***Job: A Study in Suffering…And Faith***

**Answers to Study Questions**

**Unit Two, Lesson Three: Eliphaz’s First Speech and Job’s Reply**

**Text: Job 4:1 - 7:21**

Lesson Objectives:

1. Be able to summarize the arguments of Eliphaz and Job’s reply.

2. Be able to characterize Job’s comments to God (chapter 7).

Eliphaz was from Teman, probably in the area of Edom (see lesson one for possible locations of the “land of Uz”). See Genesis 36:10-11, 19-21, 28; Jeremiah 49:7, 20; Amos 1:11-12; Obadiah 9.

1. **Of what did Eliphaz remind Job in 4:3-6?**

He reminded Job that in the past he (Job) had spoken words of encouragement to others who were suffering. He observed that Job didn’t seem to be handling the whole matter too well (4:5).

**Job 4:5 (ESV)**

**5** But now it has come to you, and you are impatient; it touches you, and you are dismayed.

Eliphaz suggested that Job’s past “fear of God” and “the integrity of his ways” should help him undergo his trials in the present. There is some question, in my mind, at least, about whether Eliphaz was being sympathetic or sarcastic. What do you think?

**Job 4:6 (ESV)**

**6** Is not your fear of God your confidence, and the integrity of your ways your hope?

1. **Did Eliphaz believe that a person could suffer and be innocent of sin?**

Evidently not. He began by affirming that the righteous never suffer (4:7) and then argued that the wicked “reap” trouble. Note the following comments:

**Job 4:7–8 (ESV)**

**7** “Remember: who that was innocent ever perished? Or where were the upright cut off? **8** As I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same.

**Job 5:2–5 (ESV)**

**2** Surely vexation kills the fool, and jealousy slays the simple. **3** I have seen the fool taking root, but suddenly I cursed his dwelling. **4** His children are far from safety; they are crushed in the gate, and there is no one to deliver them. **5** The hungry eat his harvest, and he takes it even out of thorns, and the thirsty pant after his wealth.

1. **What did Eliphaz hope to suggest by the relating of his vision?**

**Job 4:17 (ESV)**

**17** ‘Can mortal man be in the right before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker?

There are at least a couple of possibilities for the meaning of 4:17:

1) He may be saying that man should not question the justice of God. This interpretation is supported by the translations of the KJV and the NKJV.

**Job 4:17 (NKJV)**

**17** ‘Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can a man be more pure than his Maker?

2) He may be saying that suffering is inevitable because it is inevitable that men sin. This interpretation is supported by the ESV and the LXX.

**Job 4:17 (ESV)**

**17** ‘Can mortal man be in the right before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker?

The second interpretation seems to fit the greater to the lesser argument in verses 18-21 better.

**Job 4:18–19 (ESV)**

**18** Even in his servants he puts no trust, and his angels he charges with error; **19** how much more those who dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, who are crushed like the moth.

Note also 15:14-16 (Eliphaz speaking there also) and 25:4-6 (Bildad speaking). Both of these passages are similar in form and seem to allow only the second meaning.

**Job 15:14–16 (ESV)** [Eliphaz]

**14** What is man, that he can be pure? Or he who is born of a woman, that he can be righteous? **15** Behold, God puts no trust in his holy ones, and the heavens are not pure in his sight; **16** how much less one who is abominable and corrupt, a man who drinks injustice like water!

**Job 25:4–6 (ESV)** [Bildad]

**4** How then can man be in the right before God? How can he who is born of woman be pure? **5** Behold, even the moon is not bright, and the stars are not pure in his eyes; **6** how much less man, who is a maggot, and the son of man, who is a worm!”

1. **Explain the meaning of 5:6-7.**

**Job 5:6–7 (ESV)**

**6** For affliction does not come from the dust, nor does trouble sprout from the ground, **7** but man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward.

It seems that Eliphaz may have made the comments in verses 2-5 with Job in mind. If so, it is a fairly bold statement (see 8:4, where Bildad becomes even more bold).

**Job 5:2–5 (ESV)**

**2** Surely vexation kills the fool, and jealousy slays the simple. **3** I have seen the fool taking root, but suddenly I cursed his dwelling. **4** His children are far from safety; they are crushed in the gate, and there is no one to deliver them. **5** The hungry eat his harvest, and he takes it even out of thorns, and the thirsty pant after his wealth.

**Job 8:4 (ESV)** [Bildad]

**4** If your children have sinned against him, he has delivered them into the hand of their transgression.

Verse 6 appears to be an explanatory comment, i.e., man is responsible for his own suffering--Job is no exception. Verse 7 seems to be comparing the natural rise of sparks in the air with man’s propensity to experience trouble.

Summary: according to Eliphaz, suffering is not a matter of chance or experienced indiscriminately.

1. **Are there any true statements in Eliphaz’s speech? Any weaknesses? Give evidence for your answer.**

Certainly there is some truth in Eliphaz’s speech.

1) 4:6 suggests the truth that one’s integrity can be a source of comfort/hope even in the fact of suffering.

**Job 4:6 (ESV)**

**6** Is not your fear of God your confidence, and the integrity of your ways your hope?

2) 4:8 suggests the truth that iniquity will bring temporal suffering (see Proverbs 13:15). He suggests that God “will not cast away the blameless, nor will He uphold the evildoers” (8:20 – these are the words of Bildad, but express concisely the thinking of Eliphaz). Note the blessings of God upon Abraham because of his righteousness. This is generally the case.

**Job 4:8 (ESV)**

**8** As I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same.

3) Of course, Eliphaz’s comments about the value of God’s chastening are certainly true. The question that remains: is he justified in applying such a principle to Job's life??

**Job 5:17 (ESV)**

**17** “Behold, blessed is the one whom God reproves; therefore despise not the discipline of the Almighty.

The weakness of Eliphaz’s speech is that his explanation for the cause of suffering is not the only explanation (4:7). He fails to note that the innocent can suffer also. As noted in the previous question, he seems to be saying in 5:6-7 that suffering is always connected to sin.

**Job 5:6–7 (ESV)**

**6** For affliction does not come from the dust, nor does trouble sprout from the ground, **7** but man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward.

1. **With what did Job compare the comfort of his friends?**

He compares them to a dried up wadi (6:14-20). Expecting comfort, he receives criticism and condemnation. Just like the weary traveler expecting water from the wadi, he comes to the place and finds nothing--the wadi has dried up!

**Job 6:15–20 (ESV)**

**15** My brothers are treacherous as a torrent-bed, as torrential streams that pass away, **16** which are dark with ice, and where the snow hides itself. **17** When they melt, they disappear; when it is hot, they vanish from their place. **18** The caravans turn aside from their course; they go up into the waste and perish. **19** The caravans of Tema look, the travelers of Sheba hope. **20** They are ashamed because they were confident; they come there and are disappointed.

1. **With what challenge did Job present his friends?**

He challenged the friends to show his sin, the iniquity which is responsible for his suffering (6:24-30). Compare verses 28-30 in the ESV and the NKJV.

**Job 6:28–30 (ESV)**

**28** “But now, be pleased to look at me, for I will not lie to your face. **29** Please turn; let no injustice be done. Turn now; my vindication is at stake. **30** Is there any injustice on my tongue? Cannot my palate discern the cause of calamity?

**Job 6:28–30 (NKJV)**

**28** Now therefore, be pleased to look at me; For I would never lie to your face. **29** Yield now, let there be no injustice! Yes, concede, my righteousness still stands! **30** Is there injustice on my tongue? Cannot my taste discern the unsavory?

Such a challenge is the natural response to the argument of Eliphaz who has all but specifically condemned Job (4:7-8). The other two friends will make the same argument as the dialogue continues.

**Job 4:7–8 (ESV)**

**7** “Remember: who that was innocent ever perished? Or where were the upright cut off? 8 As I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same.

1. **Compare Psalm 8:3-8 with Job 7:17-19. What do you see?**

Both emphasize the smallness of man. Both ask why God would want to “bother” with man or notice him. The passage in Job, however, speaks of God visiting man with suffering while the passage in Psalm 8 notes how God has blessed man. An interesting contrast, to say the least!

**Psalm 8:3–8 (ESV)**

**3** When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, **4** what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? **5** Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. **6** You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, **7** all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, **8** the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

**Job 7:17–19 (ESV)**

**17** What is man, that you make so much of him, and that you set your heart on him, **18** visit him every morning and test him every moment? **19** How long will you not look away from me, nor leave me alone till I swallow my spit?

**Application:**