

Job Chapter 15

From here to 21:34: These chapters include the second round of speeches between Job and his friends. (From here to verse 6), Eliphaz deemed Job's words the product of wind and bombast. He began by accusing Job of sinning by attacking God with his complaints. He felt Job was guilty of empty words and had not exhibited godly fear and righteous prayer (verse 4), but rather was sinning in his prayer (verses 5-6).

Verses 1-35: This time, in his second speech, "Eliphaz" employs one of the oldest strategies in debate: if you cannot win the argument, attack your opponent. Believing that Job's latest statements revealed his inward corruption, Eliphaz once again indicted his so-called friend.

Eliphaz returns for his second session (see Job verses 4-5).

The second cycle of speeches given by Job and his 3 friends. Job's resistance to their viewpoint and his appeals energized them to greater intensity in their confrontation.

Job 15:1 "Then answered Eliphaz the Temanite, and said,"

Or, who was of Teman, as the Targum. The first of Job's friends and comforters, the oldest of them, who first began the dispute with him. Which was carried on by his two other companions, who had spoken during their turns. And now in course it fell to him to answer a second time, as he does here.

"And said": as follows.

The second round of discussion becomes more heated. Now that Job has heard and answered all three friends, he is regarded by all three as quite arrogant.

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

Eliphaz begins his second speech with a question. There are over three hundred questions in the Book of Job (more than in any other book in the Bible). They express the viewpoint of wisdom and the search for understanding. Their constant use in the book clearly reflects its Near Eastern origin.

Eliphaz was criticizing Job for his talking. He thought all of Job's talk was in vain. He thought that God regarded it no more than He would the blowing of the wind. The east wind in that part of the world was the worst of winds.

Job 15:3 "Should he reason with unprofitable talk? or with speeches wherewith he can do no good?"

Of what consequence are all his arguments? Do they carry any weight with them? Do they convince and satisfy those with whom he contends? No: they are no better than unprofitable talk.

"With speeches wherewith he can do no good?" Either to himself or others, but will do much hurt.

Eliphaz was saying that Job's talk was unprofitable. He was telling Job that all of his talk would do no good at all. He had a terrible opinion of Job. He truly felt that Job's sins were so great, that God would not even listen to him.

Job 15:4 "Yea, thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God."

"Thou castest off fear", that is, the fear of God. Eliphaz makes a serious accusation that Job is actually undermining devotion to God by others.

He forgot that Job had asked God to take away his fear of Him. Job had spoken boldly of his belief that God would save him. Eliphaz believed that Job was not showing reverence toward God. He even believed that Job was hindering other's prayers to God.

Job 15:5 "For thy mouth uttereth thine iniquity, and thou chooseth the tongue of the crafty."

Eliphaz now accuses Job of "iniquity" and being "crafty" deceitful, whereas in his first speech he seemed to assume Job's sincerity.

Eliphaz believed that Job's tongue was speaking from a heart filled with iniquity.

Job 15:6 "Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I: yea, thine own lips testify against thee."

Or shows thee to be a wicked person, guilty of things charged upon thee. Out of thine own mouth thou art convicted, there needs no other evidence to be brought against thee, that is sufficient: and thou saves me, and any other, the trouble of passing the sentence of condemnation upon you. You have done it yourself, your own mouth is judge and jury, and brings in the verdict, and pronounces it, as well as is the witness, as follows, and is instead of a thousand witnesses (Job 9:20).

"Yea, thine own lips testify against thee": And therefore, there was no need of producing any other testimony. What he had said showed that his talk was vain and unprofitable. Unbecoming a wise man, and tending to make null and void the fear of God among men, to discourage all religious exercises, and particularly prayer before God.

Now he was saying that the words he was speaking were condemning himself. He believed that Job had been acting in an irreverent way in speaking to God. Job was in very good company being accused of sinning with what he said. They accused Jesus of speaking blasphemy, and therefore worthy of death. How wrong they were, and how wrong Eliphaz was here.

Verses 7-13: Eliphaz condemned Job for rejecting the conventional wisdom, as if he had more insight than other men (verses 7-9), and could reject the wisdom of the aged (verse 10), and the kindness of God (verse 11).

Verses 7-10: With God, true knowledge is not necessarily linked to age but to consistent obedience (Psalm 119:99-100). Knowledge and wisdom come from doing what God instructs and discovering that He always knows what is right (Deut. 4:6; 1 Tim. 4:12).

Job 15:7 "[Art] thou the first man [that] was born? or wast thou made before the hills?"

This is a retort upon (Job 12:2; 12:7; 12:9), where Job had claimed equal knowledge for the inanimate creation.

"Wast thou made before the hills?" As wisdom herself was (Prov. 8:23). Did thou exist before the earth was created, and distinguished into mountains and valleys?

He was accusing Job of believing that he had supernatural intelligence. He was also asking Job if he was the firstborn of God. In other words, he was saying, are you trying to compare yourself to God.

Job 15:8 "Hast thou heard the secret of God? and dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself?"

Rather, "Wast thou a listener in the secret council of God?" God's servants are admitted to God's secrets (Ps 25:14; Gen. 18:17; John 15:15).

"And dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself?" Rather, didst thou take away, or borrow, thence (namely, from the divine secret council), thy wisdom? Eliphaz in this (Job 15:8-9), retorts Job's words upon himself (Job 12:2-3; 13:2).

No mortal man had ever been included in the counsel of God, and yet that was what Eliphaz was saying that Job believed he had done. He was really saying cutting things to Job, especially when he said that Job thought he was the only wise man on the earth.

Job 15:9 "What knowest thou, that we know not? [what] understandest thou, which [is] not in us?"

Which are pretty near the words of Job to his friends (Job 12:3), and to the same sense is what follows.

"What understandest thou which is not in us?" In our hearts, minds, and understanding. Or among us, which one or other, or all of us, have not: yet all men have not knowledge alike. Some that profess themselves to be wise, and to have a large share of knowledge, are fools. And such who think they know something extraordinary, and more than others, know nothing as they ought to know. And such who have gifts of real knowledge have them different one from another. Even of the things known there is not a like degree of knowledge, and particularly in spiritual things. Some are little children in understanding, some are young men and know more,

and some are fathers, and know most of all. An equality in knowledge belongs to another state, to the latter day glory, when the watchmen shall see eye to eye. And all shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest, and especially to the ultimate glory, when saints will know as they are known.

Job 15:10 "With us [are] both the grayheaded and very aged men, much elder than thy father."

"With us" seems to mean "of our party," or "on our side." Eliphaz claims that all the greybeards of the time, as well as all the ancient men of past times (compare Job 8:8, and below in verse 18), are on his side. And think as he does.

"Much elder than thy father": Men, i.e. not merely of the preceding, but of much more distant generations.

This is the first indication that Job was not an extremely elderly man, even though he had 10 children. It appeared that one of Job's friends was as old as Job's father. It probably would have been Eliphaz, because he always spoke first. Old age is not always what makes a person wise however. Wisdom is a gift from God. God gave great wisdom to Solomon, when he was very young.

Job 15:11 "[Are] the consolations of God small with thee? Is there any secret thing with thee?"

The "consolations of God" here refer probably to those considerations which had been suggested by Eliphaz and his friends, and which he takes to be the "consolations" which God had furnished for the afflicted. He asks whether they were regarded by Job as of little value. Whether he was not willing to take such consolations as God had provided, and to allow them to sustain him instead of permitting himself to speak against God?

"Is there any secret thing with thee?" any secret wisdom and knowledge which they were strangers to; or any secret way of conveying comfort to him they knew not of? Or any secret sin in him, any Achan in the camp (Joshua 7:11), that hindered him from receiving comfort, or put him upon slighting what was offered to him.

Eliphaz was still saying that he and the other two friends had offered a solution to Job. He should repent of his sins and seek the LORD with all his heart, and then perhaps God would stop the punishment against him.

Job 15:12 "Why doth thine heart carry thee away? and what do thy eyes wink at,"

Why do you suffer yourself to be transported by the pride of your heart, to use such unworthy and unbecoming expressions, both concerning us and concerning God and his providence?

"And what do thine eyes wink at?" Or, why do they wink? As though it was only thou who perceives it.

He said that Job was winking at the sins he committed. His heart had convinced him he was not guilty.

Job 15:13 "That thou turnest thy spirit against God, and lettest [such] words go out of thy mouth?"

Not against men, his friends only, but against God himself, being filled with wrath and indignation at him. Showing the enmity of his heart unto him, and committing hostilities upon him. Stretching out his hand, and strengthening himself against him. Running upon him, on the thick bosses of his buckler, as after expressed.

"And lettest such words go out of thy mouth?" As in (Job 9:22).

Eliphaz was saying that Job was rebellious toward God and was too proud to admit his sins. Of course, this was not true. Job had asked God to tell him what his sins were so that he could repent.

Verses 14-16: A strong statement with regard to the sinfulness of man (Rom. 3:23), that attacked Job's claim to righteousness. (Verse 15), refers to holy angels who fell and brought impurity into the heavens (Rev. 12:1-4). The truth is accurate, that all men are sinners, but irrelevant in Job's case, because his suffering was not due to any sin.

Job 15:14 "What [is] man, that he should be clean? and [he which is] born of a woman, that he should be righteous?"

Hebrew: Frail, or sick, or wretched man? His mean, original and corrupt nature; showed him to be unclean.

"Which is born of a woman": From whom he derives infirmity, corruption, and guilt, and the curse consequent upon it.

"That he should be righteous": To wit, in his own eyes, as thou O Job are.

This is the same message that those who are trying to live holy before their Lord get today. They are accused of trying to work their way to heaven. That is the furthest thing from the truth. Those who try to live as near holy lives as they can, are appreciative of the free gift of salvation God has given them. Their holy lives are trying to be like Him. This was the same thing with Job here. Eliphaz was saying it was impossible for man to live a righteous life. Job had done his best to do just that.

Verses 15-20: Retributive justice was not only Eliphaz's philosophy but that of all three friends. They did not see that while suffering is ultimately the result of original sin not all suffering is the result of a person's particular sin.

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

His holy ones": I.e. His angels (compare Job 5:1).

"The heavens": These are here the material heavens, not the celestial inhabitants (compare Job 25:5).

Exodus 24:10: "And they saw the God of Israel, and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the very heaven in its clearness" (see also Ezek. 1:22).

There is no one except God that is without spot or blemish in God's eye. It is by grace we are saved. The angels in heaven are not absolutely perfect either. We know that 1/3 of them left their first estate and followed Lucifer.

Job 15:16 "How much more abominable and filthy [is] man, which drinketh iniquity like water?"

If saints are not to be trusted, much less sinners. If the heavens are not pure; if heavenly beings, who maintained their allegiance to their Maker, are not free from imperfection, when compared with God, much less is man, who is degenerated, and has rebelled against him.

"Which drinketh iniquity like water": Who, besides his natural proneness to sin, has contracted habits of sinning; and sins as freely, as greedily, and delightfully, as men, especially in those hot countries, drink up water.

Eliphaz was saying that if even the heavens, and the angels in heaven were not clean, the earth and its inhabitants were filthy. They were filled with iniquity.

Verses 17-35: Eliphaz once again returned to the same perspective and indicted Job for sin because Job was suffering. To support his relentless point, he launched into a lengthy monologue about the wicked and their outcomes in life, including many parallels to the sufferings of Job. He had pain, and didn't know when his life would end (verse 20). He suffered from fear, every sound alarmed him, and he thought his destroyer was near (verses 21-22). He worried about having food (verse 23). His suffering made him question God (verses 24-26). Once well-nourished, housed and rich (verses 27-29), he would lose it all (verses 30-33). Eliphaz concluded by calling Job a hypocrite (verses 34-35), saying that this was the reason things were going so badly.

Eliphaz again appeals to his personal experience for authority: "That which I have seen." He then surveys the judgments that fall on the wicked, thus implying that Job is to be numbered among them.

Job 15:17 "I will shw thee, hear me; and that [which] I have seen I will declare;"

I will prove what I have affirmed, namely, that such strokes as thine are peculiar to hypocrites and wicked men.

"And that which I have seen I will declare": I will not speak from hearsay, but only from my own observation and experience.

Job 15:18 "Which wise men have told from their fathers, and have not hid [it]:"

Which they have received from their ancestors and communicated to others. Knowledge among the ancients was communicated chiefly by tradition from father to son. They had few or no written records, and hence, they embodied the results of their observation in brief, pious sayings, and transmitted them from one generation to another.

"And have not hid it": They have freely communicated the result of their observations to others.

These were the beginning verses of things that Eliphaz believed he had observed during his lifetime. He said that even the wise men of old and the fathers had warned their children of the punishment that came to those who sin. He was speaking this as an attack on Job. He said these things were not secret.

Job 15:19 "Unto whom alone the earth was given, and no stranger passed among them."

By the gracious gift of God: This he alleges to make their testimony more considerable, because these were no obscure men, but the most worthy and famous men in their ages. And to confute what Job had said (Job 9:24), that the earth was given into the hand of the wicked. By the earth he means the dominion and possession of it.

"No stranger passed among them": No person of a strange nation and disposition, or religion, passed through their land, so as to disturb or spoil them, as the Sabeans and Chaldeans did you. God watched over those holy men so that no enemy could invade them; and so he would have done over thee, if thou had been such a one. It seems evident, that Noah and his sons, Melchizedec, Abraham, and others of the patriarchs, who lived before Job, are here intended.

This helps to date Job as a very ancient writing. He was speaking of a time when there were very few men upon the earth. There were no wars. Each man was given his plot of ground by God.

Job 15:20 "The wicked man travaileth with pain all [his] days, and the number of years is hidden to the oppressor."

That is, lives a life of care, fear, and grief, by reason of God's wrath, the torments of his own mind, and his outward calamities.

"The number of his years is hidden": He knows not how short the time of his life is, and therefore lives in continual fear of losing it.

"To the oppressor": To the wicked man: he names this one sort of them, because he supposed Job to be guilty of this sin. And in opposition to what Job had affirmed of the safety of such persons (Job 12:6), and because such are apt to promise themselves a longer and happier life than other men.

Now he was beginning to list the terrible things that come to those who sin. He was most assuredly slanting this toward Job, who he believed to be a sinner. He was speaking as if all sinners suffer all the days of their lives, which is really not a correct statement. Many sinners are not punished on this earth.

Job 15:21 "A dreadful sound [is] in his ears: in prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him."

Even when he feels no evil, he is tormented with perpetual fears and expectations of it, from a consciousness of his own guilt, and a sense of God's all Seeing Eye and righteous judgment.

"In prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him": In the most peaceable and prosperous time, he is not in safety, nor does he think himself to be so. But he is always fearing someone or other will injure him as he has injured others. And that some enemy will invade and destroy him suddenly and unexpectedly. He knows both heaven and earth are incensed against him; and that he has done nothing to make his peace with either.

This was really saying that he was fearful at every sound, thinking harm might come to him.

Job 15:22 "He believeth not that he shall return out of darkness, and he is waited for of the sword."

"Darkness" is calamity, and the words mean that the wicked man anticipates a calamity which shall be final, and from which, when it befalls him, there shall be no escape.

"He is waited for of the sword": So he feels in regard to himself. He is marked out for the sword, i.e., the hostile sword or the avenging sword of God (Job 19:29; Isa. 31:8).

He was afraid of the dark, because he felt someone was lurking in the dark to kill him.

Job 15:23 "He wandereth abroad for bread, [saying], Where [is it]? he knoweth that the day of darkness is ready at his hand."

He anticipates the time when he shall be a hungry wanderer, roving in search of bread and crying:

“Where is it?” The picture of the rich oppressor tormented by visions of famine is very graphic.

"Ready at hand": Or, at his side; the dark day of calamity stands constantly beside him ready to envelop him in its shadows. Such is his own foreboding (“he knows”).

This was speaking of starvation coming to those who had sinned. The day of darkness, in this particular instance, was the day of death. He was threatening Job that he would starve to death.

Job 15:24 "Trouble and anguish shall make him afraid; they shall prevail against him, as a king ready to the battle."

When trouble comes, instead of trusting and hoping, and comforting himself in God, as good men do in such cases (1 Sam. 30:6), he is full of torment. Dreading the issue of it, and concluding it will end in his utter ruin, as he has great reason to do.

"They shall prevail against him": Though he would gladly shake off his fears, and uses many expedients to free himself from them, he is not able; they overpower him.

"As a king ready to the battle": With forces too strong to be resisted. He that would keep his peace must keep a good conscience.

Eliphaz was speaking specifically of the troubles of Job in this verse. He believed that Job's troubles were like the troubles a vicious king brought when he overthrew a country.

Job 15:25 "For he stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty."

He sinned against him with a high and outstretched hand; that is, boldly and presumptuously, as one that neither desired his favor, nor feared his anger. Thus, he gives the reason of the fore-mentioned calamities that befell him, which was his great wickedness in the time of his peace and prosperity.

"And strengthened himself against the Almighty": Putteth his forces in array, as if he would fight with him who is almighty, and therefore irresistible. This aggravates the madness of this weak and contemptible worm that he should dare to fight against the omnipotent God!

This was another accusation that Job had threatened God. He said that Job thought he was stronger than God. This was a terrible untruth.

Job 15:26 "He runneth upon him, [even] on [his] neck, upon the thick bosses of his bucklers:"

Rather, with his neck. It is not God who runs upon the wicked man, as our translators seem to have supposed, but the wicked man who rushes furiously against God. Like an infuriated bull, he makes his charge with his neck. I.e. with head lowered and neck stiffened, thinking to carry all before him.

"Upon the thick bosses of his bucklers": Rather, with the thick bosses of his shield. The metaphor of the bull is dropped, and God's enemy represented as charging him like a warrior. With the shield-arm outstretched, and the heavy bosses of the shield pressing him down.

Job 15:27 "Because he covereth his face with his fatness, and maketh collops of fat on [his] flanks."

This is mentioned as the reason of his insolent carriage toward God. Because he was fat, rich, potent, and successful, as that expression signifies (Deut. 32:15; Psalm 78:31; Jer. 46:21). His great prosperity made him proud and secure, and regardless of God and men.

"Maketh collops of fat on his flanks": His only care is to pamper and please himself, and satisfy his own lusts, and in defense and pursuance of them he contends with God.

This was a statement that Job had run against God like a charging warrior. He would have his head down running straight ahead. I personally believe that Eliphaz had gone too far. (In verse 27), he was even calling Job a glutton.

Job 15:28 "And he dwelleth in desolate cities, [and] in houses which no man inhabiteth, which are ready to become heaps."

Not only was he sensual and gluttonous, but he was covetous and greedy also. He dwelt in cities which his hand had desolated.

"In houses which no man inhabiteth": Since he had driven their owners from them.

"And which were ready to become heaps": I.e. were in a ruinous condition.

None of this had made this man anything. He lived in a ruined state. Again, Eliphaz was referring to Job's children's homes which were destroyed by the storm.

Job 15:29 "He shall not be rich, neither shall his substance continue, neither shall he prolong the perfection thereof upon the earth."

Meaning he shall not increase, or maintain, his riches.

"Neither shall his substance continue": His riches shall make themselves wings, and take their departure.

"Neither shall he prolong the perfection thereof upon the earth": Rather, neither shall their possessions be extended upon the earth.

Surely the riches of Job had been taken away, and that was what Eliphaz was stressing here. Eliphaz had been jealous of all of the blessings that God had bestowed upon Job. It seems he was a little thrilled that Job had lost it all now.

Job 15:30 "He shall not depart out of darkness; the flame shall dry up his branches, and by the breath of his mouth shall he go away."

His misery shall have no end.

"The flame": God's anger and judgment upon him.

"Shall dry up his branches": His wealth, and power, and glory, wherewith he was encompassed, as trees are with their branches.

"By the breath of his mouth": This expression intimates, with how much ease God subdues his enemies: his word, his blast, one act of his will, is sufficient.

"Shall he go away": Hebrew, go back. That is, run away from God faster than he ran upon him (Job 15:26). So, it is a continuation of the former metaphor of a conflict between two persons.

The branches were speaking of Job's children who had been destroyed. He was trying to say that the dark day that began with the loss of Job's children would continue.

Job 15:31 "Let not him that is deceived trust in vanity: for vanity shall be his recompense."

Rather, let him not trust in vanity (or in falsehood), deceiving himself. All the supports and stays of the wicked are vanity, unsubstantial, futile, utterly vain and useless. It is only a man who "deceives himself" that can trust in them.

"For vanity shall be his recompense": Such as those that do trust, gain nothing by it. They sow vanity and reap vanity.

He was saying that Job had deceived himself in thinking that he was in right standing with God. He believed that Job's pride was his downfall.

Job 15:32 "It shall be accomplished before his time, and his branch shall not be green."

"It [i.e. the recompense] shall be accomplished or, paid in full before its time (i.e. before payment is due)." A vague threat, probably intended to signify that death will come upon the wicked man prematurely, before he has lived out all the days of his natural life.

"And his branch shall not be green": I.e. he shall wither and fade, like a tree not planted by the waterside (Psalm 1:3).

Eliphaz was saying that death would come to Job before his natural time, because of his sins. He would be an old man long before his time from his disease.

Job 15:33 "He shall shake off his unripe grape as the vine, and shall cast off his flower as the olive."

Blight and untimely cold, cause the vine to drop its grapes before they are mature. So the wicked man will be deprived, one by one, of his possessions.

"And shall cast off his flower as the olive": The olive often sheds its blossoms in vast numbers.

Blight will cause a vine to do what is described here. Eliphaz was not speaking of a vine, but of Job. He was saying there was a blight in the character of Job.

Job 15:34 "For the congregation of hypocrites [shall be] desolate, and fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery."

Or, shall be sterile or barren like the vine and olive of the preceding verse. The entire company of the wicked shall suffer this punishment.

"And fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery": God's lightning shall fall from heaven, and burn up the tents (i.e. the habitations), of those who take bribes to pervert justice. It is suggested that Eliphaz intends to accuse Job of the two secret sins of hypocrisy and corruption.

He believed that Job had to be a hypocrite. Job had proclaimed his great faith in God. Eliphaz said he did not really love God and want to serve him, it was just a front. He was now accusing Job of taking bribes.

Job 15:35 "They conceive mischief, and bring forth vanity, and their belly prepareth deceit."

That is, such wicked persons as before described. They meditate sin in their minds, and contrive how to commit it, and form schemes within themselves to do mischief to others.

"And bring forth vanity": Or sin. For lust when it is conceived bringeth forth sin, and that is vanity, an empty thing. And neither yields profit nor pleasure in the issue, but that which is useless and unserviceable. Yea, harmful and ruinous; for sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death, even death eternal (James 1:14).

"And their belly prepareth deceit": Their inward part frames and devises that which is designed to deceive others, and in the end, proves deceitful to themselves.

Eliphaz had a very low opinion of Job. He had decided that Job's heart was evil. That all of his iniquity was conceived in his evil heart. He would have a lot of regrets when he found out the truth about Job.

Job Chapter 15 Questions

1. Should a wise man utter vain _____?

2. What was Eliphaz criticizing Job for?
3. He thought that God regarded it no more than He would the _____ of the wind.
4. Eliphaz was saying that Job's talk was _____.
5. What had he forgotten, when he made his statement against Job in verse 4?
6. Where did Eliphaz believe the evil words in Job's mouth were coming from?
7. What did he say condemned Job?
8. What silly question did he ask Job in verse 7?
9. Hast thou heard the _____ of God?
10. What was one of the most cutting things he said to Job?
11. What was the first indication that Job was not an elderly man?
12. How many children did Job have?
13. Who was, probably, the oldest of Job's friends?
14. What was the solution Job's friends had offered?
15. Eliphaz said that Job was rebellious toward God and too _____ to admit his sins.
16. What, or who, are without spot or blemish?
17. How many of the angels followed Lucifer?
18. Which verse helps to date Job as a very early writing?
19. Why is the sinner afraid of the dark?
20. Verse 25 was an accusation that Job had _____ God.
21. What was Eliphaz referring to in verse 28?
22. Verse 29 speaks of Job losing his _____.
23. Eliphaz said that Job had deceived himself, how?
24. In verse 32, he was saying that Job will not grow _____.
25. What did he call Job in verse 34?
26. What would happen to Eliphaz at the end?