

Chapter 5

Job's Initial Response to Eliphaz

Job 6

Job 6:1 But Job answered and said,

(Benson Commentary, Job 6:1) Job answered and said—Eliphaz concluded his discourse with an air of assurance, being very confident that what he had advanced was so plain and so pertinent that nothing could be objected to it. Job, however, is not at all convinced by it, but still justifies himself in his complaints, and condemns his friend for the weakness of his arguing. Though Eliphaz, in the beginning and some other parts of his speech, was very severe upon Job, he gave him no interruption, but heard him patiently till he had delivered his whole mind. But when he had done this, and had finished all he had to say, Job modestly, but feelingly, makes his reply.

Job 6:2–3 Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together!

³For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up.

IN his defense of wrongful correction, Job attributes thoughtlessness on Eliphaz's part. He was an outsider to Job's pain and suffering and therefore lacked the needed empathy in Job's situation. Eliphaz had spoken casually, if even sincerely, but in truth he merely added to Job's misery. In pain and sorrow men often dread that they must speak, preferring to remain quiet, especially if it is needed

to defend themselves concerning some perceived sin on their part.

Job 6:4 For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.

Not only were Job's afflictions on the outside, but even far more severe than this was the pain he felt in his inward spirit. He envisioned himself attacked by the Lord, which had taken his last ounce of spiritual strength from him. True believers, of whom Job surely was, are able to suffer much in this life, but the greatest pain, and one too difficult to bear, is when they wrongly assume that God has forsaken them. Job likens his "afflictions arrows, because, like arrows, they came upon him swiftly and suddenly, one after another, and that from on high, and wounded him deeply."¹

Job 6:5 Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? or loweth the ox over his fodder?

Job here likens himself to beasts of the field, which when content and fed are quiet and unassuming but when in pain bray and low because of their distress and agony. Job's argument is that if creatures of the field have this luxury, why should not he?

¹ *Benson Commentary, Job 6:4*

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Job 6:6 *Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt? or is there any taste in the white of an egg?*

Though commentators differ on the interpretation of this verse, it is certain that when men are under severe trial, previous things that once blessed them seem tasteless and totally unable to provide satisfaction to the soul.

Job 6:7 *The things that my soul refused to touch are as my sorrowful meat.*

(*Benson Commentary*, Job 6:7) The sense of the verse seems to be, Those grievous afflictions, which I dreaded the very thought of, are now my daily, though sorrowful, bread.

Job 6:8–9 *Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing that I long for!*

⁹Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off!

It is not simply that Job hoped to die; it was a request made to God to die. It is an act of great mercy that God does not answer all prayers. An unanswered prayer therefore can be as equal an expression

of divine love as one answered would be deemed to be. For the Lord not to grant our requests is often just as benevolent and caring on His part as if He did grant them. When lacking the Lord's Spirit and His Word, man in all natural aspects is woefully ignorant as to what is best for his life.² Because of this, he will regularly offer pleas to God that if answered would bring even greater pain and suffering to his life. In truth, unanswered requests are often the greatest blessings, simply because they are directed by divine will and not human will. The rashness of a man's words, as with Jonah,³ reveals that men often toy with the idea of death without really knowing what a great spiritual enemy death is.⁴

(*Pulpit Commentary*, Job 6:8) *Oh that I might have my request!* Here the second point is taken up. Eliphaz has threatened Job with death, representing it as the last and most terrible of punishments (Job 4:9, 20, 21; Job 5:2).⁵ Job's reply is that there is nothing he desires so much as death. His primary wish would have been never to have been born (Job 3:3–10);⁶ next to that, he would have desired an early death—the earlier the more acceptable (Job 3:11–19).⁷ As both these have been denied him, what

2 Jer. 10:23 O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

3 Jnh. 4:8 And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live.

4 I Cor. 15:26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

5 Job 4:9 By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.

Job 4:20–21 They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever without any regarding it.

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

Job 5:2 For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one.

6 Job 3:3–10 Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived. ⁴Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. ⁵Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it. ⁶As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months. ⁷Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein. ⁸Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning. ⁹Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day. ¹⁰Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes.

7 Job 3:11–19 Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?

¹²Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck? ¹³For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest. ¹⁴With kings and counsellors of the earth, which build desolate places for themselves; ¹⁵Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver: ¹⁶Or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never saw light. ¹⁷There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. ¹⁸There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the

he now desires, and earnestly asks for, is a speedy demise. It is not as yet clear what he thinks death to be, or whether he has any hope beyond the grave. Putting aside all such considerations, he here simply balances death against such a life as he now leads, and must expect to lead, since his disease is incurable, and decides in favour of death. It is not only his desire, but his “request” to God, that death may come to him quickly. *And that God would grant me the thing that I long for*; literally, my expectation or wish.

Job 6:10 *Then should I yet have comfort; yea, I would harden myself in sorrow: let him not spare; for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One.*

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, Job 6:10) *I would harden myself in sorrow*—rather, “I would exult in the pain,” if I knew that that pain would hasten my death [Gesenius]. Umbreit translates the Hebrew of “Let Him not spare,” as “unsparing”; and joins it with “pain.”

concealed—I have not disowned, in word or deed, the commands of the Holy One (Ps 119:46; Ac 20:20).⁸ He says this in answer to Eliphaz’ insinuation that he is a hypocrite.

Job 6:11 *What is my strength, that I should hope? and what is mine end, that I should prolong my life?*

In defending his request of God to die and why it should not be thought unreasonable, Job declares, *What is my strength?* (v. 11) and therefore why should he maintain any desire to remain living in this weakened physical and mental condition?

oppressor.¹⁹ *The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master.*

⁸ Ps. 119:46 *I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed.*

Acts 20:20 *And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,*

⁹ Ps. 103:14 *For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.*

¹⁰ Isa. 40:6–7 *The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: ⁷The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.*

¹¹ Matt. 26:41 *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

In Job’s mind the hope of ever gaining strength again was far beyond his reach, so why should he wish to live any longer and prolong his life?

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, Job 6:11) What strength have I, so as to warrant the hope of restoration to health? a hope which Eliphaz had suggested. “And what” but a miserable “end” of life is before me, “that I should” desire to “prolong life”? [Umbreit].

Job 6:12 *Is my strength the strength of stones? or is my flesh of brass?*

Is a man’s strength like that of a stone, Job asks, which is impervious to harsh climate and can endure without the least of struggle, the raging of the sea, and all other inclement environments thrown against it? Is a man’s flesh also as brass, whereby it is likewise impervious to the arrows’ attacks and the spear’s thrust? Job’s reasoning is that since man is flesh and blood, made of the dust of the earth,⁹ and is as mortal as the grass of the field,¹⁰ why should it be thought that he is anything but weak, feeble, and completely vulnerable to so many things so much more powerful than himself? By what he has suffered, Job is now aware, more than ever, of the weakness of his flesh and of man in general. The flesh is weak,¹¹ and those under trial will become painfully conscious of how frail the human condition is without God’s Holy Spirit to strengthen it.

Job 6:13 *Is not my help in me? and is wisdom driven quite from me?*

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(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 6:13) *Is not my help in me?*—This would be better rendered in an affirmative manner, or as an exclamation. The interrogative form of the previous verses need not be continued in this. The sense is, “alas! there is no help in me!” That is, “I have no strength; I must give up under these sorrows in despair.” So it is rendered by Jerome, Rosenmuller, Good, Noyes, and others.

And is wisdom quite driven from me?—This, also, should be read as an affirmation, “deliverance is driven from me.” The word rendered wisdom (תִּשְׁיָאֵה *tûshiyâh*) means properly a setting upright; then help, deliverance; and then purpose, enterprise; see the notes at Job 5:12.¹² Here it means that all hope of deliverance had fled, and that he was sinking in despair.

Job 6:14 *To him that is afflicted pity should be shewed from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty.*

After documenting his own weakness, Job states that it should be pity that is due him, and not as Eliphaz had done, by being completely insensitive to his internal pain and agony. If Eliphaz was a true friend, Job reasoned, compassion would fill his heart, not religious judgment. Job thus attributes the insensitive words of Eliphaz to Eliphaz's own lack of any true fear of the Lord. Should not he, Eliphaz, be more mindful of God's judgment in his own life and not be so causal in his reproof of Job? No doubt, in difficult times words are important, as they either can heal the human heart or add salt to an already painful condition.¹³ Eliphaz also would soon learn that the Lord hears all things and also will ultimately hold men

accountable for their words.¹⁴ Eliphaz would come to learn this through his own personal experience of being corrected by the Lord for his own misrepresentation of the truth.

Job 6:15 *My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away;*

Whereas Job had looked for aid and comfort from his friends, he had discovered that, like a stream that vanishes in the summer, gaining any true help from them was a hopeless prospect.

Job 6:16 *Which are blackish by reason of the ice, and wherein the snow is hid:*

Here again is another analogy on the vanity and uselessness of Eliphaz's unjust reproof of Job, which promised deliverance—yet in reality was no real help at all.

(Pulpit Commentary, Job 6:16) *Which are blackish by reason of the ice.* Job seems to have seen wadys where, in the winter-time, the water was actually frozen into hard black ice.

Job 6:17 *What time they wax warm, they vanish: when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place.*

In respect to the waters spoken of in verse 16, Job now likens Eliphaz and his friends' help to soon-vanishing water, which because it does not stem from a spring cannot remain constant and therefore could not truly be trusted in. What Job was spiritually learning by personal experience in regard to trusting man is what God's Word has revealed for millennia, that the help

¹² Job 5:12 *He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise.*

¹³ Prov. 16:24 *Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.*

Prov. 12:18 *There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.*

¹⁴ Matt. 12:36–37 *But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.* ³⁷For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

of man is vain.¹⁵ Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man (Ps. 60:11).

(Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, Ps. 60:11) It is a delusion (cp. Psalm 33:17¹⁶) to look to human strength for victory.

Job 6:18 *The paths of their way are turned aside; they go to nothing, and perish.*

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 6:18) *turned aside*—rather, “caravans” (Hebrew, “travellers”) turn aside from their way, by circuitous routes, to obtain water. They had seen the brook in spring full of water: and now in the summer heat, on their weary journey, they turn off their road by a devious route to reach the living waters, which they remembered with such pleasure. But, when “they go,” it is “into a desert” [Noyes and Umbreit]. Not as English Version, “They go to nothing,” which would be a tame repetition of the drying up of the waters in Job 6:17; instead of waters, they find an “empty wilderness”; and, not having strength to regain their road, bitterly disappointed, they “perish.”

Job 6:19 *The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them.*

(Geneva Study Bible, Job 6:19) *The troops of Tema* {} *looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them.*

(l) They who pass by it to go into the hot countries of Arabia, think to find water there to quench their thirst but they are deceived.

Job 6:20 *They were confounded because they had hoped; they came thither, and were ashamed.*

Job likens the help of his friends to dried-up streams and empty water holes, where it might be perceived that help could be found but in reality could not. There are also none who place their hope and trust in man who are not in the end consistently discouraged and let down because of whom they have placed their trust in.¹⁷ To trust in man is to trust in a fallen creature, flawed with inevitable shortcomings and weakness. To trust in God is to trust in a holy being, perfect in every respect to assist those who rely upon Him in their times of need.¹⁸

Job 6:21 *For now ye are nothing; ye see my casting down, and are afraid.*

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 6:21) As the dried-up brook is to the caravan, so are ye to me, namely, a nothing; ye might as well not be in existence [Umbreit]. The Margin “like to them,” or “to it” (namely, the waters of the brook), is not so good a reading.

ye see, and are afraid—Ye are struck aghast at the sight of my misery, and ye lose presence of mind.

(Pulpit Commentary, Job 6:21) *Ye see my casting down, and are afraid.* Here Job penetrates to the motive which had produced the conduct of his friends. They had come with good intentions, meaning to comfort and console him; but when they came, and saw what a wreck he was, how utterly “broken up” and ruined, they began to be afraid of showing too much friendliness. They thought him an object of the Divine ven-

15 Ps. 118:8 *It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.*

Ps. 146:3 *Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.*

Isa. 2:22 *Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?*

16 Ps. 33:17 *An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.*

17 Jer. 17:5–6 *Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. ⁶For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.*

18 Ps. 46:1 *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

Jer. 17:7–8 *Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. ⁸For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.*

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geance, and feared lest, if they showed him sympathy, they might involve themselves in his punishment.

Though it is possible to lay fault upon Job's friends, as if it would never happen to us, the truth is that even the most spiritual and loyal friend can fail to help in time of need. This was evidenced in Peter when he followed Jesus *afar off*¹⁹ and then betrayed the very One he had claimed personal allegiance and love toward.²⁰ Fear therefore does a great amount of harm to the soul, but never more so than when it prevents men from providing aid and comfort to those they love simply because of the fear of coming too close and perhaps suffering the same fate as them.

Job 6:22–23 Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give a reward for me of your substance?²³ Or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand? or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty?

Job had not asked for his friends to come; neither had God directed them for such a purpose. They had come through their own choosing, and as a result they would be held personally accountable for their actions. They had placed themselves in Job's trial by their own choice and consequently would very soon need to give

an account of their false accusations and assumptions of sin on Job's part.²¹

Job 6:24 Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred.

²⁵How forcible are right words! but what doth your arguing reprove?

Revealing his humility, Job states that he would hold his tongue and not defend himself against Eliphaz's accusations if true understanding and enlightenment could be brought to him regarding sin on his part. This shows that Job was not rigid in his defense, only that his friends' weak human arguments could be easily refuted. Indeed, Job later proved that he would listen to those wiser than himself when first Elihu and then the Lord began their address. It is evident that this upright man who feared God was willing to be taught, just not by any more spiritually ignorant than himself. Job's openness to proper correction is revealed beginning with Elihu's address in chapters 32–37, of which Job offers no defense of his sin nor refutes any of Elihu's reproof. Job's willingness to be divinely corrected continues when the Lord Himself reproofs Job in chapters 38–42. Ultimately Job desired instruction, even if it was correction, and was more than willing to

¹⁹ Matt. 26:58 *But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.*

²⁰ Luke 22:54–62 *Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off. ⁵⁵And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them. ⁵⁶But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him. ⁵⁷And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not. ⁵⁸And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not. ⁵⁹And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaean. ⁶⁰And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. ⁶¹And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice. ⁶²And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.*

²¹ Job 42:7–9 *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. ⁸Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job. ⁹So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD commanded them: the LORD also accepted Job.*

be taught the error of his ways. But this would be true only if someone was able to actually help him understand how he had sinned against the Lord and the manner in which he had erred.

*(Benson Commentary, Job 6:24–25) Teach me—*Instead of censuring and reproaching, instruct and convince me by solid arguments; *and I will hold my tongue—*I will patiently hear and gladly receive your counsels; *and cause me to understand wherein I have erred—*Show me my mistakes and miscarriages; for I am ready to receive your reproofs, and humbly to submit to them. *How forcible are right words!—*The words of truth and solid argument have a marvellous power to convince and persuade a man; and, if yours were such, I should readily yield to them. *But what doth your arguing reprove?—*There is no truth in your assertions, nor weight in your arguments, and therefore they are of no account, and have no power with me.

Job, because of his fear of God, knew both the strength and power of God's true Word. He was more than aware that the inspired Word of God possesses sufficient spiritual ability to pierce the sinner's heart and convince him of sin.²² Hence, though Job's friends insinuated that their arguments came from the Lord, Job inherently knew that they were bringing nothing truly of Him. What this teaches us is this—that where the true Word of God resides, is spoken, and subsequently is held forth by those filled with the Holy Spirit,²³ there will always be power and accuracy in its message. God's Word is more than sufficient to fully accomplish all that

He has purposed it should. The words of man—though they may be dressed with religious trimmings—have no such power. *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it (Isa. 55:11).*

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Isa. 55:11) 1. That God has a design in giving his Word to people. He has as distinct an intention in his Word as he has in sending down rain upon the earth.

2. That whatever is his design in giving the gospel, it shall be accomplished. It is never spoken in vain, and never fails to produce the effect which he intends. The gospel is no more preached in vain than the rain falls in vain. And though that often falls on barren rocks, or on arid sands; on extended plains where no vegetation is produced, or in the wilderness 'where no man is,' and seems to our eyes in vain, yet it is not so. God has a design in each drop that falls on sands or rocks, as really as in the copious shower that falls on fertile fields. And so the gospel often falls on the hard and barren hearts of men. It is addressed to the proud, the sensual, the avaricious, and the unbelieving, and seems to be spoken in vain, and to return void unto God. But it is not so. He has some design in it, and that will be accomplished.

Job 6:26 Do ye imagine to reprove words, and the speeches of one that is desperate, which are as wind?

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, Job 6:26) Do ye imagine to reprove words? i.e. do you think that all your arguments are solid and

²² Heb. 4:12 *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.*

²³ Mic. 3:8 *But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the LORD, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.*

Exod. 31:3 *And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,*

Luke 1:15 *For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.*

Acts 4:8 *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, Acts 13:9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him.*

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unanswerable, and all my answers are but idle and empty words? Or do you think it is sufficient to cavil and quarrel with some of my words and expressions, without considering the merits of the cause, and the truth of my condition, or giving an allowance for human infirmity, or for my extreme misery, which may easily force from me some indecent expressions? ...

Which are as wind, i.e. which you esteem to be like the wind, vain and light, without solid substance, making a great noise with little sense, and to little purpose. ... Do you take me for a desperate and distracted man, that knows not or cares not what he saith, but only speaks what comes first into his mind and mouth? The *wind* is oft used to express vain words, as Job 15:2 Jeremiah 5:13;²⁴ and vain things, Job 7:7 Proverbs 11:29.²⁵

Job 6:27 *Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless, and ye dig a pit for your friend.*

Job likened himself to a child alone in his misery, who had no reliable means of help. Job's friends had failed him and had only dug a deeper pit for him to fall into. This is often the characteristic of those who are merely religious, who commonly are not interested in sincerely helping the broken, but instead, their only real aim is to catch them in their words—with the ultimate intent of bringing religious judgment. This approach was evidenced in the religious leaders of Jesus' day who cared not for the man with the withered hand but only sought to accuse Christ.²⁶

Job 6:28 *Now therefore be content, look upon me; for it is evident unto you if I lie.*

²⁴ Job 15:2 *Should a wise man utter vain knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind?*

²⁵ Jer. 5:13 *And the prophets shall become wind, and the word is not in them: thus shall it be done unto them.*

²⁶ Prov. 11:29 *He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind: and the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart.*

²⁷ Matt. 12:10–13 *And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him.* ¹¹ *And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?* ¹² *How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.* ¹³ *Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.*

Though Job was afflicted, he had not lost the discernment to know whether what he spoke was sincere or not. Eliphaz had attacked Job's character, and in response Job appealed to Eliphaz's own conscience.

(Benson Commentary, Job 6:30) Is there iniquity in my tongue?—Consider, if there be any iniquity, or untruth, in what I have already said, or shall further speak? Have I hitherto uttered any thing that is faulty? Cannot my taste discern perverse things—That is, my understanding, which judges of words and actions, as the palate doth of meats. I hope it is not so corrupted but that I can discern what is bad, though spoken by myself.

In seeking to reason with his friends, Job calls upon them to look upon him so they could more rightly judge if indeed he was the hypocrite that they had so foolishly claimed him to be. Job knew that with a more careful examination of his life, it would be clearly evident that he had neither lied nor misrepresented himself. A truly righteous man also will not be hesitant to challenge accusers to more fully scrutinize his life, to either prove or disprove religious integrity. Hence, whereas sinners will dread having their lives come under divine inspection, a truly righteous man will welcome it.

Job 6:29 *Return, I pray you, let it not be iniquity; yea, return again, my righteousness is in it.*

Job's spiritual integrity was at stake; thus, he implored his friends to re-examine if he was actually the sinner they claimed

him to be. In essence Job sought a reopening of his case, knowing that if all things were considered and rightly weighed, then it would not be with judgment that he would be looked upon by his friends but rather shown both mercy and pity. Job's name, integrity, and righteousness were at stake; understandably, it remained reasonable that sufficient time should be given to rightfully appraise his life, to determine if what he had been accused of was actually true. Job knew himself innocent of all charges and rightfully hoped that with greater spiritual inspection he would receive a full and complete exoneration.

Job 6:30 *Is there iniquity in my tongue? cannot my taste discern perverse things?*

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Job 6:30) Is there iniquity?—Or, injustice in my tongue? Is my taste so perverted that it cannot perceive what is perverse? “Ye appear to think that I am wholly incapable of judging my own cause because it is my own; but if ye will only condescend to return in due course, ye shall find that I know what is right as well as you, and that there is no more vicious reasoning in me than there is with you, and probably less.”

We could continue studying Eliphaz's misjudgments concerning Job, as well as Job's defense of himself; however, this would only clutter the real purpose of the book, by getting lost in the words of those who did not themselves truly know the Lord. If more study is desired, Eliphaz's full message can be found in chapters 15 and 22. In these chapters Eliphaz continues his address by beseeching Job to hear, based primarily on what Eliphaz in his own personal life had seen. *I will*

27 Job 42:7–8 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. ^aTherefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.

*shew thee, hear me; and that which I have seen I will declare (Job 15:17). By his third address, because he finds himself unable to convince Job of any wrongdoing, Eliphaz, without any spiritual restraint, accuses Job of crimes far beyond any true, verifiable evidence. The harshness and injustice of Eliphaz's words are recorded in chapter 22: *Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite? For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing. Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry. But as for the mighty man, he had the earth; and the honourable man dwelt in it. Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken (Job 22:5–9).* When the proud are not heard as they think they should be, their claims and exaggerations about how others have sinned seem to have no limits. This was certainly true of Eliphaz, revealing that a solely self-righteous and religious man will stop at nothing, including bringing false accusations against those he claims to desire to help. This will be done in an attempt to remain right in his own eyes.*

Because of time constraints, only part of Job's initial response to Eliphaz is addressed. The rest can be studied in chapter 7 and then later in chapters 16 and 17, as well as chapters 23 and 24. In each and every claim against Job, Eliphaz failed to convince Job of sin or to offer any true understanding as what was necessary for his deliverance. Though Eliphaz talked much and was supremely confident of Job's perceived sin, in the end he only brought the Lord's condemnation upon himself,²⁷ a spiritual reality that will accompany all

Job's Initial Response to Eliphaz

who come in God's name but are not led by the Lord's Holy Spirit.