

Eliphaz Answered

Job 4:1-21

The main argument of Eliphaz was that Job's trial was simply because of sin. That argument was flawed for God had said that Job hadn't sinned. However, what Eliphaz said was true – it just wasn't true about Job.

Who was "Eliphaz the Temanite?" (taken primarily from Barnes' Notes)

1. He seems to be the most prominent of Job's friends.
2. The Septuagint renders this "Eliphaz, the king of the Themanites." The Hebrew does not intimate that he held any office or rank.
3. The word rendered "Temanite" is a patronymic (a component of a personal name based on the given name of one's father, or a patrilineal ancestor) – from a word meaning "at the right hand," and then "the South." The Hebrew geographers are always represented as looking to the East, and not toward the North, as we do; and hence, with them, the right hand denotes the South.
4. Teman or Theman was a son of Eliphaz, a grandson of Esau (Gen. 36:15), where he is spoken of as "duke" or prince, a head of a family or tribe (which may be why the Septuagint renders Eliphaz as the king of the Themanites).
5. The Eliphaz of Job was not the son of Esau mentioned in Genesis – he would not have been a "Temanite," at that point because Teman was his son. This would be a direct descendant of the son of Esau.

NOTE: I need to clarify something I stated in error at the beginning of our study. When asked whether the book of Job was written before the flood, I believe I said that it was. Upon further study (and the study of the names here being part of that study), I was wrong in giving the answer that this was written prior to the flood. The name of "Job" (whether the "Job" of the book of Job or not cannot be determined dogmatically, but I believe it was the same) first appears in Gen. 46:13, whereas I had it much earlier in Genesis when I gave the introduction to the book. With that understanding, the book of Job would have been written, at the earliest, in the time of Joseph, and at the latest, in the time of Moses (which is where the biblical historian Bishop James Ussher puts it).

Eliphaz makes three separate points in his first discourse with Job (as his response to what Job said, as recorded in chapter two).

I. POINT #1 – ALTHOUGH JOB HAD HELPED OTHERS IN TIME OF TROUBLE, HE WASN'T "PRACTICING WHAT HE PREACHED" – VS. 1-6

A. The first thing that Eliphaz asked Job (vs. 2) was that if they talked to him, was he going to be upset? It would appear that he didn't think much of Job at this point.

B. He then made the point that Job had been a friend to others, helping them in their times of trial – vs. 3-4

C. Then, a very harsh and unkind thing (and that from a so-called "friend) was said – Eliphaz was saying, now that you are in trouble, you can't handle it – vs. 5

D. In verse 6 we find Eliphaz asking Job what had happened to all that he said he was. He's saying, in essence, "Isn't this what you always preached? Isn't this what you always said you believed? What happened?"

II. POINT #2 – NOBODY THAT WAS INNOCENT HAD DIED YET, SO WHAT MADE JOB THINK HE WAS ANY DIFFERENT? – VS. 7-11

A. Vs. 7 – The premise here is that, in Eliphaz's eyes, innocent people, good people, lived a long, and happy life, and since Job wasn't happy and didn't appear to be able to live much longer, he must have done something to anger God.

B. Vs. 8 is a true verse – it's taught all through Scripture – we'll reap what we sow – it just wasn't true about Job in this particular case.

Proverbs 22:8

⁸ He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail.

Hosea 8:7

⁷ For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up.

2 Corinthians 9:6

⁶ But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

Galatians 6:7-8

⁷ Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for

whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

⁸ For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

C. Verses 9-11 are just a form of Hebrew poetry to illustrate verse 8.

III. POINT #3 – GOD DIDN'T OWE JOB, OR ANYONE ELSE, ANYTHING, AND THAT INCLUDED LIFE ITSELF – VS. 12-21

A. Vs. 12-16 – Eliphaz had a dream or a vision, and there is no reason to believe that it wasn't a real, literal instance that took place in his life. There's no reason to believe, either, that it wasn't from the Lord Himself, although it isn't abundantly clear whether it was or not.

Scofield says something interesting about this dream or vision:

Eliphaz is a religious dogmatist whose dogmatism rests upon a mysterious and remarkable experience Job 4:12-16. Did a spirit ever pass before Job's face? Did Job's hair of his flesh ever stand up? Then let him be meek while one so superior as Eliphaz declares the causes of his misfortunes. Eliphaz says many true things (as do the others), and often rises into eloquence, but he remains hard and cruel, a dogmatist who must be heard because of one remarkable experience.

[1 John 4:1](#)

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.

B. Again, the statements made in verses 17-21 are biblically sound, they just don't apply to Job in this case. Make sure we understand that, in the poetical books (especially Job and Ecclesiastes) there are many statements made that are true – just make sure we take them within the context of the book.

1. Verse 17 asks the question as to whether we, as mortal beings, are more just than God – are we purer than our maker. The answer is a very obvious one.

Job 9:2

² I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God?

Job 9:30–31

³⁰ If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean;

³¹ Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.

Job 14:4

⁴ Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.

Job 15:14

¹⁴ What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?

Ecclesiastes 7:20

²⁰ For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

Jeremiah 17:9

⁹ The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

2. Verses 18-19 points out that God didn't look to the angels for help – what makes us (in this case, Job) think that He will look to us for help?

Job 15:15-16

¹⁵ Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.

¹⁶ How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?

Job 25:5-6

⁵ Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight.

⁶ How much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, which is a worm?

3. Verses 20-21 bring out the point that we will die, and once dead, as Solomon said in Ecclesiastes, we are gone and, most often, forgotten.

C. Eliphaz was saying all this to Job to point out that he thought Job had brought all this on himself and the very fact he was suffering and about to die would indicate that

Conclusion: Although these things weren't true of Job, are they true of us? Have we been suffering because of sin in our lives? Be sure that we stay right with the Lord, so we can know that whatever comes our way, it isn't because of something we did.