii. 6. Jehovah and Job.

C | xlii. 7–9. The Three Friends. Their departure.

B | xlii. 9, 10. Satan’s defeat. Job blessed with double.

A | xlii. 11–17. Conclusion. Historical.

² *Job 40:1–5* Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said, ²Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it. ³Then Job answered the LORD, and said, ⁴Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. ⁵Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.

³ *Job 42:7* And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.

⁴ *The Book of Job: The Oldest Lesson in the World* by E.W. Bullinger

⁵ *Ps. 72:12* For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper.

Ps. 121:1&2 I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. ²My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.

Isa. 45:22 Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

*He made known His WAYS unto Moses, His ACTS unto the children of Israel.*⁴

Ample time is therefore given to Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar so that every ounce of human wisdom has sufficient chance to help Job in his circumstances. The Lord often allows men sufficient opportunity to use everything at their disposal to impress upon them that their only real help comes from Him.⁵ Adding to this is the fact that it is generally only when men have exhausted their own thinking and efforts, and know themselves incapable of solving a problem, that they then turn to God for deliverance. Hence, for twenty-nine chapters human thought is allowed every possible opportunity to prove itself capable of delivering a man afflicted by Satan and deceived by his own limited knowledge of God. In each instance all efforts fail. The evidence proves that man’s wisdom cannot help when men are under devilish attack. Natural wisdom fails miserably at understanding the ways of God and helping bring deliverance to those afflicted by Satan. And though men may exalt themselves while making such efforts, nothing of any lasting profit may be expected to come from them.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

There is no good thing that any Christian will ultimately come to possess that does not come from God. Wise men know this; therefore, it will not be themselves or their own reasoning that they will seek help from. Because man's ways are not in himself, and because it is not in man to direct his steps, then to God he must look. *O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*⁶ If men cannot know even their own way, how can they know the ways of God? Consequently, God cannot be truly known without the Holy Spirit giving men the ability to know Him.

Romans 11:33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

There is a depth to God's wisdom, knowledge, and judgments. This wisdom is untraceable and beyond mere human perception. God's thoughts are deeper than any natural man can perceive on his own. *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*⁷ Spiritual wisdom can be perceived only through spiritual means.

⁶ Jer. 10:23

⁷ I Cor. 2:14

⁸ Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, I Cor. 2:14

⁹ I Cor. 2:9&10

¹⁰ Ps. 139:1 O lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.

¹¹ I Pet. 1:11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

¹² John 7:52 They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.

Rom. 8:27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Rev. 2:23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

¹³ Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Cor. 2:10

Natural.—That is, literally, that part of our nature which we call "mind," and hence signifies that man in whom pure intellectual reason and the merely natural affections predominate. Now such a one cannot grasp spiritual truth any more than the physical nature, which is made to discern physical things, can grasp intellectual things. Spiritual truth appeals to the spirit of the man, and therefore is intelligible only to those who are "spiritual," i.e., in whom the *pneuma* is not dormant, but quickened by the Holy *Pneuma*.⁸

For the spiritual realm to be known, God's Spirit must reveal it. *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*⁹

Searcheth - This word does not fully express the force of the original ἐρευνᾶ *ereuna*. It means to search accurately, diligently, so as fully to understand; such profound research as to have thorough knowledge. So David uses the Hebrew word חָקַר *chaaqar* in Psalm 139:1.¹⁰ So the word is used to denote a careful and accurate investigation of secret and obscure things, in 1 Peter 1:11.¹¹ Compare John 7:52; Romans 8:27; Revelation 2:23,¹² where it is used to denote that profound and accurate search by which the desires and feelings of the heart are known. ...

The deep things of God - He has a thorough knowledge of the hidden counsels or purposes of God; of all his plans and purposes. He sees all his designs. He sees all his councils; all his purposes in regard to the government of the universe, and the scheme of salvation. He knows all whom God designs to save; he sees all that they need; and he sees how the plan of God is suited to their salvation...¹³

For any to know God and His righteous judgments, it takes spiritual inspiration. This is how men first received God's Word.¹⁴ Without the Spirit's influence and direction, when men talk of God as Job and his three friends did, the results will be no better than God declaring that they did *darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge*.¹⁵ It is only the Spirit of truth that can lead men to truth.¹⁶ Human reasoning, thought, and experience are insufficient to know the true purposes of God. And though many may say a lot of spiritual things, this in no way ensures that they are being led by divine inspiration. Speaking about the Lord from the mind and speaking for God via the Spirit are as separate as night and day. And though God's name may be used in both instances, His presence is in only one. This is also why unless men are led by the Spirit, they should remain quiet, which is also what will happen when men recognize God speaking through another.¹⁷ Job did this with Elihu, as did the men who were going to stone the woman caught in the act of adultery, when Jesus's words cut to their heart.¹⁸ Uttering God's Word without the Holy Spirit's inspiration only muddies any true knowledge of Him.

¹⁴ II Pet. 1:21 *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

¹⁵ Job 38:2 *Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*

¹⁶ John 14:17 *Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

John 15:26 *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:*

John 16:13 *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

I John 4:6 *We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.*

¹⁷ Job 32:15 *They were amazed, they answered no more: they left off speaking.*

¹⁸ John 8:7-9 *So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. ⁸And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. ⁹And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.*

¹⁹ Matt. 7:15 *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*
Matt. 24:24 *For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.*

II Pet. 2:1 *But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.*

I John 4:1 *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*

²⁰ Matt. 24:11

²¹ Eph. 4:1 *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

²² Rom. 8:14

One of the reasons this world has very little true perception of God is that so many have said that they have come in God's name but do not possess God's Spirit. False prophets are those who, though they use the Lord's name, lack His Holy Spirit both in their hearts and speech.¹⁹ *And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.*²⁰ If men are ever to come to truly know God, they must allow themselves to be taught by those whom Christ has set in His church,²¹ not those who have set themselves. There is great danger when men say they are sent from God but speak only of their own human imagination. In the end, only those who are inspired by the Holy Spirit have the right to speak on God's behalf. Elihu would prove to be such a person. Elihu also is the only human character in the book of Job who does not later come under God's reproof, for whereas Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar are all corrected by the Lord, Elihu is not. This teaches us that when men are led by the Holy Spirit, they will not be chastened by God for improperly representing Him. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*²² Men are God's sons if they are led by His Spirit. Every true child of God will submit to the Spirit's promptings within himself. By yielding to the Holy

Spirit's influence, true Christians can follow God's will for their lives.

Returning to our subject matter, Dr. Bullinger's notes on Job give us an overview of the foundation of Job's three friends' arguments.

Eliphaz reasons on human experience.
Bildad reasons on human tradition; while
Zophar reasons on human merit.

If we look at the three colloquies as a whole, the one great lesson for ourselves is this: that man, with all his wisdom, and all his powers, cannot get to know God, and cannot meet man's needs. He can neither satisfy the righteous claims of God, nor heal the wounds of the sinner's heart.

All these reasonings were wrong in their conclusions, as they were false in their logic. They reasoned from the particular to the general: i.e., they argued that what they had seen and observed in their own respective spheres was true universally.

They may speak truly of the "works" of God, and of what they had seen in the case of individuals; but it did not follow that they could gather from these few cases what was the law which regulated the "ways" and dealings of God with mankind.

Eliphaz is the first to answer Job's complaints. His three utterances are given (1) chaps. iv, v., (2) chap. xv., and (3) chap. xxii.

His reasonings, as we have said, are based on human experience. He argued from the particular to the general, and hence arrived at a wrong conclusion. He based his argument on his own experience. "As I have seen" is the burden of his speech. As he had "seen" that it was the wicked who always suffer, and the righteous who prosper, so he concluded that as Job was suffering he must therefore have committed some dreadful sin. At first he only insinuates this. He asks Job if he had not noticed the same thing himself.²³

Job 4:1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,

²³ *The Book of Job: The Oldest Lesson in the World* by Dr. E.W. Bullinger, *Job and His Three Friends*

²⁴ *Job 42:7*

²⁵ *Job 2:11* Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.

²⁶ *Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Job 4:1*

Eliphaz spoke before the other two either because he was the most aged or thought himself the most knowledgeable. Either way, he thought himself more than able to set Job right. As we will see, he is the only one of Job's friends whom God calls out by name and personally singles out for divine correction later in the book. *And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.*²⁴ Since Eliphaz placed himself first, singling himself out as the leader of the other two, God decided that he would also have to be singled out for personal correction.

Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said. When Job was done cursing his day, and had finished his doleful ditty on that subject, then Eliphaz took the opportunity of speaking, not being able to bear any longer with Job and his behaviour under his afflictions; Eliphaz was one of Job's three friends that came to visit him, *Job 2:11;*²⁵ very probably he might be the senior man, or a man of the greatest authority and power; a most respectable person, had in great esteem and reverence among men, and by these his friends, and therefore takes upon him to speak first; or it may be it was agreed among themselves that he should begin the dispute with Job; and we find, that in the close of this controversy the Lord speaks to him by name, and to him only, *Job 42:7;*²⁶

When men take upon themselves the senior position, as Eliphaz did, by originating what they think is accurate reproof and they are wrong, then they will also bear the greatest judgment. Taking the highest position, if we are being led by pride, leads only to greater heavenly condemnation by God. Eliphaz was confident in his assertions, but this only led him to be called out personally by the Lord. Yes, he distinguished himself, or so he thought, by leading in Job's reproof, but in the end he needed Job's prayers to be forgiven for his sin. By taking the

highest seat, he grabbed God's attention. *My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.*²⁷

Be not many masters — Διδασκαλοι, teachers. Let none of you rashly, and without proper qualifications, undertake the office of teachers of others; an office into which many are ready to intrude themselves, without being called of God to it. "The great desire which the Jewish Christians, to whom this letter was written, had to become teachers in the church after their conversion, and to inculcate the obligation of the law of Moses, is noticed by St. Paul, 1 Timothy 1:7.²⁸ *Desiring to be teachers of the law, &c.* — These teachers of the law in the Christian Church were the great corrupters of the gospel.²⁹ Knowing that — *If we err, we shall receive the greater condemnation* — On account of our taking upon us an office for which we are not qualified, and in the exercise of which more is required of us, in many respects, than of others in a more private station of life.²⁹

It is wisdom to know what God has appointed for us to do in His name and wis-

²⁷ Jas. 3:1

²⁸ 1 Tim. 1:7 *Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.*

²⁹ Benson Commentary, Jas. 3:1&2

³⁰ Exod. 28:41 *And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office.*

Exod. 29:20&21 *Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of his blood, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about.* ²¹ *And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him: and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him.*

Exod. 29:29 *And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his sons' after him, to be anointed therein, and to be consecrated in them.*

Lev. 8:30 *And Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which was upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons' garments with him; and sanctified Aaron, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him.*

Num. 3:3 *These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the priests which were anointed, whom he consecrated to minister in the priest's office.*

Num. 8:10&11 *And thou shalt bring the Levites before the LORD: and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites: ¹¹And Aaron shall offer the Levites before the LORD for an offering of the children of Israel, that they may execute the service of the LORD.*

Num. 27:18–23 *And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; ¹⁹And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. ²⁰And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. ²¹And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation. ²²And Moses did as the LORD commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation: ²³And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.*

Jer. 1:5 *Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.*

Mark 3:14 *And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, John 15:16 *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.**

³¹ 1 Tim. 3:6

dom to know that God has not equipped us for a task. No office of the Lord should be assumed unless divine revelation is given from the Lord that it is ours to occupy.³⁰ If men are to speak for God, it is not they who should decide if God has ordained them for such a purpose, but God alone, lest men through the deceit of pride be condemned like the devil. *Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.*³¹

Eliphaz, fully confident about what he will say, begins the first of three discourses (chapters 4, 5, 15, and 22):

Job 4:2–11 If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? but who can withhold himself from speaking?

³ Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands.

⁴ Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees.

⁵ But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.

⁶ *Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?*

⁷ *Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?*

⁸ *Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.*

⁹ *By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.*

¹⁰ *The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions, are broken.*

¹¹ *The old lion perisheth for lack of prey, and the stout lion's whelps are scattered abroad.*

He argues based on what he has seen, but he is not humble enough to know the many things of God that he has not. He corrects Job for being a teacher of others but now in his own distress being weak. He presumes to know Job's guilt, but he shows that he is woefully ignorant of the reality that wicked forces are involved. The real truth also is that Job did not plow iniquity, nor did he sow wickedness, as Eliphaz implies. (^v8) *Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.* Immediately we see that Eliphaz was not led by any divine inspiration but by his own human imagination. His answers might have been easy to conclude, but they were way off the mark. In the same way, just because men can bring charges against their fellow men, it does not mean that they are true.

Job 4:12–17 Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof.

¹³ *In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men,*

¹⁴ *Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.*

¹⁵ *Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up:*

³² Col. 2:18

³³ Benson Commentary, Col. 2:18

³⁴ Ezek. 11:24&25 *Afterwards the spirit took me up, and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to them of the captivity. So the vision that I had seen went up from me. ²⁵Then I spake unto them of the captivity all the things that the LORD had shewed me.*

Acts 16:9 *And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.*

Acts 9:10&11 *And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. ¹¹And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, Acts 18:9 *Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:**

¹⁶ *It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying,*

¹⁷ *Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker?*

Because we know that Eliphaz erred in his thinking, it is impossible to precisely know if he was accurate in his vision. And even if the Lord gave him a vision, it does not mean that any true interpretation was also given to him. Many have claimed to see things that they really have not, simply because they are puffed up by human conceit. *Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.*³²

Intruding into things which he hath not seen

— With great presumption, and pretending to discover wonderful secrets, relating to their various ranks, subordinations, and offices. “The apostle’s meaning,” says Macknight, “is, that the false teachers, of whom he speaks, presumptuously penetrated into the secrets of the invisible world, and talked of them with an air of certainty, without having any knowledge of the things which they affirmed; particularly that the angels intercede with God for men, and that to worship them is acceptable to God.” *Vainly puffed up by his fleshly* — His corrupt and carnal; *mind* — With the conceit of things which it is impossible he should understand, and a desire of introducing novelties into religion.³³

It is true that godly men are made by God's power to see visions,³⁴ but it is equally true that many who claim to have seen things have observed nothing of the kind. We say this not to place doubt on Eliphaz's vision but rather to warn that many through the years have claimed to have received revelations, dreams, and visions from the Lord that in reality orig-

inated from their own deceived hearts. Just because a man says that God has spoken to him does not mean he speaks the truth. *And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD God; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!*³⁵ So also, *I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart.*³⁶

How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies?.... To invent such lies, and deceive the people, and turn them away from God; agreeably to the preceding and following verses: this shows that this was not through ignorance and inadvertence; it was a meditated and studied thing by them; they contrived it in their hearts, and they were resolute and bent upon it, and took much delight and pleasure in it; their hearts were in it, and it was in them to do as they did; and in this way they had been long, but should continue no longer.³⁷

³⁵ Ezek. 13:1-3

Ezek. 13:6-10 They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The LORD saith: and the LORD hath not sent them: and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word. ⁷Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination, whereas ye say, The LORD saith it; albeit I have not spoken? ⁸Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I am against you, saith the Lord GOD. ⁹And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD. ¹⁰Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar:

Ezek. 21:29 Whiles they see vanity unto thee, whiles they divine a lie unto thee, to bring thee upon the necks of them that are slain, of the wicked, whose day is come, when their iniquity shall have an end.

Ezek. 22:28 And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken.

Lam. 2:14 Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee: and they have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity; but have seen for thee false burdens and causes of banishment.

Jer. 28:15 Then said the prophet Jeremiah unto Hananiah the prophet, Hear now, Hananiah; The LORD hath not sent thee; but thou makest this people to trust in a lie.

³⁶ Jer. 23:25&26

³⁷ Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible, Jer. 23:26

³⁸ Gen. 40:8

Gen. 40:12 And Joseph said unto him, This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days:

Gen. 40:18 And Joseph answered and said, This is the interpretation thereof: The three baskets are three days:

Gen. 41:25 And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do.

Dan. 1:17 As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

³⁹ I John 4:1

⁴⁰ Matt. 24:4&5 *And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. ⁵For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.*

Though we cannot really know for sure if Eliphaz saw a vision, what we can know is that he was not God's spokesman. And the very fact that he was not ordained to speak for the Lord should cause us to question what he says. Sincerity is no guarantee for truth. Even if men are given dreams and revelations, they should still lean solely upon the Lord for their interpretation. *And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them, I pray you.*³⁸ Those who say they speak by the Spirit should be tried. This can be done by observing the sincerity with which they confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and if they are accompanied by the Holy Spirit. Just because men speak in either God's or Christ's name, it does not mean that the Holy Spirit accompanies them when they speak. Human reason and religious speculation are not proof of the Holy Spirit's influence. *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*³⁹

Beloved, believe not every spirit - Do not confide implicitly in everyone who professes to be under the influences of the Holy Spirit. Compare Matthew 24:4-5.⁴⁰ The true and the

false teachers of religion alike claimed to be under the influence of the Spirit of God, and it was of importance that all such pretensions should be examined. It was not to be admitted because anyone claimed to have been sent from God that therefore he was sent. Every such claim should be subjected to the proper proof before it was conceded. All pretensions to divine inspiration, or to being authorised teachers of religion, were to be examined by the proper tests, because there were many false and delusive teachers who set up such claims in the world.⁴¹

Eliphaz's correction of Job continues:

Job 4:18–21 Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly:

¹⁹ How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth?

²⁰ They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever without any regarding it.

²¹ Doth not their excellency which is in them go away? they die, even without wisdom.

Without quibbling about Eliphaz's words, let us briefly say that God trusts his servants not to do as they will but to conduct themselves according to His will. Some commentators have referred to the servants spoken of here as angels, but the truth remains the same—God uses both angelic and human messengers to reveal His will. It seems amazing that Eliphaz, after speaking of his own vision and thinking himself fully able to set Job right, now casts doubt on God's trusting others in ministry—as if God would reveal revelation to Eliphaz but exclude others from receiving it. It is pride that prompts men to conclude that they alone can be used for God, that their religion is the right religion simply because it is theirs. The truth is that God trusts His messengers. It is how He brought forth His Word,⁴² and it is how His will is made known to men.⁴³ Elihu, who will be in-

⁴¹ Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 4:1

⁴² II Tim. 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

II Pet. 1:20&21 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. ²¹For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

⁴³ Exod. 4:10–12 And Moses said unto the LORD, O my LORD, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. ¹¹And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?

¹²Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.

Num. 23:5 And the LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak. Deut. 18:18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

II Sam. 23:1&2 Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, ²The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.

Isa. 6:9–11 And he said [to Isaiah], Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. ¹⁰Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

¹¹Then said I, LORD, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate,

Isa. 51:16 And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people.

Jer. 1:9 Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.

Jer. 39:15&16 Now the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah, while he was shut up in the court of the prison, saying, ¹⁶Go and speak to Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring my words upon this city for evil, and not for good; and they shall be accomplished in that day before thee.

Jonah 1:1&2 Now the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, ²Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.

Matt. 11:10&11 For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. ¹¹Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Acts 3:22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

roduced later in the book, will serve this purpose for the Lord as well. *Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee that I have yet to speak on God's behalf.*⁴⁴ Elihu will be commissioned by God to speak on His behalf to clear up much of the spiritual confusion that was the result of human thinking.

Eliphaz continues, but notice how all he can do is speak of God, and we sense no power whatsoever that he was sent to speak for God. No doubt, here was a man who liked to talk but actually had very little to say.

Job 5:1–27 Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?

² *For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one.*

³ *I have seen the foolish taking root: but suddenly I cursed his habitation.*

⁴ *His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them.*

⁵ *Whose harvest the hungry eateth up, and taketh it even out of the thorns, and the robber swalloweth up their substance.*

⁶ *Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground;*

⁷ *Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.*

⁸ *I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause:*

⁹ *Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number:*

¹⁰ *Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields:*

¹¹ *To set up on high those that be low; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety.*

¹² *He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise.*

¹³ *He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.*

¹⁴ *They meet with darkness in the day time, and grope in the noonday as in the night.*

Acts 5:19&20 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said [to the apostles], ²⁰*Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.*

⁴⁴ *Job 36:2*

⁴⁵ *John 16:8*

¹⁵ *But he saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty.*

¹⁶ *So the poor hath hope, and iniquity stoppeth her mouth.*

¹⁷ *Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:*

¹⁸ *For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.*

¹⁹ *He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.*

²⁰ *In famine he shall redeem thee from death: and in war from the power of the sword.*

²¹ *Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue: neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh.*

²² *At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh: neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth.*

²³ *For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.*

²⁴ *And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin.*

²⁵ *Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth.*

²⁶ *Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season.*

²⁷ *Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good.*

Again, without divine inspiration, though men may speak much, they will accomplish little. Human reason cannot convict men of sin. That is the work of the Holy Spirit alone. *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*⁴⁵ Eliphaz makes another reference to what he has seen (^v3), and then he closes by saying that if Job will only hear him, it will be for his own good. In the end, Eliphaz's confidence in his own words and insights does absolutely nothing to help Job's suffering or convince Job of sin. Neither do Eliphaz's other speeches (chapters 15 and 22). Because Eliphaz was not led by God's Spirit, he was incapable of helping

Job. This teaches us that when men think they know but do not, it is not help they bring but only harm. So if men “go it alone” by leaning on their own wisdom, they will be ineffective at carrying out God’s tasks. He who speaks by himself will convince no man of God.

Though Job heard the arguments, he was neither moved nor swayed in the slightest. The dressed-up human wisdom presented to him sounded eloquent and was perceived, at least by the speaker, to come from one with knowledge—but God endorsed none of it. Observe as well that nothing is piercing or penetrating in men’s words unless it is by the Spirit of God that they are speaking. God’s Word alone is living and powerful, able to touch and critique the thoughts and intents of the sinner’s heart. Hence,

for men’s hearts to be penetrated and convicted of sin, God’s Word must be spoken to them. *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*⁴⁶

Sharper than any two-edged sword - Literally, “two-mouthed” sword - δίστομον *distoromon*. The word “mouth” was given to the sword because it seemed to “devour” all before it. It consumed or destroyed as a wild beast does. The comparison of the Word of God to a sword or to an arrow, is designed to show its power of penetrating the heart... The idea is that of piercing, or penetrating; and the meaning here is, that the Word of God reaches the “heart” - the very center of action, and lays open the motives and feelings of the man.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Heb. 4:12

⁴⁷ Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Heb. 4:12