

KEY

Archer = A Survey of Old Testament Introduction (Gleason Archer). Chicago: Moody Press, 2007.

Ash = Job: The Wisdom of the Cross (Christopher Ash). Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014.

BBC = The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament. Edited by John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews and Mark W. Chavalas. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

Bush = Bush, Frederick. Ruth/Esther in the Word Biblical Commentary, Vol 9. Edited by David H. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker. Dallas: Word Books, 1996.

Frame = John Frame, Systematic Theology, P&R Publishing, 2013.

Grudem = Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, Zondervan, 1994.

Harrison = Introduction to the Old Testament (R.K. Harrison). Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969.

K&D = Keil, C.F. and Delitzsch, F. in the Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, Vol 2. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989.

Swindoll = A Man of Heroic Endurance: Job (Charles Swindoll). Nashville, TN. W Publishing Group, 2004.

Talbert = *Beyond Suffering: Discovering the Message of Job* (Layton Talbert). Bob Jones University Press, 2007.

TWOT = The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (R. Laird Harris; Gleason L. Archer, Jr.; Bruce Waltke). Chicago: Moody Press, 1980. Two Volumes.

Walton = Old Testament Today. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004.

Basic English Diagram / Structure

I. Indictment Against Job (1–13)

A. Job's words are empty (1-3)

1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite responded,

2 "Should a wise man answer with windy knowledge And fill himself with the east wind?

3 "Should he argue with useless talk, Or with words which are not profitable?

B. Job's worship is empty (4-6)

4 "Indeed, you do away with reverence And hinder meditation before God.

5 "For your guilt teaches your mouth, And you choose the language of the crafty.

6 "Your own mouth condemns you, and not I;

And your own lips testify against you.

C. Job's wisdom is empty (7-10)

7 "Were you the first man to be born, Or were you brought forth before the hills?

8 "Do you hear the secret counsel of God, And limit wisdom to yourself?

9 "What do you know that we do not know? What do you understand that we do not?

10 "Both the gray-haired and the aged are among us, Older than your father.

D. Job's Way is Empty (11-12)

11 "Are the consolations of God too small for you,

Even the word spoken gently with you?

12 "Why does your heart carry you away? And why do your eyes flash, 13 That you should turn your spirit against God And allow such words to go out of your mouth?

II. Indictment Against Humanity (14-16)

14 "What is man, that he should be pure, Or he who is born of a woman, that he should be

righteous? 15 "Behold, He puts no trust in His holy ones, And the heavens are not pure in His

sight; 16 How much less one who is detestable and corrupt, Man, who drinks iniquity like water!

III. Instruction from History (17–35)

A. The Wicked Get What They Deserve (20–35)

1. Past Opinion (17–19)

17 "I will tell you, listen to me; And what I have seen I will also declare;

18 What wise men have told, And have not concealed from their fathers,
19 To whom alone the land was given, And no alien passed among them.

2. Present Woes (20–26)

20 “The wicked man writhes in pain all his days, And numbered are the years stored up for the ruthless.

21 “Sounds of terror are in his ears; While at peace the destroyer comes upon him.

22 “He does not believe that he will return from darkness, And he is destined for the sword.

23 “He wanders about for food, saying, ‘Where is it?’ He knows that a day of darkness is at hand.

24 “Distress and anguish terrify him, They overpower him like a king ready for the attack,

25 Because he has stretched out his hand against God And conducts himself arrogantly against the Almighty.

26 “He rushes headlong at Him With his massive shield.

3. Future Grief (27–35)

27 “For he has covered his face with his fat And made his thighs heavy with flesh.

28 “He has lived in desolate cities, In houses no one would inhabit, Which are destined to become ruins.

29 “He will not become rich, nor will his wealth endure; And his grain will not bend down to the ground.

30 “He will not escape from darkness; The flame will wither his shoots, And by the breath of His mouth he will go away.

31 “Let him not trust in emptiness, deceiving himself; For emptiness will be his reward.

32 “It will be accomplished before his time, And his palm branch will not be green.

33 “He will drop off his unripe grape like the vine, And will cast off his flower like the olive tree.

34 “For the company of the godless is barren, And fire consumes the tents of the corrupt.

35 “They conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity, And their mind prepares deception.”

TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

ENGLISH TRANSLATION (NASB95):

15:1-35 1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite responded, 2 “Should a wise man answer with windy knowledge And fill himself with the east wind? 3 “Should he argue with useless talk, Or with words which are not profitable? 4 “Indeed, you do away with reverence And hinder meditation before God. 5 “For your guilt teaches your mouth, And you choose the language of the crafty. 6 “Your own mouth condemns you, and not I; And your own lips testify against you.

7 “Were you the first man to be born, Or were you brought forth before the hills? 8 “Do you hear the secret counsel of God, And limit wisdom to yourself? 9 “What do you know that we do not know? What do you understand that we do not?

10 “Both the gray-haired and the aged are among us, Older than your father. 11 “Are the consolations of God too small for you, Even the word spoken gently with you? 12 “Why does your heart carry you away? And why do your eyes flash, 13 That you should turn your spirit against God And allow such words to go out of your mouth? 14 “What is man, that he should be pure, Or he who is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? 15 “Behold, He puts no trust in His holy ones, And the heavens are not pure in His sight; 16 How much less one who is detestable and corrupt, Man, who drinks iniquity like water!

17 “I will tell you, listen to me; And what I have seen I will also declare; 18 What wise men have told, And have not concealed from their fathers, 19 To whom alone the land was given, And no alien passed among them. 20 “The wicked man writhes in pain all his days, And numbered are the years stored up for the ruthless. 21 “Sounds of terror are in his ears; While at peace the destroyer comes upon him. 22 “He does not believe that he will return from darkness, And he is destined for the sword. 23 “He wanders about for food, saying, ‘Where is it?’ He knows that a day of darkness is at hand. 24 “Distress and anguish terrify him, They overpower him like a king ready for the attack, 25 Because he has stretched out his hand against God And conducts himself arrogantly against the Almighty. 26 “He rushes headlong at Him With his massive shield. 27 “For he has covered his face with his fat And made his thighs heavy with flesh. 28 “He has lived in desolate cities, In houses no one would inhabit, Which are destined to become ruins. 29 “He will not become rich, nor will his wealth endure; And his grain will not bend down to the ground. 30 “He will not escape from darkness; The flame will wither his shoots, And by the breath of His mouth he will go away. 31 “Let him not trust in emptiness, deceiving himself; For emptiness will be his reward. 32 “It will be accomplished before his time, And his palm branch will not be green. 33 “He will drop off his unripe grape like the vine, And will cast off his flower like the olive tree. 34 “For the company of the godless is barren, And fire consumes the tents of the corrupt. 35 “They conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity, And their mind prepares deception.”

PASSAGE OUTLINE:

Bible Knowledge Commentary

- I. ELIPHAZ'S SECOND SPEECH (CHAP. 15)
 - A. A reprimand of Job's perverse attitude (15:1–16)
 - B. A reminder of the fate of the wicked (15:17–35)

UBS Handbook Series

- I. Eliphaz Rebukes Job for His Claims of Innocence Job 15:1–16
- II. The Fate of the Wicked Job 15:17–35

The Outline Bible

- I. Eliphaz's Denunciations (15:1-35): Eliphaz Begins a Second Round of Rebukes from Job's Friends
 - A. Nothing But a Windbag (15:1-16)
 - 1. Eliphaz tells Job that he is acting like a wise man, but really he is foolish
 - B. Sinful People Suffer (15:17-35)
 - 1. Eliphaz again assumes that Job is suffering because of sin in his life, so he tells how the wicked suffer many troubles

Biblical Studies: Job (Sam Storms)

- I. Eliphaz's Second Speech (Job 15)
 - A. A rebuke—15:1–16
 - 1. For Job's irreverent talk—vv. 1–6
 - 2. For Job's unwarranted claim to be wise—vv. 7–13
 - 3. For Job's unwarranted claim to be pure—vv. 14–16
 - B. A reminder—15:17–35

The New American Commentary: Job (Robert L. Alden)

- I. Eliphaz Accuses Job of Folly (15:1–35)
 - A. Rebuke (15:1–13)
 - 1. Job is Ignorant and Arrogant (15:7–13)
 - 2. On God and Human Sinfulness (15:14–16)
 - B. Lessons from the Past (15:17–35)
 - 1. Appeal to Tradition (15:17–19)
 - 2. The Wicked Get What They Deserve (15:20–35)
 - a. Present Woes (15:20–26)
 - b. Future Grief (15:27–35)

Be Patient: Job (Warren W. Wiersbe)

- I. Discussion Turns into Dispute (15-17)
 - A. Eliphaz: two warnings (Job 15)
 - 1. Job lacks wisdom (Job 15:1–16)

- 2. God judges the wicked (Job 15:17–35)
- B. Job: three requests (Job 16–17)
 - 1. A plea for sympathy (Job 16:1–14)
 - 2. A plea for justice (Job 16:15–22)
 - 3. A plea for death (Job 17:1–16)

BASIC OUTLINE:

- I. Indictment Against Job (1–13)
 - A. Job’s Words are Empty (1-3)
 - B. Job’s Worship is Empty (4-6)
 - C. Job’s Wisdom is Empty (7-10)
 - D. Job’s Way is Empty (11-13)
- II. Incrimination Against Humanity (14-16)
- III. Instruction from History (17–35)
 - A. The Wicked Get What They Deserve (20–35)
 - 1. Past Opinion (17–19)
 - 2. Present Woes (20–26)
 - 3. Future Grief (27–35)

SERMON OUTLINE:

- I. The Indictment of Job (1–13)
 - A. Job’s Words are Empty (1-3)
 - B. Job’s Worship is Empty (4-6)
 - C. Job’s Wisdom is Empty (7-10)
 - D. Job’s Way is Empty (11-13)
- II. The Incrimination of Humanity (14-16)
 - A. The Doctrine of the Total Depravity of Man
- III. The Instruction of History (17–35)
 - A. The Wicked Get What They Deserve (20–35)
 - 1. Past Opinion (17–19) (what have others said in the past)
 - a. From Eliphaz (17)
 - b. From Others (18-19)
 - 2. Present Woes (20–26)
 - a. First we see “Pain” (Job was in pain)
 - c. Sudden calamity
 - d. Sudden death (v. 22)
 - e. Famine (v. 23)
 - f. Anguish like a King facing a battle he knows he cannot win
 - g. Eliphaz gives the reason for all this calamity in verse 25
 - h. Eliphaz sees Job as being so foolish as to even attempt to attack God

3. Future Grief (27–35)

- a. Job’s previous life of prosperity and wealth is given as a reason for his supposed callous attitude toward others (v. 27)
- b. The wicked will face desolation (v. 28)
- c. The wicked will not retain wealth and possessions (v. 29)
- d. We will let verses 30-34 speak for themselves
- e. You can sum all this up with a list of 12 afflictions faced by the wicked according to Eliphaz
 - (1) Pain – particularly emotional pain (v. 20)
 - (2) Terrifying sounds (v. 21)
 - (3) Attack by destroyers (v. 21) — Hebrew word may be translated “marauders”
 - (4) Destined for the sword (v. 22)
 - (5) Without food and desperate, aimless wandering (v. 23)
 - (6) Distress and anguish hound him (v. 24)
 - (7) The wealthy wicked will come to ruin, forced to live in desolate towns (v. 28)
 - (8) Loss of possessions (29)
 - (9) Darkness with perhaps the loss of children (v. 30)
 - (10) Emptiness (v. 31)
 - (11) Premature death (v. 33)
 - (12) Childlessness and consuming fire (v. 34)

PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what is the passage talking about): Eliphaz censures and warns Job

PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what is the passage saying about what it’s talking about): about Job’s empty words and worship with an eye toward the fact that the wicked get what they deserve.

PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text): The sufferings of Job are deserved.

CENTRAL PROPOSITION (OR IDEA) OF THE SERMON: We all deserve God’s death penalty.

SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE: The Second Speech of Eliphaz: No Grace for the Grieving

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

Now that Job had spoken three times, Eliphaz had much to which he could react. And react he did with uncivil and arrogant criticism and accusation. [Robert L. Alden, *Job*, vol. 11, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 171–172]

The structure of the speech is self-evidently twofold. In the first part Job is directly addressed (vv 2–16); in the second (vv 17–35) there is a description of the wicked man and his fate, which is indeed for Job's instructions—the point being that Job is not such a man and therefore has good reason for confidence—though Job is not addressed except in the introductory sentence advising him to listen (v 17). [David J. A. Clines, *Job 1–20*, vol. 17, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1989), 344]

Is there any inherent reason in the dynamics of the book why a second and a third cycle of speeches should unfold? The friends have no new points to make, so their speeches are in themselves otiose. [David J. A. Clines, *Job 1–20*, vol. 17, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1989), 346]

VERSES 15:1-6

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite responded, 2 “Should a wise man answer with windy knowledge And fill himself with the east wind? 3 “Should he argue with useless talk, Or with words which are not profitable? 4 “Indeed, you do away with reverence And hinder meditation before God. 5 “For your guilt teaches your mouth, And you choose the language of the crafty. 6 “Your own mouth condemns you, and not I; And your own lips testify against you.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said: 2 “Should a wise man answer with windy knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind? 3 Should he argue in unprofitable talk, or in words with which he can do no good? 4 But you are doing away with the fear of God and hindering meditation before God. 5 For your iniquity teaches your mouth, and you choose the tongue of the crafty. 6 Your own mouth condemns you, and not I; your own lips testify against you.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied: 2 Does a wise man answer with empty counsel or fill himself with the hot east wind? 3 Should he argue with useless talk or with words that serve no good purpose? 4 But you even undermine the fear of God and hinder meditation before Him. 5 Your iniquity teaches you what to say, and you choose the language of the crafty. 6 Your own mouth condemns you, not I; your own lips testify against you.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied: 2 “Would a wise person answer with empty notions or fill their belly with the hot east wind? 3 Would they argue with useless words, with speeches that have no value? 4 But you even undermine piety and hinder devotion to God. 5 Your sin prompts your mouth; you adopt the tongue of the crafty. 6 Your own mouth condemns you, not mine; your own lips testify against you.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite responded,

See 4:1

2 “Should a wise man answer with windy knowledge And fill himself with the east wind?

Implication: Job you’re not wise. Sarcasm. Cf. Bildad in 8:2.

The “hot east wind” (qādîm) came off the desert and was particularly unwelcome in May and October.² Eliphaz’s point of comparison seems an acceptance of Job’s bait in 6:26. [Robert L. Alden, Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 173]

This may have been the “wind” that caused Job’s children to perish (cf. 1:19).

Eliphaz’s point of comparison seems an acceptance of Job’s bait in 6:26.

Job later returned the accusation by calling Eliphaz’s words windy (16:3).

This line translates Hebrew “and fill his belly with the east.” The reference to “the east” is to the scorching wind that blows from the east across the desert. In this sense Job is filling himself with “hot air,” [William David Reayburn, A Handbook on the Book of Job, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 284]

3 “Should he argue with useless talk, Or with words which are not profitable?”

Should he argue in unprofitable talk: in 13:3 Job said “I desire to argue my case with God.” Eliphaz now picks up Job’s thought and asks in a rhetorical question if such arguing would not be without profit, that is, without effect, accomplishing nothing. The word translated unprofitable is found only in Job. Or in words with which he can do no good? This line is almost identical in meaning to the first line, and some translators may find it best to combine the two into a single line. [UBS Handbook]

4 “Indeed, you do away with reverence And hinder meditation before God.

Better, ESV: But you are doing away with the fear of God and hindering meditation before God.

Fear [of God] translates Hebrew “fear, reverence, worship,” and is used also to mean “religion.” [UBS Handbook]

Meditation translates a word which is used as a verb in Psalm 119:15 with the sense of “reflect, meditate.” [UBS Handbook]

“meditation” or “devotion” (as NIV).

According to Eliphaz, Job (you is emphatic in Heb.) hindered the cause of reverence (cf. 6:14) before God. Job’s words stemmed from sin within, and therefore were the basis of his being condemned. [Roy B. Zuck, “Job,” in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 736]

הַחַיִּישׁ usually means “musing aloud,” sometimes with complaint (as חַיִּישׁ in 7:11 [see n. 7:11.b]; 7:13; 9:27; 10:1), but here simply in the process of theological study and reflection (as in Ps 77:13 [12]; 104:34; 119:15, 23, 27, 48, 78). The term would describe the contemplative activity of the pious wise man. Job’s criticism of God, and especially his lawsuit against him (13:3, 19–24), is an abandonment of the respect due to God, and a rejection, or at least a minimizing (עָרַג “diminish”), of the patient meditative posture of the truly pious. NEB’S translation of the second colon, “usurping the sole right to speak in his presence,” implies that Job is rejecting other people’s “meditation” before God, but that can hardly be meant. [David J. A. Clines]

Eliphaz reproaches Job for not living up to his own high standards, just as he had in 4:5–6. It is not that he is accusing Job of having abandoned religion, or having become positively irreligious (Gray), whether in inward sentiment or outward observance. [David J. A. Clines]

5 “For your guilt teaches your mouth, And you choose the language of the crafty.

6 “Your own mouth condemns you, and not I; And your own lips testify against you.

“For” = “because” or “since” (reason for v. 4). Sophistry. “Forked tongue.” Cf. James.

“Mouth” x2 + “lips.”

Cf. Job in 9:20 “Though I am righteous, my mouth will condemn me; Though I am guiltless, He will declare me guilty.

VERSES 15:7-13

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

7 “Were you the first man to be born, Or were you brought forth before the hills? 8 “Do you hear the secret counsel of God, And limit wisdom to yourself? 9 “What do you know that we do not know? What do you understand that we do not? 10 “Both the gray-haired and the aged are among us, Older than your father. 11 “Are the consolations of God too small for you, Even the word spoken gently with you? 12 “Why does your heart carry you away? And why do your eyes flash, 13 That you should turn your spirit against God And allow such words to go out of your mouth?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

7 “Are you the first man who was born? Or were you brought forth before the hills? 8 Have you listened in the council of God? And do you limit wisdom to yourself? 9 What do you know that we do not know? What do you understand that is not clear to us? 10 Both the gray-haired and the aged are among us, older than your father. 11 Are the comforts of God too small for you, or the word that deals gently with you? 12 Why does your heart carry you away, and why do your eyes flash, 13 that you turn your spirit against God and bring such words out of your mouth?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

7 Were you the first person ever born, or were you brought forth before the hills? 8 Do you listen in on the council of God, or have a monopoly on wisdom? 9 What do you know that we don't? What do you understand that is not clear to us? 10 Both the gray-haired and the elderly are with us, men older than your father. 11 Are God's consolations not enough for you, even the words that deal gently with you? 12 Why has your heart misled you, and why do your eyes flash 13 as you turn your anger against God and allow such words to leave your mouth?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

7 “Are you the first man ever born? Were you brought forth before the hills? 8 Do you listen in on God's council? Do you have a monopoly on wisdom? 9 What do you know that we do not know? What insights do you have that we do not have? 10 The gray-haired and the aged are on our side, men even older than your father. 11 Are God's consolations not enough for you, words spoken gently to you? 12 Why has your heart carried you away, and why do your eyes flash, 13 so that you vent your rage against God and pour out such words from your mouth?

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

7 “Were you the first man to be born, Or were you brought forth before the hills?

Are you older than dirt? Some see a reference here to a mythical man, not Adam of Gen. (cf. Clines).

8 “Do you hear the secret counsel of God, And limit wisdom to yourself?

Have you listened in the council of God: listened refers to listening to the talk that takes place in the council where God's plans are made. Council of God is the same assembly of heavenly beings described in 1:6; 2:1. [UBS Handbook]

Do you have a monopoly on wisdom?!

9 **“What do you know that we do not know? What do you understand that we do not?”**

10 **“Both the gray-haired and the aged are among us, Older than your father.**

Cf. 12:3/13:2. May refer to Eliphaz or to the aged men of the past who serve as witnesses to his case. UBS paraphrases the thought: “Old men with wrinkled faces taught us wisdom; they lived long before your own father.”

11 **“Are the consolations of God too small for you, Even the word spoken gently with you?”**

Does Eliphaz think that he's actually consoling Job here? Or likely a reference to 5:17-27. Eliphaz started with a degree of sympathy. Cf. 2:11 / 16:2.

Note those who claim to be speaking harshly with the caveat “I only say this because I care.”

12 **“Why does your heart carry you away? And why do your eyes flash,**

13 **That you should turn your spirit against God And allow such words to go out of your mouth?”**

Shame on you!

Like Bildad earlier, Eliphaz appealed to traditional wisdom (8:8). In his view (but not in Elihu's [32:9] or Job's [12:12]) old folks are wise folks, so an appeal to them strengthened his case. [Robert L. Alden]

Eliphaz probably had in mind Job's audacious words in such verses as 6:4; 7:15–20; 10:2–3, 16–17; 13:20–27. [Roy B. Zuck, “Job,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 737]

VERSES 15:14-16

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

14 “What is man, that he should be pure, Or he who is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? 15 “Behold, He puts no trust in His holy ones, And the heavens are not pure in His sight; 16 How much less one who is detestable and corrupt, Man, who drinks iniquity like water!

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

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!

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

14 What is man, that he should be pure, or one born of woman, that he should be righteous? 15 If God puts no trust in His holy ones and the heavens are not pure in His sight, 16 how much less one who is revolting and corrupt, who drinks injustice like water?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

14 “What are mortals, that they could be pure, or those born of woman, that they could be righteous? 15 If God places no trust in his holy ones, if even the heavens are not pure in his eyes, 16 how much less mortals, who are vile and corrupt, who drink up evil like water!

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

14 “What is man, that he should be pure, Or he who is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?”

Cf. 4:17; 9:2;14:4. Psalm 51:5, 32:2.

The theme of inherent and unavoidable human sinfulness has been heard several times and will be heard again (4:17; 5:7; 9:2; 14:4; 25:4). Eliphaz’s words are so eloquent it is a pity they are not more often quoted to support the doctrine of original sin. Though much about the friends was objectionable (e.g., their lack of compassion and their faulty doctrine of suffering and retribution), much of their theology was accurate and can be appropriated today if it is in harmony with the rest of Scripture (the hermeneutical principle of the analogy of Scripture). [Robert L. Alden, Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 175]

15 “Behold, He puts no trust in His holy ones, And the heavens are not pure in His sight;
Cf. 4:18. Does Gen. 6:1-4 apply?

16 How much less one who is detestable and corrupt, Man, who drinks iniquity like water!

No man (ʾēnôš, “weak, mortal man”; cf. comments on 4:17), born of woman (a pickup of Job’s phrase in 14:1; cf. 25:4), can be pure or righteous before God. So how could Job claim innocence (9:21; 12:4) when not even angels (holy ones) and the heavens are pure? This repeats what Eliphaz argued earlier (4:17). Surely Job is vile (i.e., repulsive) and corrupt (sour like milk; cf. Pss. 14:3; 53:3) and guzzles sin as if it were water. [Roy B. Zuck, “Job,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 737]

A man who drinks iniquity like water: the point of this metaphor is that people do evil deeds with the ease with which they take a drink of water. [UBS Handbook]

Cf. depravity; “Adam’s ale.”

In particular, how can a member of the guild of the wise denigrate humanity (himself included) so categorically when he believes that there are righteous people, sharply differentiated from the wicked, and when he will indeed immediately hereafter depict the fate of the wicked as a destiny distinct from that of the righteous? Hesse thinks he must be led into such speech by thinking specifically of Job though speaking generally of humankind. But this is in conflict with Eliphaz’s settled and stated attitude to Job. It is much more likely that Eliphaz here represents what he imagines to be the divine perspective on mortals: from the standpoint of a perfectly righteous God who finds fault even in heavenly beings humankind must be truly disgusting. But such an absolute standard does not always have to be applied, and it does not obliterate the long acknowledged distinction between good persons and evil. [David J. A. Clines]

VERSES 15:17-19

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

17 “I will tell you, listen to me; And what I have seen I will also declare; 18 What wise men have told, And have not concealed from their fathers, 19 To whom alone the land was given, And no alien passed among them.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

17 “I will show you; hear me, and what I have seen I will declare 18 (what wise men have told, without hiding it from their fathers, 19 to whom alone the land was given, and no stranger passed among them).

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

17 Listen to me and I will inform you. I will describe what I have seen, 18 what was declared by wise men and was not suppressed by their ancestors, 19 the land was given to them alone when no foreigner passed among them.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

17 “Listen to me and I will explain to you; let me tell you what I have seen, 18 what the wise have declared, hiding nothing received from their ancestors 19 (to whom alone the land was given when no foreigners moved among them):

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Eliphaz enumerated (in vv. 21–35) 17 terrible troubles that befall a sinner.

**17 “I will tell you, listen to me; And what I have seen I will also declare;
18 What wise men have told, And have not concealed from their fathers,**

Eliphaz likes to argue on the basis of his personal experience (4:8, 12; 5:3).

Like Bildad earlier, Eliphaz appealed to traditional wisdom (8:8). In his view (but not in Elihu’s [32:9] or Job’s [12:12]) old folks are wise folks, so an appeal to them strengthened his case. [Robert L. Alden]

And what I have seen I will declare: in this line Eliphaz again appeals to the mysterious vision that was revealed to him in chapter 4. [UBS Handbook]

Eliphaz’s experience is wholly of a piece with traditional wisdom. He has sold his soul to tradition, and has so ensured that he will never have any experience that runs counter to

it; everything that happens to him will be interpretable in wisdom categories, for he will perceive everything from its viewpoint. [David J. A. Clines]

Cf. Eccles. 8:9.

19 To whom alone the land was given, And no alien passed among them.

Parentheses are not indicated in the Masoretic Text, but parenthetical statements certainly do occur. Whereas the NIV places v. 19 in parentheses, the RV, RSV, NEB place both vv. 18 and 19 in parentheses; the REB and NRSV have no parentheses (although they have a dash after v. 17 and the REB has a colon after v. 19). The NIV treatment probably is the clearest. Apparently Eliphaz wanted further to underscore the antiquity of the wisdom he was about to unload on Job by noting that their ancestors were the original and unchallenged recipients of “the land/ earth.” [Robert L. Alden]

This verse, with its references to the giving of the land to the fathers, and to the absence of foreigners from the land in a former age, has seemed to some to reflect the interests of a Jewish scribe rather than maintaining the viewpoint of the Temanite Eliphaz. de Wilde would delete it, and NEB encloses it (and v 18) in square brackets as being a secondary addition. Others think the author’s concentration has slipped, and he has put into Eliphaz’s mouth words not really appropriate to him. Against these views, it can be affirmed that the second half of the line could not have been truthfully uttered by a Jewish writer (author or copyist) at any historical time about Jewish ancestors; for biblical tradition is unanimous that from patriarchal times to post-exilic the people of Israel shared their land with other races. Certainly it is impossible to use this verse in attempting to date the Book of Job (against Duhm and others).

Some specific allusion, now beyond our grasp, may be made to Temanite traditions of the origins of their people; but the sense is plain. As the first occupants of their land, the ancestors possessed a primal, pristine wisdom, a wisdom that was as internally consistent and unadulterated as the social framework of their community. No disintegrating or falsifying influence from outside sources had disturbed the comprehensive pattern of their perception of life, just as no foreign infiltrators had interfered in the social fabric. There is appeal in Eliphaz’s words to a primitive ideal time as the fons et origo of the wisdom he now teaches. [David J. A. Clines]

VERSES 15:20-26

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

20 “The wicked man writhes in pain all his days, And numbered are the years stored up for the ruthless. 21 “Sounds of terror are in his ears; While at peace the destroyer comes upon him. 22 “He does not believe that he will return from darkness, And he is destined for the sword. 23 “He wanders about for food, saying, ‘Where is it?’ He knows that a day of darkness is at hand. 24 “Distress and anguish terrify him, They overpower him like a king ready for the attack, 25 Because he has stretched out his hand against God And conducts himself arrogantly against the Almighty. 26 “He rushes headlong at Him With his massive shield.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

20 The wicked man writhes in pain all his days, through all the years that are laid up for the ruthless. 21 Dreadful sounds are in his ears; in prosperity the destroyer will come upon him. 22 He does not believe that he will return out of darkness, and he is marked for the sword. 23 He wanders abroad for bread, saying, ‘Where is it?’ He knows that a day of darkness is ready at his hand; 24 distress and anguish terrify him; they prevail against him, like a king ready for battle. 25 Because he has stretched out his hand against God and defies the Almighty, 26 running stubbornly against him with a thickly bossed shield;

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

20 A wicked man writhes in pain all his days; only a few years are reserved for the ruthless. 21 Dreadful sounds fill his ears; when he is at peace, a robber attacks him. 22 He doesn’t believe he will return from darkness; he is destined for the sword. 23 He wanders about for food, saying, “Where is it?” He knows the day of darkness is at hand. 24 Trouble and distress terrify him, overwhelming him like a king prepared for battle. 25 For he has stretched out his hand against God and has arrogantly opposed the Almighty. 26 He rushes headlong at Him with his thick, studded shields.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

20 All his days the wicked man suffers torment, the ruthless man through all the years stored up for him. 21 Terrifying sounds fill his ears; when all seems well, marauders attack him. 22 He despairs of escaping the realm of darkness; he is marked for the sword. 23 He wanders about for food like a vulture; he knows the day of darkness is at hand. 24 Distress and anguish fill him with terror; troubles overwhelm him, like a king poised to attack, 25 because he shakes his fist at God and vaunts himself against the Almighty, 26 defiantly charging against him with a thick, strong shield.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

The wicked get what they deserve; and what they are getting is what they deserve. Verses 20-26 speak of the present, verses 27-35 the future.

Eliphaz's presentation is in two sections. This first half describes in the present tense what evil people endure. It must be noted that tenses hardly exist in Hebrew poetry and that the system of perfect and imperfect verbs has little of the precision that it does in narrative portions of the Old Testament. It is largely up to translators whether to make statements past, present, or future. [Robert L. Alden]

Eliphaz enumerated (in vv. 21–35) 17 terrible troubles that befall a sinner. This friend-turned-enemy hoped to force Job to repent of his terrible ways.

(1) Terrifying sounds are heard by a tyrant who terrifies others (cf. “ruthless,” v. 20). Job had certainly heard some terrifying news (1:14–19).

(2) Marauders attack him, which is exactly what the Sabeans and Chaldeans had done to Job's livestock and servants (1:15, 17; cf. Job's words about marauders in 12:6).

(3) Darkness (*hōšek*, also used by Eliphaz in 15:23, 30; cf. 3:4; 10:21) haunts him, possibly a reference to the darkness of death.

(4) He is marked for the sword, that is, destined to be a victim of violence, possibly because he himself was violent against others.

(5) Without food and desperate, he wanders aimlessly, trying to escape his attackers, sensing that any day he might be killed (he would enter the day of darkness; cf. vv. 22, 30).

(6) Distress and anguish hound him like a king ready to attack (cf. Job's words about terror in 9:34; 13:21; also cf. 18:11; 20:25). Job had said God overpowers man (14:20), but Eliphaz pointed out that a person's own anguish, not God, destroys him.

Why such misfortunes? The reason, this verbal pugilist said, is that a sinner is defiant (shakes his fist) and arrogant against God (vaunts himself), attacking God head-on. This contradicted Job's words that God was attacking him (7:20; 13:24; cf. 19:11; 33:10).

15:27–35. The first six calamities befalling the wicked (vv. 21–24) are followed by an explanation of the reasons for such punishment (vv. 25–26). Now the order is reversed; Eliphaz first gave a reason (v. 27) for the disasters he then mentioned (vv. 28–35). Self-indulgence (a fattened face and bulging midline) was the reason. A chubby person represented self-absorbed luxury and spiritual insensitivity (cf. Ps. 73:7, NIV marg.; Jer. 5:28).

Eliphaz proceeded with his list:

(7) The wealthy wicked will come to ruin, forced to live in ghost towns, abandoned houses, and crumbling residences.

(8) The transgressor will lose his wealth, a cruel recall of Job's privation (Job 1:13–17; cf. 20:12–26).

(9) Darkness (cf. 15:22–23) overtakes him.

(10) Fire will blight his crops.

(11) He will vanish, being blown away by the hot anger of God’s breath.

(12) A wicked person who trusts in worthless possessions will actually gain nothing. This supported Eliphaz’s contention that Job was trusting in his opulence, an accusation Job later firmly denied (31:24–25).

(13) Though gaining nothing materially (15:31), the rebel will be paid (i.e., he will receive from God the deserved punishment for his sin).

(14) Like a vine without grapes, and a dying olive tree, a reprobate dies prematurely, thus losing his hoped-for affluence and security.

(15) Nor, said Eliphaz, will the godless (cf. 8:12–13) have children.

(16) And an unjust person who accepts bribes, thereby favoring some and mistreating others, will have his tents burned (cf. the burning of Job’s possessions by “the fire of God,” 1:16; also cf. the trio’s references to tents, 4:21; 8:22; 18:15; 20:26).

(17) Using the figure of conception and childbirth, he said that wicked people are characterized by trouble (‘āmāl; cf. comments on 3:10; 16:2), evil (’āwen, used before by Eliphaz in 4:8 and 5:6, “hardship”; and later in 22:15), and deceit.

By affirming that all these mishaps come to wicked people in this life, Eliphaz did not have all the facts. His attempt to jolt Job into repentance failed. [Roy B. Zuck, “Job,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 737–738]

Clines takes the approach that these things describe what Job is not. I find this view hard to fathom, but here’s a quote:

The fundamental key for the interpretation of this speech is the recognition that the depiction of the wicked in vv 20–35 is a depiction of what Job is not. It opens the way to see the speech as a whole as an encouragement to Job, in essential accord both with Eliphaz’s first speech (chaps. 4–5) and with his third (chap. 22). From Eliphaz’s point of view, Job’s present rash and, frankly, sinful words apart, Job is at bottom a righteous man whose innocence Eliphaz admires. Job has nothing to fear from the present suffering he endures at God’s hand, for it is but an epiphenomenon upon the ordered course of a prosperous and devout life. The mental anguish that the godless suffer all their days (vv 20–22) is not Job’s experience, nor can their end, “marked down for the sword” (v 22), “cast out as food for the vultures” (v 23), their “blossom swept away by the wind” (v 30), ever be his. [David J. A. Clines, *Job 1–20*, vol. 17]

20 “The wicked man writhes in pain all his days, And numbered are the years stored up for the ruthless.

The verb translated “suffer torment” in other forms refers to a mother writhing in childbirth (cf. Job 39:1; Ps 51:5 [7]; Prov 8:24–25).¹² The second line is literally “the number of years are stored up for the ruthless.” The idea is that the ruthless also suffer torment for a preset period of time. Once more the author’s inclination toward predestination is evident (14:5). [Robert L. Alden]

This likely refers to mental/spiritual anguish.

21 “Sounds of terror are in his ears; While at peace the destroyer comes upon him.

Terrifying sounds are in his ears: here the inward violence which the wicked person suffers is pictured. Terrifying sounds translates Hebrew “voice of fears” and suggests the fright that the voice of his conscience arouses within him. [UBS Handbook]

In prosperity the destroyer will come upon him: in prosperity translates “in peace (shalom)” and suggests in this context “while all is peaceful, quite calm.” TEV has “when he thinks he is safe.” The destroyer translates the same noun rendered “robbers” in 12:6 by RSV, and that would be a better translation here. Come upon him means “assault, attack.” This line may be rendered, for example, “while everything is quiet, robbers will attack him” or “when he thinks he is safest, bandits will leap on him.” [UBS Handbook]

Heb. 10:31.

Note Job’s sudden change of having peace turned to terror (chapter 1).

22 “He does not believe that he will return from darkness, And he is destined for the sword.

He does not believe that he will return out of darkness is literally “He does not believe a return from darkness.” The subject is still the wicked man, but the meaning of return out of darkness is problematic. Some suggest that he fears the night, that he will not wake up. Others take darkness to mean “misfortune.” That is, he will always remain unfortunate. Dhorme understands the verb form rendered return out of to mean “escape from,” and translates “He does not expect to escape the dark,” and this is followed by TEV and others. All of these express the torments which his conscience causes him. [UBS Handbook]

“Sword” = violent death.

23 “He wanders about for food, saying, ‘Where is it?’ He knows that a day of darkness is at hand.

The older versions and a few modern ones (NASB, NJPS, NRSV) have a less grisly picture by reading, “Where is it?” in place of “vultures.” The vowel change yields a better sense and follows the LXX (cf. Prov 30:17; Luke 17:37). The word ’ayyâ also occurs in 28:7 (without repointing), but there the NIV translates it “raven.” [Robert L. Alden]

He wanders abroad for bread, saying, ‘Where is it?’ RSV translates the Hebrew text, which suggests that the wicked person is troubled by poverty and lack of food. Where is it? is the question of the wicked person as he searches for food. However, the Septuagint translates “He has been appointed for food to vultures,” that is, in verse 22 the wicked person fears being killed, and in verse 23 he fears that he will subsequently be eaten by vultures. The Hebrew word for “vulture” has the same consonants as the word meaning Where is it? Accordingly many translations prefer an expression similar to SPCL, “His corpse will be food for vultures,” and this is recommended by HOTTIP. Another model is “The vultures will eat his corpse for their food.” [UBS Handbook]

The “vulture” is properly the kite, milvus, of the hawk family. de Wilde describes two types, milus milvus, a slender bird 70 cm long, brown with white flecks on the wings and breast, and milvus migrans, brown and black, with a smaller tail. They feed on carrion, small animals, reptiles, frogs and larger insects. Their far-sightedness is alluded to by the saying in the Talmud (Hullin 63b), “A kite in Babylon saw carrion in the land of Israel.” [David J. A. Clines]

Cf. ESV and NIV.

24 “Distress and anguish terrify him, They overpower him like a king ready for the attack,

King = a king about to enter into a battle he knows he cannot win. Cf. vv. 25-26 which indicate this.

There is no peace for the wicked (Isa 48:22; 57:21)

25 Because he has stretched out his hand against God And conducts himself arrogantly against the Almighty.

26 “He rushes headlong at Him With his massive shield.

Picture of a foolish warrior rushing at the omnipotent God of the universe!

It is foolhardy heroism to set oneself against God as the wicked do; the verb (רִבְגַתָּהּ, hithpael) signifies to “act the hero, play the role of a warrior” (cf. אִבְנֵתָהּ, “play the prophet”). In Isa 42:13 Yahweh “shows himself mighty” against his foes, and in Eccles 31:25 one is warned not to “play the hero” where wine is concerned (cf. also Job 36:9). It is the “Almighty” (Shaddai) whom the wrongdoer assaults, so foolishly unaware is he of his own puny stature. [David J. A. Clines]

VERSES 15:27-35

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

27 “For he has covered his face with his fat And made his thighs heavy with flesh. 28 “He has lived in desolate cities, In houses no one would inhabit, Which are destined to become ruins. 29 “He will not become rich, nor will his wealth endure; And his grain will not bend down to the ground. 30 “He will not escape from darkness; The flame will wither his shoots, And by the breath of His mouth he will go away. 31 “Let him not trust in emptiness, deceiving himself; For emptiness will be his reward. 32 “It will be accomplished before his time, And his palm branch will not be green. 33 “He will drop off his unripe grape like the vine, And will cast off his flower like the olive tree. 34 “For the company of the godless is barren, And fire consumes the tents of the corrupt. 35 “They conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity, And their mind prepares deception.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [ESV]:

27 because he has covered his face with his fat and gathered fat upon his waist 28 and has lived in desolate cities, in houses that none should inhabit, which were ready to become heaps of ruins; 29 he will not be rich, and his wealth will not endure, nor will his possessions spread over the earth; 30 he will not depart from darkness; the flame will dry up his shoots, and by the breath of his mouth he will depart. 31 Let him not trust in emptiness, deceiving himself, for emptiness will be his payment. 32 It will be paid in full before his time, and his branch will not be green. 33 He will shake off his unripe grape like the vine, and cast off his blossom like the olive tree. 34 For the company of the godless is barren, and fire consumes the tents of bribery. 35 They conceive trouble and give birth to evil, and their womb prepares deceit.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

27 Though his face is covered with fat and his waistline bulges with it, 28 he will dwell in ruined cities, in abandoned houses destined to become piles of rubble. 29 He will no longer be rich; his wealth will not endure. His possessions will not increase in the land. 30 He will not escape from the darkness; flames will wither his shoots, and by the breath of God’s mouth, he will depart. 31 Let him not put trust in worthless things, being led astray, for what he gets in exchange will prove worthless. 32 It will be accomplished before his time, and his branch will not flourish. 33 He will be like a vine that drops its unripe grapes and like an olive tree that sheds its blossoms. 34 For the company of the godless will have no children, and fire will consume the tents of those who offer bribes. 35 They conceive trouble and give birth to evil; their womb prepares deception.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

27 “Though his face is covered with fat and his waist bulges with flesh, 28 he will inhabit ruined towns and houses where no one lives, houses crumbling to rubble. 29 He will no longer be rich and his wealth will not endure, nor will his possessions spread over the land. 30 He will not escape the darkness; a flame will wither his shoots, and the breath of God’s mouth will carry him away. 31 Let him not deceive himself by trusting what is worthless, for he will get nothing in

return. 32 Before his time he will wither, and his branches will not flourish. 33 He will be like a vine stripped of its unripe grapes, like an olive tree shedding its blossoms. 34 For the company of the godless will be barren, and fire will consume the tents of those who love bribes. 35 They conceive trouble and give birth to evil; their womb fashions deceit.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Future Grief (15:27–35) — In the closing stanza of his second speech Eliphaz predicted the assorted punishments that would befall the godless. They include homelessness, poverty, and barrenness. [Robert L. Alden]

27 **“For he has covered his face with his fat And made his thighs heavy with flesh.**

Cf. NIV: “Though his face is covered with fat and his waist bulges with flesh,

Picture of the wealthy wicked (what Job was). Deut. 32:15; Psalm 73:7.
In days past it was cool to be fat!

28 **“He has lived in desolate cities, In houses no one would inhabit, Which are destined to become ruins.**

Given that v 27 describes the present healthy state, physically speaking, of the wicked man as a type, this verse is best understood as a depiction of the lonely and accursed future that awaits him. [David J. A. Clines]

Those proofs of prosperity will, according to Eliphaz, give way to impoverishment when the once opulent find themselves holing up in abandoned buildings like squatters. The three lines describe their living conditions as “ruined,” “uninhabited,” and “destined to become heaps of ruins” (RSV). [Robert L. Alden]

Desolate translates a verb meaning “hidden or effaced” and refers to cities that are in ruins. This notion can be expressed in translation by saying, for instance, “He defied God by living in cities that were in ruins” or “He challenged God’s might by living in these ruined cities.” Although this interpretation seems to fit the context best, it may be necessary to add a note; for example, “Such places were believed to be under a curse. See Joshua 6:26; Isaiah 13:20.” [UBS Handbook]

Cf. NIV and other translations that render this in a future tense. Ambiguity of Hebrew.

29 **“He will not become rich, nor will his wealth endure; And his grain will not bend down to the ground.**

Better: “He will not remain rich.” On grain not bending, see other translations which render this differently:

29 he will not be rich, and his wealth will not endure, nor will his possessions spread over the earth; [ESV]

30 “He will not escape from darkness; The flame will wither his shoots, And by the breath of His mouth he will go away.

Picture of death. Cf. 10:21-22; 14:7. “His mouth” = God (4:9). Debated, however.

“Shoots,” *yōnaqtô*, is from a root that means “suck/nurse,” and this may be an indirect reference to Job’s children. [Robert L. Alden]

31 “Let him not trust in emptiness, deceiving himself; For emptiness will be his reward.

Because the Hebrew is subject to so much variation of interpretation, it is not possible to insist on any one rendering as being superior. However, the proposed change to “height” or “stature” has the advantage of relating this verse with both verses 30 and 32. This verse may be rendered, for example, “Let him not trust in being great or he will be deceived,” “He deceives himself if he relies on his high standing,” or “He is bound to fall if he thinks of himself as great.” [UBS Handbook]

32 “It will be accomplished before his time, And his palm branch will not be green.

“will not be green” = “wither away.”

33 “He will drop off his unripe grape like the vine, And will cast off his flower like the olive tree.

34 “For the company of the godless is barren, And fire consumes the tents of the corrupt.

Eliphaz’s reference to the loss of Job’s goods and the deaths of his children is transparent. “Barren,” a rare word, was Job’s wish for his mother on his birthday (3:7). Strictly speaking, he and his wife were not barren but had now become childless. Without heirs, however, the results were the same, with no hope of seeing children to the third and fourth generations. [Robert L. Alden]

35 “They conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity, And their mind prepares deception.”

In Job 4:8 the same thought is expressed as “Those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same.”

Isaiah 59:4 No one sues righteously and no one pleads honestly. They trust in confusion and speak lies; They conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity.

Psalm 7:14 Behold, he travails with wickedness, And he conceives mischief and brings forth falsehood.