

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 Structure

Not applicable for this passage. See outline below.

TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

ENGLISH TRANSLATION (NASB95):

4:1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered, 2 “If one ventures a word with you, will you become impatient? But who can refrain from speaking? 3 “Behold you have admonished many, And you have strengthened weak hands. 4 “Your words have helped the tottering to stand, And you have strengthened feeble knees. 5 “But now it has come to you, and you are impatient; It touches you, and you are dismayed. 6 “Is not your fear of God your confidence, And the integrity of your ways your hope?

7 “Remember now, who ever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright destroyed? 8 “According to what I have seen, those who plow iniquity And those who sow trouble harvest it. 9 “By the breath of God they perish, And by the blast of His anger they come to an end. 10 “The roaring of the lion and the voice of the fierce lion, And the teeth of the young lions are broken. 11 “The lion perishes for lack of prey, And the whelps of the lioness are scattered.

12 “Now a word was brought to me stealthily, And my ear received a whisper of it. 13 “Amid disquieting thoughts from the visions of the night, When deep sleep falls on men, 14 Dread came upon me, and trembling, And made all my bones shake. 15 “Then a spirit passed by my face; The hair of my flesh bristled up. 16 “It stood still, but I could not discern its appearance; A form was before my eyes; There was silence, then I heard a voice: 17 ‘Can mankind be just before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker? 18 ‘He puts no trust even in His servants; And against His angels He charges error. 19 ‘How much more those who dwell in houses of clay, Whose foundation is in the dust, Who are crushed before the moth! 20 ‘Between morning and evening they are broken in pieces; Unobserved, they perish forever. 21 ‘Is not their tent-cord plucked up within them? They die, yet without wisdom.’

5:1 “Call now, is there anyone who will answer you? And to which of the holy ones will you turn? 2 “For anger slays the foolish man, And jealousy kills the simple. 3 “I have seen the foolish taking root, And I cursed his abode immediately. 4 “His sons are far from safety, They are even oppressed in the gate, And there is no deliverer. 5 “His harvest the hungry devour And take it to a place of thorns, And the schemer is eager for their wealth. 6 “For affliction does not come from the dust, Nor does trouble sprout from the ground, 7 For man is born for trouble, As sparks fly upward.

8 “But as for me, I would seek God, And I would place my cause before God; 9 Who does great and unsearchable things, Wonders without number. 10 “He gives rain on the earth And sends water on the fields, 11 So that He sets on high those who are lowly, And those who mourn are lifted to safety. 12 “He frustrates the plotting of the shrewd, So that their hands cannot attain success. 13 “He captures the wise by their own shrewdness, And the advice of the cunning is quickly thwarted. 14 “By day they meet with darkness, And grope at noon as in the night. 15 “But He saves from the sword of their mouth, And the poor from the hand of the mighty. 16 “So the helpless has hope, And unrighteousness must shut its mouth.

17 “Behold, how happy is the man whom God reproves, So do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. 18 “For He inflicts pain, and gives relief; He wounds, and His hands also heal. 19 “From six troubles He will deliver you, Even in seven evil will not touch you. 20 “In famine He will redeem you from death, And in war from the power of the sword. 21 “You will be hidden from the scourge of the tongue, And you will not be afraid of violence when it comes. 22 “You will laugh at violence and famine, And you will not be afraid of wild beasts. 23 “For you will be in league with the stones of the field, And the beasts of the field will be at peace with you. 24 “You will know that your tent is secure, For you will visit your abode and fear no loss. 25 “You will know also that your descendants will be many, And your offspring as the grass of the earth. 26 “You will come to the grave in full vigor, Like the stacking of grain in its season. 27 “Behold this; we have investigated it, and so it is. Hear it, and know for yourself.” [Job 4-5]

PASSAGE OUTLINE:

SERMON OUTLINE:

- I. The Observations of Eliphaz (4:1 - 5:7)
 - A. His Experience as it Relates to Job (4:1-6)
 1. Job Doesn’t Practice What He Preaches
 - B. His Experience as it Relates to Nature (4:7-11)
 1. Job Is Reaping What He Has Sown
 - C. His Experience as it Relates to a Vision (4:12-21)
 1. The Origin of the Vision
 2. The Message of the Vision
 - D. His Experience as it Relates to Fools (5:1-7)
 1. Bad Things Happen to Stupid People
- II. The Opinions of Eliphaz (5:8-17)
 - A. Seek God (8-16)
 1. He Does Great Things (8-11)
 2. He Exalts the Humble and Humiliates the Proud (12-16)
 - B. Accept His Discipline (17-27)
 1. He Wounds and He Heals (17-18)
 2. He Delivers the Righteous From Trouble (19-26)
 - a. From Famine, War, and Hostilities (19-24)
 - b. From Domestic Loss (25)
 - c. From Fruitless Death (26)
 - C. Believe Our Report (27)
- III. Closing Application
 1. Leave Room in Your Theology for Innocent Suffering
 2. Leave Room for Imperfection
 3. Don’t Make General Principles Absolute
 4. Be Patient With Sufferers
 5. Eliphaz’ Contention in 4:7 is Flat Out Wrong
 6. Sometimes Bad Things Do Happen to Good People
 7. The Cross Answers the Question of 4:17

PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what is the passage talking about): Eliphaz Admonishes Job

PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what is the passage saying about what it's talking about): contending that his woes are directly connected to his behavior

PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text): Job's afflictions are a direct result of his own failure to be righteous (he is reaping what he has sown)

CENTRAL PROPOSITION (OR IDEA) OF THE SERMON: Bad Things Don't Happen to Good People

SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE: Eliphaz' First Address: Bad Things Don't Happen to Good People / Bad Things *Do* Happen to Good People

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

These chapters begin the first of three rounds of dialogue cycles. Sort of a “tag-team.”

As far as how the book breaks down: A simple way to see the book has been described by 1 comm. as prologue ==> dialogue ==> monologue ==> epilogue

Prologue is in prose or narrative (chapters 1-2)

Dialogue which contains prose and poetry (chapters 3-37)

Monologue which involves G. directly speaking (38-41)

Epilogue again in narrative form (42)

4 “logues” [^]

83% of t/book is dialogue (conversation) in which there are 3 cycles of speeches whereby Job replies to each of his friends. (chapters 4-37) Dialogue in Poetry. Poetic representations of a real-life conversation between Job and his friends.

I. Job’s Circumstances in Historical Narrative (1-2)

II. Job’s Lament (3)

III. Three Rounds of Dialogue Between Job and His Friends (4:1-26:14)

A. Round One (4:1-14:22):

1. Job vs Eliphaz
 - a. Eliphaz Addresses Job the First Time (4-5)
 - b. Job Replies to Eliphaz (6-7)
2. Job vs Bildad
 - a. Bildad Addresses Job the First Time (8)
 - b. Job Replies to Bildad (9-10)
3. Job vs Zophar
 - a. Zophar Addresses Job the First Time (11)
 - b. Job Replies to Zophar (12-14)

B. Round Two (15:1-21:34):

1. Job vs Eliphaz
 - a. Eliphaz Addresses Job the Second Time (15)
 - b. Job Replies to Eliphaz (16-17)
2. Job vs Bildad
 - a. Bildad Addresses Job the Second Time (18)
 - b. Job Replies to Bildad (19)
3. Job vs Zophar
 - a. Zophar Addresses Job the Second Time (20)
 - b. Job Replies to Zophar (21)

C. Round Three (22:1-26:14):

1. Job vs Eliphaz
 - a. Eliphaz Addresses Job the Third Time (22)
 - b. Job Replies to Eliphaz (23-24)
2. Job vs Bildad
 - a. Bildad Addresses Job the Third Time (25)
 - b. Job Replies to Bildad (26)
3. *Zophar Doesn't Participate in this Round*

IV. Job's Last Reply to his friends (27-31)

V. A New Face: A Young Man Elihu Speaks (32-37)

- A. First Address (32-33)
- B. Second Address (34)
- C. Third Address (35)
- D. Fourth Address (36-37)

VI. God Speaks (38:1-42:6)

- A. First Speech (38:1-40:2)
 1. Job's Contrite Reply (40:3-5)
- B. Second Speech (40:6-41:34)

VII. Job's Confession and Repentance (42:1-6)

VIII. God Admonishes Job's Friends by Way of Elihu (42:7-9)

IX. Job's Restoration (42:10-17)

Broad overview: Job is not impressed with his comforters (16:2); his comforters are not impressed with Job (8:2); God is not impressed with the comforters (42:7).

Eliphaz's first speech sets the tone for all the friends' comments. After rebuking Job for not being able to help himself when he has taught others (4:1-6), Eliphaz summarizes his own theology by declaring that the innocent and upright are never destroyed (4:7). Only the wicked perish (4:8-11). His basis for this belief system is twofold: a personal vision he received (4:12-21) and knowledge of Wisdom teachings (5:1-7). Eliphaz believes Job has been disciplined by God (5:17) and must appeal to the righteous, saving Lord (5:8-16). Without question Eliphaz believes in simple cause-and-effect retribution for sin. He leaves no room in his worldview for an innocent sufferer such as readers know Job to be.²⁵ At least at this point he does not consider his friend beyond redemption. He simply wants to remind Job that "innocence and suffering are mutually exclusive."²⁶

Certain parts of Eliphaz's theology are correct. He claims Yahweh is just, merciful, forgiving and willing to offer revelation. He thinks creation has purpose and meaning for the faithful. The notion of a God who tests and vindicates is beyond him. His view of strict retribution marks him as a benevolent adherent of ancient Wisdom teachings that emphasize straightforward cause and effect in human events.²⁷ This incomplete theology hampers his defense of God, his friendship with Job and his ability to have and convey wisdom. [Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 431.]

The three friends who were introduced at the close of chap. 2 have not said a word for a week; now they begin to speak. This central and largest section in the book fills more than half the volume with its twenty-four chapters. Each of the three friends spoke, and each time Job responded. This cycle goes around three times with Eliphaz speaking three times, Bildad speaking three times, but Zophar speaking only twice. Job had eight or nine speeches (depending on whether chaps. 26–27 are separate speeches, as I believe).

Some generalizations characterize the speeches. They will be mentioned in the course of the commentary, but among them is the fact that the speeches grow shorter. Bildad's third speech in chap. 25 is especially brief. The speeches grow in intensity. Both the friends and Job became less courteous and more critical of one another. All of the speakers, and notably Elihu, who appears later in the book, anticipated the theophany or the speeches of Yahweh by making observations about God's evident power in creation and his apparent sovereignty over the world. Usually the friends' speeches include rebuke and advice. Usually Job turned to God in petition or complaint. The friends never prayed. The overall thrust of the friends' speeches is that the wicked suffer and the righteous are rewarded; thus, since Job was suffering, he must have sinned. He needed only to confess that sin, and God would restore his former fortunes. Job regularly countered that generalization and wished that he had an explanation for his suffering from his accusers but, even more, from God. His inability to get an explanation made him more frustrated and angry, aggravating his desire for death. Interspersed through his speeches, however, are occasional glimmers of hope—hope in a redeemer, hope in a resurrection, hope for ultimate vindication¹. [Robert L. Alden, *Job*, vol. 11, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 82.]

Premises:

1. God is absolutely sovereign
2. God is absolutely just
3. Therefore, he always punishes wickedness and blesses goodness.
4. Application: Job is suffering therefore he's not good.

Eliphaz' advice to Job comes from two sources: personal experience and supposed divine revelation. Really summed up as experience, for his perceived revelation was experiential. Eliphaz anecdotal evidences are drawn from creation and personal experience.

“Correspondingly, the advice serves to reassure Job of the stability of the moral order and to remind Job of human finitude and its incapacity for ultimate wisdom. Let Job take these words to heart, and he will find that they do him good.” [Janzen, 71]

Cyprian: tradition may simply be error in old age.

The friends operate from an experiential worldview. Job increasingly seeks to understand truth apart from experience.

Eliphaz emphasizes experience (“I have seen”); Bildad bases his words on tradition (cf. 8:8); Zophar who is the most impatient and sharp, bases his on assumptions. All three become legalistic.

Much of what Eliphaz says is true. He may be using Job’s own words against him. However, the application of what he says, and the absolutizing of general principles, make what he says erroneous in the context.

Theme: God is disciplining you so that you might return to Him.

Job’s three friends affirm God’s sovereignty.

Good vs. bad counsel: Prov. 12:15; 16:24; 19:20; 25:11-12; 27:6.

See Swindoll 76-77 for a good summary of the context.

VERSES 4:1-6

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

4:1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered, 2 “If one ventures a word with you, will you become impatient? But who can refrain from speaking? 3 “Behold you have admonished many, And you have strengthened weak hands. 4 “Your words have helped the tottering to stand, And you have strengthened feeble knees. 5 “But now it has come to you, and you are impatient; It touches you, and you are dismayed. 6 “Is not your fear of God your confidence, And the integrity of your ways your hope?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

4:1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied: 2 Should anyone try to speak with you when you are exhausted? Yet who can keep from speaking? 3 Indeed, you have instructed many and have strengthened weak hands. 4 Your words have steadied the one who was stumbling and braced the knees that were buckling. 5 But now that this has happened to you, you have become exhausted. It strikes you, and you are dismayed. 6 Isn't your piety your confidence, and the integrity of your life your hope?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

4:1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied: 2 “If someone ventures a word with you, will you be impatient? But who can keep from speaking? 3 Think how you have instructed many, how you have strengthened feeble hands. 4 Your words have supported those who stumbled; you have strengthened faltering knees. 5 But now trouble comes to you, and you are discouraged; it strikes you, and you are dismayed. 6 Should not your piety be your confidence and your blameless ways your hope?

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Job Should Have Hope Job 4:1–6 [UBS Handbook Series]

4:1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered,

Cf. my previous notes on Eliphaz. Teman / Edom / wisdom.

Eliphaz was likely the eldest and thus speaks first. He speaks first in each cycle of speeches. He's summoned by God as representative of the three (42:7).

Job had just finished his soliloquy (chapter 3) which came at the heels of 7 days of silence (2:11-15). Eliphaz breaks the silence of the friends.

Issue of interpreting the tone of what's being said.

2 “If one ventures a word with you, will you become impatient? But who can refrain from speaking?”

Note HCSB “exhausted.”

I think Eliphaz is trying to be sensitive here. Trying to find a way to get to his point in what may feel like an awkward situation.

3 “Behold you have admonished many, And you have strengthened weak hands.

4 “Your words have helped the tottering to stand, And you have strengthened feeble knees.

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

Cf. Matthew 27:42.

6 “Is not your fear of God your confidence, And the integrity of your ways your hope?”

See 1:1,8; 2:3 where the same word “integrity” is used of Job. Job feared God and was righteous. So how does Eliphaz interpret this? Is he being sarcastic?

ELIPHAZ’S FIRST EXHORTATION FOR Job occurs in the problematic verse 4:6, which the NIV renders, “Should not your piety be your confidence and your blameless ways your hope?” The syntax is complex, as we commonly find in Job, but even the words themselves present some challenges. The word translated “confidence” (*kislah*) is often rendered “folly,” both for this form (Ps. 85:8[9]) and in a variety of derivative forms. When the root is contextually associated with trust, it is usually a vain or foolish trust (Job 8:14; 31:24; Ps. 49:13[14]; Eccl. 7:25). The only occurrences that suggest a different connotation are Psalm 78:7 and Proverbs 3:26; because God is the object of trust, the speaker cannot be foolish or vain.

We might account for this range of meaning by understanding the word as a designation of irrational trust, either because the object is not worthy of the trust (e.g., oneself, one’s riches) or because it is born of faith with little or no supporting logic. If this is so, Eliphaz identifies Job’s fear of God as an irrational confidence, since all the evidence now indicates that he lacks the requisite fear of God. Given Eliphaz’s observations in verses 7–11, he seems to be accusing Job of denial in verse 6. In this interpretation, the translation should not be “Should not . . .,” but something more like, “Is not your [self-proclaimed] piety the basis for this irrational confidence? Is your only hope really in the [presumed] blamelessness of your ways?” In Eliphaz’s view, the incontestable RP (4:7–11) gives the lie to Job’s delusion of righteousness and exposes his hope as vain. [John H. Walton and Kelly Lemon Vizcaino, *The NIV Application Commentary: Job*, ed. Terry Muck et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 157.]

Cf. 15:4 where Eliphaz rejects the idea that Job is righteous.

VERSES 4:7-11

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

4:7 “Remember now, who ever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright destroyed? 8 “According to what I have seen, those who plow iniquity And those who sow trouble harvest it. 9 “By the breath of God they perish, And by the blast of His anger they come to an end. 10 “The roaring of the lion and the voice of the fierce lion, And the teeth of the young lions are broken. 11 “The lion perishes for lack of prey, And the whelps of the lioness are scattered.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

4:7 Consider: who has perished when he was innocent? Where have the honest been destroyed? 8 In my experience, those who plow injustice and those who sow trouble reap the same. 9 They perish at a single blast from God and come to an end by the breath of His nostrils. 10 The lion may roar and the fierce lion growl, but the fangs of young lions are broken. 11 The strong lion dies if it catches no prey, and the cubs of the lioness are scattered.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

4:7 “Consider now: Who, being innocent, has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed? 8 As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it. 9 At the breath of God they perish; at the blast of his anger they are no more. 10 The lions may roar and growl, yet the teeth of the great lions are broken. 11 The lion perishes for lack of prey, and the cubs of the lioness are scattered.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

The Righteous Do Not Suffer From God’s Anger Job 4:7–11 [UBS Handbook]

4:7 “Remember now, who ever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright destroyed?”

Martyrs; those suffering persecution; those who die untimely deaths or suffer disease? Ultimately, Jesus.

But see Acts 28:4 (Paul in Malta).

Luke 13:4-5; John 9:1-3; 1 Peter 2:19-20.

Eliphaz asserts as true that which he seeks to prove.

8 “According to what I have seen, those who plow iniquity And those who sow trouble harvest it.

9 “By the breath of God they perish, And by the blast of His anger they come to an end.

Anecdotal argument. Don't argue this way!

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

11 **“The lion perishes for lack of prey, And the whelps of the lioness are scattered.**

See: bad things happen to those who are bad. Making a theological argument from nature. Predatory. The lion is a type of the wicked (cf. Psalm 58:6).

TEV has made the implication clear in line a with “The wicked roar and growl like lions.”

Orphaned cubs? Job?

VERSES 4:12-17

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

4:12 “Now a word was brought to me stealthily, And my ear received a whisper of it. 13 “Amid disquieting thoughts from the visions of the night, When deep sleep falls on men, 14 Dread came upon me, and trembling, And made all my bones shake. 15 “Then a spirit passed by my face; The hair of my flesh bristled up. 16 “It stood still, but I could not discern its appearance; A form was before my eyes; There was silence, then I heard a voice: 17 ‘Can mankind be just before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker?

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

4:12 A word was brought to me in secret; my ears caught a whisper of it. 13 Among unsettling thoughts from visions in the night, when deep sleep descends on men, 14 fear and trembling came over me and made all my bones shake. 15 A wind passed by me, and I shuddered with fear. 16 A figure stood there, but I could not recognize its appearance; a form loomed before my eyes. I heard a quiet voice: 17 “Can a person be more righteous than God, or a man more pure than his Maker?”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

4:12 “A word was secretly brought to me, my ears caught a whisper of it. 13 Amid disquieting dreams in the night, when deep sleep falls on people, 14 fear and trembling seized me and made all my bones shake. 15 A spirit glided past my face, and the hair on my body stood on end. 16 It stopped, but I could not tell what it was. A form stood before my eyes, and I heard a hushed voice: 17 ‘Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can even a strong man be more pure than his Maker?

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Eliphaz Reports a Vision: No One is Righteous in God’s Eyes Job 4:12–21 [UBS Handbook]

4:12 “Now a word was brought to me stealthily, And my ear received a whisper of it.

13 “Amid disquieting thoughts from the visions of the night, When deep sleep falls on men,

14 Dread came upon me, and trembling, And made all my bones shake.

15 “Then a spirit passed by my face; The hair of my flesh bristled up.

16 “It stood still, but I could not discern its appearance; A form was before my eyes; There was silence, then I heard a voice:

Difficult. Was this a vision from God? From the Satan? From Eliphaz? Cf. 1 Kings 22:5-28. However, the “voice” seems to reflect a truism in verse 17. But what of the rest of the message?

Note that Talbert (97ff.) takes this vision to be from God. Cf. 9:2 and 40:8.

He begins by describing the communication which came to him. His account is very different from the way traditional prophets of Israel spoke of their revelations. It is more akin to the experience of Abraham in Genesis 15:12, in which a “dread and great darkness fell on him.” [William David Reyburn, *A Handbook on the Book of Job*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 97.]

Apparently the words Eliphaz claimed he heard in his dream are given in these verses. For three reasons it is doubtful that the words were a revelation from God: (a) “a word” (v. 12), not “a word of the LORD,” came to Eliphaz; (b) the word came “secretly” (i.e., in an elusive manner, v. 12); and (c) the message seemed to picture God as unconcerned about man (vv. 17–21). [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), 726.]

“Unlike the oracles given to some of the prophets in visions of the night, there is no clear indication of the source of this vision or of the one who speaks. Eliphaz may imply that this is supernatural and therefore authoritative, but the author of the book subverts that claim and makes us suspect that something less positive is going on here.” [Ash, 106]

Eliphaz’s mystical experience (4:12–21) occurs in a vision (NIV “dreams”). This word (*hizzayon*) identifies prophetic visions (e.g., 2 Sam. 7:17; Joel 2:28; Zech. 13:4) as well as terrifying nightmares (Job 7:14) and sometimes both (Isa. 22:1, 5). Dreams and visions in the ancient world were not simply psychological experiences; they originated in the divine realm. The literature from Mesopotamia describes what people believed about dreams and their interpretation. Job 33:15 also refers to visions derived from deep sleep (see also Abram’s vision from a deep sleep in Gen. 15:12–21). The texts associates Zaqiqu, the dream god (also Ziqiqu) with the merest breath of wind (cf. the use of *ruah*, spirit/wind, in 4:15). In *Ludlul bel nemeqi* (one of the pious suffering pieces), the sufferer indicates that he appealed to a zaqiqu, “but he did not enlighten me.”³ Just as Eliphaz identifies a “form” that stood before him (4:16), “a remarkable young man of outstanding physique” brings the sufferer in *Ludlul* a message of imminent recovery.⁴ Eliphaz is claiming revelation; in effect he says, “God gave me a message for you, Job.” [John H. Walton and Kelly Lemon Vizcaino, *The NIV Application Commentary: Job*, ed. Terry Muck et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 157–158.]

17 ‘Can mankind be just before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker?’

Translation issue here (NASB, ESV, NET vs. NIV, KJV).

KJV / NIV is likely incorrect on verse 17:

Job 4:17 Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his maker?

However, see 40:8

Job 40:8 “Will you really annul My judgment? Will you condemn Me that you may be justified?”

NCV preserves both meanings:

Job 4:17 It said, ‘Can a human be more right than God? Can a person be pure before his maker?’

The NIV renders 4:17 in the traditional way: “Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can a man be more pure than his Maker?” This is a grammatically defensible interpretation, since the Hebrew uses a finite stative verb with the comparative *min*. This construction usually prefers an adjective rather than a finite verb, but the latter is attested (1 Sam. 10:23; Nah. 3:8).⁵ Nevertheless, we should reject this translation on both lexical and rhetorical grounds. Lexically, it is not possible to compare a human’s purity to God’s because this term (*ṭhr*) is never used to describe God. It refers to a clean condition achieved from an unclean state—but because God cannot be unclean, God also cannot be designated as clean. [John H. Walton and Kelly Lemon Vizcaino, *The NIV Application Commentary: Job*, ed. Terry Muck et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 158.]

Scholars differ on how to translate the Hebrew word “from” in the literal phrases “from God” and “from his Maker.” One rendering makes it comparative (as in the KJV and NIV): “more righteous than God,” “more pure than his Maker.” Another is suggested by the NASB: “before God,” “before his Maker.” [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), 726.]

Can mortal man be righteous before God? Mortal man renders the Hebrew *‘enosh*, a possible play on words, since it means “weak” as well as “man.” Be righteous translates the Hebrew *DsaTaq*, and in the context of Eliphaz’s speech, it is understood by many interpreters to take on the sense of being morally and spiritually right, just, sinless, or perfect. Job himself uses this term in a more legal sense, having the idea of “innocent” or “guiltless.” The word translated “blameless” in 1:8 by RSV is a different Hebrew word. FRCL translates “Can a man claim to be blameless ...?” SPCL “Can a man be considered just before God?” NJB “Can a mortal seem upright to God?” The marginal alternative given in RSV and TEV is taken up by NEB, “Can mortal man be more righteous than God?” “More righteous than God” and righteous before God are alternative interpretations of the same Hebrew text, which arise from the ambiguity in the Hebrew preposition *min*. It is unusual for it to have the meaning “before” (RSV) or “in the sight

of,” but it is the word generally used when comparing, as in Genesis 38:26 “She is more righteous than I am,” where the same Hebrew verb meaning “to be in the right” is used as here in Job. TEV “in the sight of God” translates the meaning intended by RSV. Both RSV and TEV provide the alternative rendering in a footnote. Mortal man may be rendered as TEV “anyone,” “a person,” or “an ordinary person.” If the poetic intensification in line b is to be kept, then the step-up will be from “anyone” in line a to something like “greatest person” in line b.

Can a man be pure before his Maker? This line is parallel to the first. Here the word translated a man is GeBer. It focuses on male gender in contrast to female and carries the sense of power, force, strength. Job describes himself as a GeBer whose way has been blocked by God (3:23). Later God challenges Job to gird up his loins and act like a true GeBer (38:3; 40:7). In its poetic order line a is general, “Can an ordinary man,” and line b is raised by being specific, “Can even a real man.” The Hebrew word translated pure is often used of people, but only in Habakkuk 1:13 of God, “Thou who art of purer eyes than to behold evil.” In Leviticus 15:13; 22:4 the word for pure refers to being ritually clean in worship of God. In the present context, however, it refers to moral perfection in relation to the creator. The rhetorical question may be shifted to an emphatic denial; for example, “No ordinary person can be more righteous than God, and not even the bravest person can be more pure than the creator.” [William David Reyburn, *A Handbook on the Book of Job*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 101.]

Note Romans 4 on how one is righteous before a holy God. The Cross and faith alone. Also Job 9:33, 16:19, 33:23.

Job 9:2 “In truth I know that this is so; But how can a man be in the right before God?”

Cf. 14:4; 15:14; 25:4.

VERSES 4:18-21

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

4:18 'He puts no trust even in His servants; And against His angels He charges error. 19 'How much more those who dwell in houses of clay, Whose foundation is in the dust, Who are crushed before the moth! 20 'Between morning and evening they are broken in pieces; Unobserved, they perish forever. 21 'Is not their tent-cord plucked up within them? They die, yet without wisdom.'

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

4:18 If God puts no trust in His servants and He charges His angels with foolishness, 19 how much more those who dwell in clay houses, whose foundation is in the dust, who are crushed like a moth! 20 They are smashed to pieces from dawn to dusk; they perish forever while no one notices. 21 Are their tent cords not pulled up? They die without wisdom.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

4:18 If God places no trust in his servants, if he charges his angels with error, 19 how much more those who live in houses of clay, whose foundations are in the dust, who are crushed more readily than a moth! 20 Between dawn and dusk they are broken to pieces; unnoticed, they perish forever. 21 Are not the cords of their tent pulled up, so that they die without wisdom?'

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

4:18 'He puts no trust even in His servants; And against His angels He charges error.'

Difficult. Perhaps the comparison is between earthly servants and the fallen angels? But it seems that commentators favor the word "servants" to be the same as angels (parallelism).

19 'How much more those who dwell in houses of clay, Whose foundation is in the dust, Who are crushed before the moth!'

Here includes and follows lessons on human mortality.

20 'Between morning and evening they are broken in pieces; Unobserved, they perish forever.'

21 'Is not their tent-cord plucked up within them? They die, yet without wisdom.'

The "revelation" received by Eliphaz appears to end here.

VERSES 5:1-7

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

5:1 “Call now, is there anyone who will answer you? And to which of the holy ones will you turn? 2 “For anger slays the foolish man, And jealousy kills the simple. 3 “I have seen the foolish taking root, And I cursed his abode immediately. 4 “His sons are far from safety, They are even oppressed in the gate, And there is no deliverer. 5 “His harvest the hungry devour And take it to a place of thorns, And the schemer is eager for their wealth. 6 “For affliction does not come from the dust, Nor does trouble sprout from the ground, 7 For man is born for trouble, As sparks fly upward.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

5:1 Call out if you please. Will anyone answer you? Which of the holy ones will you turn to? 2 For anger kills a fool, and jealousy slays the gullible. 3 I have seen a fool taking root, but I immediately pronounced a curse on his home. 4 His children are far from safety. They are crushed at the city gate, with no one to rescue them. 5 The hungry consume his harvest, even taking it out of the thorns. The thirsty pant for his children’s wealth. 6 For distress does not grow out of the soil, and trouble does not sprout from the ground. 7 But mankind is born for trouble as surely as sparks fly upward.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

5:1 “Call if you will, but who will answer you? To which of the holy ones will you turn? 2 Resentment kills a fool, and envy slays the simple. 3 I myself have seen a fool taking root, but suddenly his house was cursed. 4 His children are far from safety, crushed in court without a defender. 5 The hungry consume his harvest, taking it even from among thorns, and the thirsty pant after his wealth. 6 For hardship does not spring from the soil, nor does trouble sprout from the ground. 7 Yet man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Eliphaz Says Job Alone is to Blame Job 5:1–7 [UBS Handbook Series]

5:1 “Call now, is there anyone who will answer you? And to which of the holy ones will you turn?”

Reflecting on their “error” of 4:18? Or a general call for help from heaven?

This is highly ironic, since the prologue has informed us that a member of the divine council initiated Job’s current situation. Consequently, Eliphaz is more correct than he knows, for no appeal to the divine council will resolve this before its time. This is also the first suggestion of Job initiating legal action: the verbs “call” (qr) and “answer” (nh) are legal terms used for an official court summons and the appearance before the judging

body in response to such a summons.¹² Job will later take up this idea of legal action and begin to call for an advocate to take up his case. Eliphaz, however, implies that summoning one of the council would be fruitless; perhaps his conviction goes back to 4:18, with his less-than-positive portrayal of God's servants. [John H. Walton and Kelly Lemon Vizcaino, *The NIV Application Commentary: Job*, ed. Terry Muck et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 160.]

2 “For anger slays the foolish man, And jealousy kills the simple.

3 “I have seen the foolish taking root, And I cursed his abode immediately.

Could mean that Eliphaz wished a curse, declared a curse, or that he observed the fool's house was cursed.

4 “His sons are far from safety, They are even oppressed in the gate, And there is no deliverer.

Job would have taken this personally, cf. 1:13-19.

5 “His harvest the hungry devour And take it to a place of thorns, And the schemer is eager for their wealth.

6 “For affliction does not come from the dust, Nor does trouble sprout from the ground,

7 For man is born for trouble, As sparks fly upward.

“The word ‘sparks’ is literally ‘sons of Reshef’, the god of destruction with his traditional arrows of trouble. So the argument may be that human beings are born to trouble because the earth beneath us and the underworld beneath us send troubles upward to us.” [Ash, 109-10]

May be that the nuance here is that “every man generates whatever trouble comes to him.” [Talbert, 98]

Eliphaz speaks in the vein of 4:17-21.

VERSES 5:8-16

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

8 “But as for me, I would seek God, And I would place my cause before God; 9 Who does great and unsearchable things, Wonders without number. 10 “He gives rain on the earth And sends water on the fields, 11 So that He sets on high those who are lowly, And those who mourn are lifted to safety. 12 “He frustrates the plotting of the shrewd, So that their hands cannot attain success. 13 “He captures the wise by their own shrewdness, And the advice of the cunning is quickly thwarted. 14 “By day they meet with darkness, And grope at noon as in the night. 15 “But He saves from the sword of their mouth, And the poor from the hand of the mighty. 16 “So the helpless has hope, And unrighteousness must shut its mouth.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

5:8 However, if I were you, I would appeal to God and would present my case to Him. 9 He does great and unsearchable things, wonders without number. 10 He gives rain to the earth and sends water to the fields. 11 He sets the lowly on high, and mourners are lifted to safety. 12 He frustrates the schemes of the crafty so that they achieve no success. 13 He traps the wise in their craftiness so that the plans of the deceptive are quickly brought to an end. 14 They encounter darkness by day, and they grope at noon as if it were night. 15 He saves the needy from their sharp words and from the clutches of the powerful. 16 So the poor have hope, and injustice shuts its mouth.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

5:8 “But if I were you, I would appeal to God; I would lay my cause before him. 9 He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted. 10 He provides rain for the earth; he sends water on the countryside. 11 The lowly he sets on high, and those who mourn are lifted to safety. 12 He thwarts the plans of the crafty, so that their hands achieve no success. 13 He catches the wise in their craftiness, and the schemes of the wily are swept away. 14 Darkness comes upon them in the daytime; at noon they grope as in the night. 15 He saves the needy from the sword in their mouth; he saves them from the clutches of the powerful. 16 So the poor have hope, and injustice shuts its mouth.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Eliphaz Advises Job to Take His Case to God Job 5:8–16 [UBS Handbook]

8 “But as for me, I would seek God, And I would place my cause before God;

9 Who does great and unsearchable things, Wonders without number.

10 “He gives rain on the earth And sends water on the fields,

11 So that He sets on high those who are lowly, And those who mourn are lifted to safety.

12 **“He frustrates the plotting of the shrewd, So that their hands cannot attain success.**

13 **“He captures the wise by their own shrewdness, And the advice of the cunning is quickly thwarted.**

Quoted by Paul in 1 Cor. 3:19.

14 **“By day they meet with darkness, And grope at noon as in the night.**

15 **“But He saves from the sword of their mouth, And the poor from the hand of the mighty.**

16 **“So the helpless has hope, And unrighteousness must shut its mouth.**

VERSES 5:17-27

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB95]:

17 “Behold, how happy is the man whom God reproves, So do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. 18 “For He inflicts pain, and gives relief; He wounds, and His hands also heal. 19 “From six troubles He will deliver you, Even in seven evil will not touch you. 20 “In famine He will redeem you from death, And in war from the power of the sword. 21 “You will be hidden from the scourge of the tongue, And you will not be afraid of violence when it comes. 22 “You will laugh at violence and famine, And you will not be afraid of wild beasts. 23 “For you will be in league with the stones of the field, And the beasts of the field will be at peace with you. 24 “You will know that your tent is secure, For you will visit your abode and fear no loss. 25 “You will know also that your descendants will be many, And your offspring as the grass of the earth. 26 “You will come to the grave in full vigor, Like the stacking of grain in its season. 27 “Behold this; we have investigated it, and so it is. Hear it, and know for yourself.”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [HCSB]:

5:17 See how happy the man is God corrects; so do not reject the discipline of the Almighty. 18 For He crushes but also binds up; He strikes, but His hands also heal. 19 He will rescue you from six calamities; no harm will touch you in seven. 20 In famine He will redeem you from death, and in battle, from the power of the sword. 21 You will be safe from slander and not fear destruction when it comes. 22 You will laugh at destruction and hunger and not fear the animals of the earth. 23 For you will have a covenant with the stones of the field, and the wild animals will be at peace with you. 24 You will know that your tent is secure, and nothing will be missing when you inspect your home. 25 You will also know that your offspring will be many and your descendants like the grass of the earth. 26 You will approach the grave in full vigor, as a stack of sheaves is gathered in its season. 27 We have investigated this, and it is true! Hear it and understand it for yourself.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NIV]:

5:17 “Blessed is the one whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. 18 For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal. 19 From six calamities he will rescue you; in seven no harm will touch you. 20 In famine he will deliver you from death, and in battle from the stroke of the sword. 21 You will be protected from the lash of the tongue, and need not fear when destruction comes. 22 You will laugh at destruction and famine, and need not fear the wild animals. 23 For you will have a covenant with the stones of the field, and the wild animals will be at peace with you. 24 You will know that your tent is secure; you will take stock of your property and find nothing missing. 25 You will know that your children will be many, and your descendants like the grass of the earth. 26 You will come to the grave in full vigor, like sheaves gathered in season. 27 “We have examined this, and it is true. So hear it and apply it to yourself.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Eliphaz Assures Job That God Will Restore Him Job 5:17–27 [UBS Handbook]

17 “Behold, how happy is the man whom God reproveth, So do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.

Hebrews 12:4-13 (citing Proverbs 3:11-12).

The following words sound like 1 Samuel 2:8 :

“He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the ash heap To make them sit with nobles, And inherit a seat of honor; For the pillars of the earth are the LORD’S, And He set the world on them.

18 “For He inflicts pain, and gives relief; He wounds, and His hands also heal.

19 “From six troubles He will deliver you, Even in seven evil will not touch you.

20 “In famine He will redeem you from death, And in war from the power of the sword.

21 “You will be hidden from the scourge of the tongue, And you will not be afraid of violence when it comes.

22 “You will laugh at violence and famine, And you will not be afraid of wild beasts.

23 “For you will be in league with the stones of the field, And the beasts of the field will be at peace with you.

Stones of the field = agricultural troubles. Isa 5:2; 2 Kings 3:19,25.

24 “You will know that your tent is secure, For you will visit your abode and fear no loss.

25 “You will know also that your descendants will be many, And your offspring as the grass of the earth.

Barbs in Job’s heart; Job lost his children and his farms.

26 “You will come to the grave in full vigor, Like the stacking of grain in its season.

Cf. Hosea 6:1; Deut. 32:39.

27 “Behold this; we have investigated it, and so it is. Hear it, and know for yourself.”

There is irony here, as Eliphaz exhorts Job to fear God for the very reasons Satan said he always had: for the supposed earthly blessings that come with worship.

Jesus on the man born blind; tower that fell... Luke 13:1-5.

We look at calamity that befalls someone and it's easy to think: they must have done something to deserve it

Absolutizing the relative.

From the musical "The Sound of Music" where the handsome captain Von Trapp declares his love for the young heroine. With delight she sings:

Perhaps I had a wicked childhood
Perhaps I had a miserable youth
But somewhere in my wicked miserable past
There must have been a moment of truth
For here you are standing there loving me
Whether or not you should
So somewhere in my youth or childhood
I must have done something good
Nothing comes from nothing
Nothing ever could
So somewhere in my youth or childhood
I must have done something good.

Don't ask "what have I done? but what does God want me to learn and do?"

"What have I done to deserve this?"

This innocent suffer (what does it mean to be "innocent?")

Nothing is final until it's final.

What not to say to the suffering.

Are Cowper's words true: "behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face." ?

Sowing and reaping? Sin in James 5? Cf. Psalm 32 (sin does result in physical sickness).

The 3 friends live in a black and white world.

The 3 friends have no room for nuance.

The 3 friends think that truth must be told regardless.
The 3 friends have no room for demonic attack.
The 3 friends have no room for innocent suffering.
The 3 friends have no room for delayed justice. Cf. Psalm 1:5.
The 3 friends have no appreciation for eternity.

Truisms are not individual absolutes.
The Bible alone is absolute / Gospel.

There is a peanuts cartoon where Lucy tells Charlie Brown, "There is one thing you are going to have to learn: you reap what you sow; you get out of life what you put into it, no more no less." Snoopy overhears the conversation and mutters, "I'd like to see a little margin for error." Better grace and mercy.

Gal. 6:7 ff.

Filling up that which is lacking in the sufferings of Christ . . . Participating in His suffering.

See conclusion by Ash, page 114ff. "The Undeserved and Redemptive Sufferings of Christians"