

### The Second Speech of Eliphaz to Job

#### Job 15

**Job 15:1-6** - *“Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said: <sup>2</sup>“Should a wise man answer with empty knowledge, and fill himself with the east wind? <sup>3</sup>Should he reason with unprofitable talk, or by speeches with which he can do no good? <sup>4</sup>Yes, you cast off fear, and restrain prayer before God. <sup>5</sup>For your iniquity teaches your mouth, and you choose the tongue of the crafty. <sup>6</sup>Your own mouth condemns you, and not I. Yes, your own lips testify against you.”*

#### Background Notes

Remember the simple outline of Job that we’re using:

Job 1-2 - Disasters of Job

Job 3–41 - Dialogues with Job

Job 42 - Deliverance for Job

We’ve completed the first round of dialogues between Job and his three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. In Job 15 we begin the second round. It continues through Job 21. In this second cycle, Job’s would-be counselors don’t change their basic argument. They still maintain that all personal suffering is the result of personal sin. Job is suffering; therefore he must be hiding some personal secret sin.

The only difference between the first two rounds of dialogues is that Job’s three friends show less courtesy and less respect for Job in the second round. They show no mercy in their judgment of Job. In fact, we can even sense hostility in their conversations! Meanwhile, Job stubbornly maintains his position: “I am blameless! I’m **not** suffering because of personal sin!” Job doesn’t know why God is allowing him to suffer, but he maintains that it’s not because he’s hiding secret sin.

#### Doctrinal / Teaching Points

##### 1. In his second speech, to shame Job, Eliphaz fires questions at Job.

Eliphaz directs a series of rapid-fire questions at Job in verses 1-16. He wants to challenge Job - and ridicule him, and shame him. First Eliphaz likens Job’s words to hot air, like the sirocco – the hot east wind from the desert (v2-3). “Job, your words are hot and blustery, like the sirocco. Your words carry no weight, and they aren’t profitable,” says Eliphaz.

Eliphaz then goes on to accuse Job of irreverence and crafty speech (v4-6). “No judge is needed. Your lips condemn you.”

**Job 15:7-16** - *“Are you the first man who was born? Or were you made before the hills? <sup>8</sup> Have you heard the counsel of God? Do you limit wisdom to yourself? <sup>9</sup> What do you know that we do not know? What do you understand that is not in us? <sup>10</sup> Both the gray-haired and the aged are among us, much older than your father. Are the consolations of God too small for you, and the word spoken gently with you? <sup>12</sup> Why does your heart carry you away, and what do your eyes wink at, <sup>13</sup> that you turn your spirit against God, and let such words go out of your mouth?*

*“What is man, that he could be pure? and he who is born of a woman, that he could be righteous? <sup>15</sup> If God puts no trust in His saints, and the heavens are not pure in His sight, <sup>16</sup> how much less man, who is abominable and filthy, who drinks iniquity like water!”*

In verses 7-10 Eliphaz’s questions continue, accusing Job of arrogance and ignorance! Eliphaz claims that he and the others were wiser than Job because they’re older (v10).

Verses 11-13 contain more of Eliphaz’s accusing questions of Job. Eliphaz wrongly claims that Job is turning against God because he’s rejecting the gentle counsel of his friends. But - their counsel wasn’t gentle! And their counsel wasn’t from God!

In verses 14-16 Eliphaz questions Job’s claim of innocence. How could Job, a fallen human being, make such a claim - when even heavenly angels have sinned? So in his second speech, to shame Job, Eliphaz fires questions at Job.

## **2. In his second speech, to scare Job, Eliphaz reminds him of the fate of the wicked.**

Once again Eliphaz claims his own observations are his authority, as he did in his previous speech. And now he also claims the wisdom of the ages.

**Job 15:17-19** - *“I will tell you, hear me; what I have seen I will declare, <sup>18</sup> what wise men have told, not hiding anything received from their fathers, <sup>19</sup> to whom alone the land was given, and no alien passed among them...”*

In verse 19, Eliphaz means that the wisdom of their ancestors went back before any alien philosophies got mixed in. And Eliphaz implies that Job has probably swallowed alien philosophies!

In verses 20-24 Eliphaz enumerates the terrible troubles and judgments that come upon the sinner. And he continues to insist that Job is suffering because of his sin.

- The wicked suffer pain and die prematurely: *“The wicked man writhes with pain all his days, and the number of years is hidden from the oppressor” (v20).*

- The wicked can never rest in peace. *"Dreadful sounds are in his ears; in prosperity the destroyer comes upon him"* (v21).
- The wicked are haunted by darkness and the threat of violence. *"He does not believe that he will return from darkness, for a sword is waiting for him"* (v22).
- The wicked are anxious about their basic needs. *"He wanders about for bread, saying, 'Where is it?'"* (v23).
- The wicked are terrified by what's out there and awaits them. *"Trouble and anguish make him afraid. They overpower him, like a king ready for battle"* (v24).

**Job 15:25-28** - *"For they shake their fists at God, defying the Almighty. <sup>26</sup> Holding their strong shields, they defiantly charge against him. <sup>27</sup> "These wicked people are heavy and prosperous; their waists bulge with fat. <sup>28</sup> But their cities will be ruined. They will live in abandoned houses that are ready to tumble down"* (NLV).

In verses 25-28 Eliphaz gives two reasons for judgments upon the wicked: **rebellion** and **self-indulgence**.

In **Job 15:29-35** Eliphaz lists seven more judgments of the wicked to scare Job into confessing his (supposed) life of personal sin.

- The wicked do not prosper. *"He will not be rich, nor will his wealth continue, nor will his possessions overspread the earth"* (v29).
- The wicked die prematurely. *"He will not depart from darkness, the flame will dry out his branches, and by the breath of his mouth, he will go away"* (v30).
- The wicked are never satisfied or fulfilled. *"Let him not trust in futile things, deceiving himself, for futility will be his reward"* (v31).
- The wicked never fully flourish. *"It will be accomplished before his time, and his branch will not be green"* (v32).
- The wicked experience loss. *"He will shake off his unripe grape like a vine, and cast off his blossom like an olive tree"* (v33).
- The wicked experience barrenness. *"For the company of hypocrites will be barren, and fire will consume the tents of bribery"* (v34).
- The wicked only produce more wickedness. Verse 35: *"They conceive trouble and bring forth futility; their womb prepares deceit"* (v35).

With this list of troubles and judgments that befall the wicked, Eliphaz hopes to scare Job into confessing his supposed hidden sins, and then get right with God.

Eliphaz is certainly correct in all he says about the wicked (as the rest of Scripture indicates), but he is wrong in putting Job into the category of the wicked! Job is not suffering because he is a wicked person, as Eliphaz implies, but Eliphaz reminds Job of the fate of the wicked in order to scare him.

## Practical Application

### Don't trust the speech of Eliphaz for the truth about angels!

Back in his first speech, Eliphaz made a statement about angels. Job 4:18-19: *"If God places no trust in his servants, if he charges his angels with error, how much more those who live in houses of clay, whose foundations are in the dust, who are crushed more readily than a moth."*

And here Eliphaz makes a similar statement about angels. From the Hebrew parallel structure, *"holy ones"* seems to be a reference to angels. *"If God puts no trust in His holy ones, and the heavens are not pure in His sight, how much less man, who is abominable and filthy, who drinks iniquity like water!"* (v15-16).

So what is Eliphaz trying to say about angels? It sounds like he believes that the holy angels can sin today, just as people sin. "But wait!" you say. "Does the Bible teach that about the holy angels?" No, it doesn't!

Then how do we harmonize what Eliphaz seems to be saying with the rest of Scripture? Simple answer: We can't harmonize it, because Eliphaz is **not right** in everything he says! We've already seen that Eliphaz and the others friends were not right in what they said about Job's suffering - and they're weren't necessarily right in other things they said as well.

All these dialogues are recorded by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, of course, so what Eliphaz said about angels is **a true record of what he said** - but **what he said is not necessarily true!** Some things he said were true, and some were not!

To learn what the Bible teaches about angels, don't depend on the faulty theology of Job's three counselors. Go to other Scriptures. Look at the first two chapters of Job, or Hebrews 1, where the inspired writers are teaching the truth about angels. Don't trust the speeches of Eliphaz for the truth about angels!