

....They Die Even Without Wisdom ~

Job 4:1 – 5:7

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~ This leg of our Spiritual Safari brings us the beginning of a discourse that becomes a true contest of wit and wisdom. Jobs “*friends*,” who have gathered in condescension and self-righteousness under the guise of compassion, are now going to reveal their hearts and make an unholy attack on Job — or, should I say? — A “*holier than thou*” attack on him; and Job is certainly going to respond in kind. We could write over this report “*INTELLECTUAL ATHLETICS*.” This type of dialogue was popular in the day in which we are studying. In today’s lost and dying world, man’s mental acumen literally prohibits it.

We typically correlate athletics to games, such as soccer, football, or basketball, a wrestling match – something like that – where physical ability is the only demonstration. However, in the day in which we are studying, people gathered for intellectual athletics. Later, we will see one strong observer, Elihu, stand up and give the final word in this verbal exchange. Of course, this is way back when men weren’t civilized, that the emphasis was placed on the intellectual; today we’ve advanced so far forward that our hero’s are steroid induced, illiterate children who can barely spell their names or form a complete sentence – but I digress.

So, Job has broken forth with his sad and bitter complaint articulated in black pessimism. Satan has stripped him of everything he ever had; there’s nothing left for Job to lean on in this world — and no place he can turn to for comfort. Even God Himself seems very far removed from Job at this point. That’s when old man Eliphaz stands up, and he just can’t resist saying something hurtful. In our last report, we learned about each of these men and the meaning of their names. If you haven’t read our previous report, I highly suggest you go back and do so now.

The name of our first speaker, Eliphaz, means “*God is strength*.” This man is, actually, the voice of experience. He is a remarkable man in many ways; and he claims to have had some deep and mysteriously secret dreams and

visions in the night; enlightenment that he sincerely believes no one else could possibly have ever had revealed to them — and that he possesses an understanding of things others have not been shown. The key to his statement is found in verse eight of chapter four when he says, “...even as I have seen....” Everything he has to say rests upon that self-righteous and pious assertion. Therefore, we can dismiss all of his testimony wholesale. Some of it is correct, but none of it is applicable to Job in this case....

IV

¹ Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,

² If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? but who can withhold himself from speaking?

³ Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands.

⁴ Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees.

⁵ But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.

⁶ Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?

⁷ Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?

~ So, Eliphaz began in a diplomatic-sounding sort of way, but he really has his tongue in his cheek; and he is couching his criticism in feigned concern and false politeness. We see that happen all the time in religious circles today. Eliphaz asked Job if he could say something in verse one, but he was going to say it anyways. Eliphaz reminds Job that, in Job’s days of prosperity and plenty and good health, Job was a tower of strength to many people. He recounts how Job spoke to men and advised them what to do and how

to do it; but now, Eliphaz questions Job about the advice Job gave those others — because it doesn't seem to be good enough for Job now. Eliphaz is saying Job doesn't really believe his own advice and encouragement. So, Eliphaz thereby effectively calls Job a hypocrite without saying it.

Many of us have Eliphaz's problem, to be sure. It's easy for you and me to tell others what to do and how to do it in their time of trouble. The psychiatrist and psychologist are highly skilled at instructing others. I know it seems like I am constantly criticizing the psychiatric profession — because I am — but I have known a few psychiatrists and, trust me, most of them need to see a psychologist. When they meet in their conferences, they look at each other and say, ".... *you're fine! How am I?*" They are constantly analyzing other people and their problems. It enables them to forget their own. According to Eliphaz, Job was an expert at this. Everything Eliphaz is saying is stark projection.

So, Eliphaz asks Job why Job's own advice isn't good enough for Job. The cold and indifferent insinuation in verse seven is *NOTHING*, though, when compared to what the other two friends, Bildad and Zophar, who are both particularly crude and uncaring, will assert later. I have heard verse seven quoted *MANY* times; and it might be true and accurate, but it is simply not applicable to nor is it true about Job. Eliphaz makes a false accusation that there must have been something radically and secretly wrong in Job's life — or this wouldn't have happened. Well, God has already told us that none of what Eliphaz is saying about Job is true. God said Job was perfect, upright, and sinned not with his lips. We learned that way back in the beginning of this book. Eliphaz was not aware of that truth.

See, these men are completely incapable of comforting their friend because they do not understand God, and they do not understand Job and, in fact, they don't even understand themselves. And that is the reason why so many people who attempt to speak about spiritual matters bungle them shamefully. Very few are qualified to deal with spiritual matters. So many people want to '*mentor*' and '*council*' and '*lead*' other people — when their own lives are in complete disarray. Outside of a technical theological matter, or a physical problem that needs comfort, I believe every one of our problems can be settled directly with God *IF – IF – IF* we will actually

take the time and make the effort to study the Word of God properly, correctly and completely.

Those who are not willing to study the Bible in an educated, systematic manner will discover all mentoring and counseling futile. See, we have an Intercessor in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a third party will only bungle matters — they can never help — because that would be impossible. In fact, if a man will not go directly to Christ with his problems, then a minister or shrink will compound said problems. Quite frankly, if it is a physical problem, then they'll need to seek Christ in the doctor's office, too. I just happen to know from experience that God does hear and answer prayer relative to our physical condition *and* relative to our spiritual state. You can just write that down ~

⁸ Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.

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

¹⁰ The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions, are broken.

¹¹ The old lion perisheth for lack of prey, and the stout lion's whelps are scattered abroad.

~ Old man Eliphaz speaks condescendingly from a high pulpit of self-righteousness. Eliphaz is just playing dirty and nasty as he demands — again — for Job to confess his secret sins and be forthcoming. Well, God never destroys His Own children as Eliphaz erroneously says He does in verses eight through eleven — and Job has no sin to confess. God disciplines and chastises those He loves — but He never cuts us off completely. That makes Eliphaz desperately wrong. It's easy for us to be equally wrong when we give advice to others, too. In fact, *MOST* people who are advising others about what to do and how to do it should really just shut their mouths. Of course, they won't — just as Eliphaz is not able to allow his silence to be his

wisdom, either — but they should. The world would be a better place if they did....

12 Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof.

13 In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men,

14 Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.

15 Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up:

16 It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying,

~ I suppose Eliphaz was attempting to enthrall those listening as he tells about his mysterious, private, secret-dreamy revelation. Eliphaz thinks he has seen and knows things no one else has ever contemplated before. I'm sure the other two friends drew closer and cupped their ears so they wouldn't miss anything. Eliphaz must have honestly believed this was blood-curdling inside information; and that he was scaring them to death. This alleged vision took place at night — in the dark — spooky! I'm also sure Job was bored to tears with this ridiculous ghost story — which was likely all just made up anyways; but, Bildad and Zophar must have been saying, "... tell us more, Eliphaz!" Of course, Eliphaz isn't even close to finished talking....

17 Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker?

~ I'm not sure about you dear readers, but, to me, the climax to Eliphaz's story in verse seventeen is a deeply disappointing letdown. I would think a vision in the night would reveal profound wisdom; but, this isn't radical — it isn't even new information. Those who embellish while self-aggrandizing always build it up a bit too much; and subsequently conclude with very

little, if anything. That's Eliphaz's character in a nutshell. I'm sure Job shook his head in disdain when Eliphaz said all of this.

Eliphaz's mountain has now travailed and conceived, but it brought forth absolutely no life! Eliphaz's self-perceived truth turns out to be merely common knowledge. It isn't worthwhile, nor worthy of thoughtful consideration. Of course, mortal man isn't more just than God. Of course, a man isn't more pure than God. Even the most ignorant Christians know these things. It certainly didn't take a terrifying dream to reveal a trite and self-evident precept. Unfortunately, there are a whole lot of these same types of a "voice of experience" running around today....

18 Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly:

19 How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth?

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

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

V

1 Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?

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

3 I have seen the foolish taking root: but suddenly I cursed his habitation.

4 His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them.

⁵ Whose harvest the hungry eateth up, and taketh it even out of the thorns, and the robber swalloweth up their substance.

⁶ Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground;

~ Alright, I've had enough of Eliphaz's unhelpfulness towards Job for one report. We're going to leave his story at that. In fairness, Eliphaz did, however, manage to accidentally spew out a few words of wisdom when he said that these bodies we live in are houses of clay; there's no better description of our flesh than that. Paul called these bodies we live in "tents." That's also highly accurate; because we're just frail, feeble – and the wind could blow us away — or we could simply fold at any moment, put the flesh in a box on a shelf and — that's it — the end.

So, Eliphaz conveyed a few wonderful truths; but *NONE* of them were helpful or applicable to Job at this time That's critically important to see. Many of us speak truth today that is not relevant or pertinent; typically, it isn't even geared-in to our lives. Actually, *most* of what *most* of us say is literally irrelevant. What we need is truth that meets a need! I enjoy reading the Book of Job, but I always want to tell Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar that they have gone down a wrong road very fast with Job. That's when I recognize how similar I am to Eliphaz; and it's frightening. Each one of them is driving ninety miles per hour down a dead-end road. This book is to warn us to change courses and repent. Well, we're going to have to listen to each one of them on this expedition through the entire Word of God. It will be painful...

⁷ Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.

~ So, our Spiritual Safari ends this leg of our expedition with the first correct advice Eliphaz gives to Job in verse seven. Man is born unto trouble, friends. Have you ever felt that you were getting the wrong advice from a well-intentioned and well-meaning friend? Well, the Word of God is the only true source of wisdom, guidance, and comfort. In the power of the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures can be opened to you; but you're going to have to take the time to read them — and make a concerted effort to study

them in an educated, systematic, daily and sincere manner – and then meditate on them. That’s the entire purpose for this so-called safari – to get *you* to do just that; study to show yourself approved — and to learn the Bible in sound doctrine as God wants you to. In our next report, we’re going to examine verse seven of chapter five of Job very carefully — and extensively. I hope you can continue with us as we consider the entire Word of God ~

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