

Eliphaz

Chapter Fifteen

Job 15:1-6

“Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said: “Should a wise man answer with windy knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind? Should he argue in unprofitable talk, or in words with which he can do no good? But you are doing away with the fear of God and hindering meditation before God. For your iniquity teaches your mouth, and you choose the tongue of the crafty. Your own mouth condemns you, and not I; your own lips testify against you.”

Job Full Of Hot Air

- Eliphaz, who was originally gentle and encouraging to Job, now becomes critical and accusatory.
- Eliphaz says that Job is full of hot air belching out useless knowledge.
- "Eliphaz was using one of the oldest tactics in debate—if you can't refute your opponent's arguments, attack his words and make them sound like a lot of hot air." -Wiersbe, Warren
- The "east wind" is a hot dusty destructive wind that blew from across the Arabian Desert

Job Disrespectful

- Criticizing Job's words and knowledge was not enough for Eliphaz who now turns on Job's character.
- Eliphaz says that Job is being disrespectful towards God by, "doing away with the fear of God" thus hindering how Job thinks and speaks about God.
- Eliphaz says that Job's own words are a demonstration of his sinfulness since it is his sin that "teaches" his "mouth" what to say.

Job 15:7-13

“Are you the first man who was born? Or were you brought forth before the hills? Have you listened in the council of God? And do you limit wisdom to yourself? What do you know that we do not know? What do you understand that is not clear to us? Both the gray-haired and the aged are among us, older than your father. Are the comforts of God too small for you, or the word that deals gently with you? Why does your heart carry you away, and why do your eyes flash, that you turn your spirit against God and bring such words out of your mouth?”

Job Lacks Understanding

- Eliphaz attacks Job's wisdom and understanding.
- Eliphaz says that Job was not the “first man who was born” and Job had not “listened in the council of God”.
- Eliphaz is mocking Job only because Job would not listen to the advice of his friends and humbly repent for the sin that put him in this place.

- "Thus he goes on to jeer Job, and to accuse him of insolent arrogance, as if he had taken himself to be of God's cabinet-council, and so to have known more of his mind than any other."-Trapp, John
- It doesn't appear that Eliphaz was listening to Job since Job had made no such claim about being superior in knowledge but Job only said he had equal intelligence (12:3; 13:2).
- Job never claimed to know anything only that his friend's explanation was wrong.

The Gray-Haired

- Eliphaz says Job is not smarter than the wisdom of the “gray-haired” people the lived among them.
- In Eliphaz’s mind the “gray-haired” people apparently share the opinion of Job’s friends.
- These old people are older than your father and even they recognize that sin is the cause of suffering and righteousness is the cause of blessing.
- The Bible speaks highly of the wisdom of the aged.

- “Remember the days of old; consider the years of many generations; ask your father, and he will show you, your elders, and they will tell you.”-**Deuteronomy 32:7**
- “You shall stand up before the gray head and honor the face of an old man, and you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.”-**Leviticus 19:32**
- Though the aged have wisdom from years of living it doesn’t by virtue of age make them automatically correct.

- Elihu was a young man but speaks with great wisdom, “And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said: ‘I am young in years, and you are aged; therefore I was timid and afraid to declare my opinion to you. I said, ‘Let days speak, and many years teach wisdom.’ But it is the spirit in man, the breath of the Almighty, that makes him understand. It is not the old who are wise, nor the aged who understand what is right.”-Job 32:6-9

Solomon's Prayer For Wisdom

- “And Solomon said: “You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, because he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted. Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?””

“It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. And God said to him, “Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days.” **-1 Kings 3:6-12**

How Does A Person Gain Wisdom?

- There are three possibilities to gain wisdom:
 1. A person can gain wisdom by defining what it says in the dictionary.
 2. A person can gain wisdom by defining what the world says about wisdom.
 3. A person can gain wisdom by defining what God says about wisdom.

Dictionary Wisdom

- “Knowledge that is gained by having many experiences in life”.
- “The natural ability to understand things that most other people cannot understand”.
- “Knowledge of what is proper or reasonable”.
- “good sense or judgment”
- “The sum of learning through the ages”.
- Learnersdictionary.com

Wisdom From Above

- “But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.”-**James 3:17**
- Wisdom is being able to see people and the world from God’s perspective and then apply that to our surrounding culture.
- “Wisdom is the reward you get for a lifetime of listening when you would have preferred to talk.”- Doug Larson.

- “Who is the man so wise that he can understand this? To whom has the mouth of the LORD spoken, that he may declare it?... “Thus says the LORD: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who **practices** steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.”-**Jeremiah 9:12;23-24**

- “Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.”-
James 3:13-15
- The friends of Job were not seeking or acting upon a wisdom that comes from above, but were selfish, boastful, close-minded, prideful, and unwilling to show compassion and mercy.

<u>Godly Wisdom</u>	<u>Earthly Wisdom</u>
Looks at life situations from God's perspective	Looks at other people to compare themselves with how well things are going
Knows that God is good no matter what the circumstances may be	Has a sense of bitterness towards God
Seeks God during difficult circumstances	Stops seeking and becomes resentful
Values God's wisdom	Values Man's wisdom above God's wisdom
The goal is not the gifts God gives but a relationship built on His grace	The goal is to get from God such things as health, wealth, insight, power, and control
Recognizes that God has not left them	God must not be involved in the affairs of the world, especially my world
Difficult circumstances can build maturity in my relationship with God	Difficult circumstances have no value
Everybody goes through times of testing	I am the only one who seems to have these things happening to me

Job Is A Back Slider

- Eliphaz says that Job is being carried away from God by his sinful heart.
- Eliphaz interpreted Job's prayers of frustration to God as rebellion against God which they were not.
- Job was only proclaiming his innocence before God but Eliphaz was looking into Job's heart and seeing rebellion.
- Eliphaz needed Job to be in rebellion against God in order that his theology would stay intact and thus win his argument that Job's suffering is a result of sin.

Job 15:14-16

“What is man, that he can be pure? Or he who is born of a woman, that he can be righteous? Behold, God puts no trust in his holy ones, and the heavens are not pure in his sight; how much less one who is abominable and corrupt, a man who drinks injustice like water!”

Job Is Corrupt

- Eliphaz's argument has turned to Job's eternal fate in the hand of God.
- If God can puts “no trust in his holy ones” then how is it possible for Job, who is “abominable and corrupt” be able to stand before God and escape judgment.
- The judgment that Eliphaz in his experience has delved into.

Job 15:17-26

“I will show you; hear me, and what I have seen I will declare (what wise men have told, without hiding it from their fathers, to whom alone the land was given, and no stranger passed among them).

The wicked man writhes in pain all his days, through all the years that are laid up for the ruthless.”

“Dreadful sounds are in his ears; in prosperity the destroyer will come upon him. He does not believe that he will return out of darkness, and he is marked for the sword. He wanders abroad for bread, saying, ‘Where is it?’ He knows that a day of darkness is ready at his hand; distress and anguish terrify him; they prevail against him, like a king ready for battle. Because he has stretched out his hand against God and defies the Almighty, running stubbornly against him with a thickly bossed shield;”

Wicked Suffer

- Once again Eliphaz appeals to his experience and wisdom to proclaim that suffering only come upon the wicked.
- Job's friends speak in general terms of cause-and-effect associations between human suffering caused by wickedness.
- They assume that a general principle is always true in all cases especially in Job's particular case.

- “When once the sledge-hammer of tradition is brought to bear there is nothing more to say... The Pharisees adopted this method with Jesus... The ‘Eliphaz’ method has hindered more souls in developing the life with God than almost any other thing.”-Chambers, Oswald
- If people follow God for what they believe He should provide then they are not following God at all.
- They are only following a made up version of God which in turn attempts to make God serve their own selfish desires.
- Eliphaz wants to “sledge-hammer” his made up version of God into Job’s life but it didn’t fit. The more he hammers the more he only mangles what he is trying to fix.

- “If Eliphaz had been wise he would have seen what Job was getting at – ‘Job is facing something I do not see; I don’t understand his problem, but I will treat him with respect’. Instead of that he said, ‘According to my traditional belief, you are a hypocrite, Job’.”- Chambers
- “There is no tenderness here. The philosophy of life is stated wholly on the negative side, and it was impossible for Job to misunderstand the meaning.”- Morgan, G. Cambell

Job 15:27-35

“ because he has covered his face with his fat and gathered fat upon his waist and has lived in desolate cities, in houses that none should inhabit, which were ready to become heaps of ruins; he will not be rich, and his wealth will not endure, nor will his possessions spread over the earth; he will not depart from darkness; the flame will dry up his shoots, and by the breath of his mouth he will depart. Let him not trust in emptiness, deceiving himself, for emptiness will be his payment.”

“It will be paid in full before his time, and his branch will not be green. He will shake off his unripe grape like the vine, and cast off his blossom like the olive tree. For the company of the godless is barren, and fire consumes the tents of bribery. They conceive trouble and give birth to evil, and their womb prepares deceit.”

God's Judgment Upon The Wicked

- Eliphaz lays out his two-fold reasons for God's Judgment:
 1. Rebellion against God (vs. 25-26)
 2. Self indulgence (vs. 27-28)
- There *was* wisdom in Eliphaz's description of the ungodly and their destiny. The problem was that they did not apply to Job and his situation. “Apart from the fact that these words did not fit the case of Job, they constitute a magnificent description of the unutterable folly of the man who rebels.”-Morgan, G. Cambell

Seven Judgments Of God

- Eliphaz lists seven judgments of God upon the wicked:
 1. The wicked will not prosper but if he does it will not endure. (vs.29)
 2. He will die. (vs. 30)
 3. His works will be futile. (vs. 31)

4. Untimely suffering. (vs.32)
5. His crops will fail. (vs. 32-33)
6. He will suffer barrenness (futility and unproductiveness). (vs. 34)
7. He experiences trouble and deceit, (vs. 35)

- It is interesting that the list of seven judgments that Eliphaz gives are natural things to a fallen world and judgments that do not discriminate between believers and nonbelievers.

- "It is a subtlety of our author that Eliphaz, who began by calling Job a wind-bag (verse 2), ends his own speech with a pile of verbiage. With tedious repetition, assertion not argument, he presents the doctrine 'you reap what you sow' in several forms."-Anderson, Francis

- “Poor Job! What a fight of affliction had he to contend with! His *body* wasted and tortured with sore *disease*, his *mind* harassed by *Satan*; and his *heart* wrung with the unkindness, and false accusations of his *friends*. No wonder he was greatly agitated, often distracted, and sometimes even thrown off his guard. However, all his enemies were chained; and beyond that chain they could not go. God was his unseen Protector, and did not suffer his faithful servant to be greatly moved.”- Clarke, Adam