

Title: Disorder in the Court: The Last Words of Eliphaz

Number: 0122Job22:1-30(23)

Text: 22.1-30

Central Idea: You cannot apply right what you know wrong

Date: January 16, 2022

{Read Selected Text / Prayer}

1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite responded, 2 “Can a vigorous man be of use to God, Or a wise man be useful to himself? 3 “Is there any pleasure to the Almighty if you are righteous, Or profit if you make your ways perfect? 4 “Is it because of your reverence that He reproves you, That He enters into judgment against you? 5 “Is not your wickedness great, And your iniquities without end? 6 “For you have taken pledges of your brothers without cause, And stripped men naked. 7 “To the weary you have given no water to drink, And from the hungry you have withheld bread.

[i] One thing we've noted in our study of Job is that there was an underlying assumption that bad things happen to bad people

Job's 3 friends assumed this to be an unwritten law of heaven:
Calamity strikes as direct result of personal sin.

Bad happens to you = must have done something to deserve it.

Common thought in the ANE - Job's time around 2000 BC.

Turn t/clock forward 2000 years & we see t/same mentality.

It's recorded in t/Gospels.

John 9 t/disciples see a man blind from birth. They ask Jesus a ?:

2 “. . . Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?”

Jesus answer:

3 “. . . It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

IOW - phys. disability not t/result of personal sin.

But in this instance, it was preordained so that G. would be glorified. With that, Jesus healed t/man.

We read in Lk 13:1–5 about Jesus being confronted w/news of a group of Galileans who were murdered by Pontius Pilate.

Jesus responded by asking,

2 “. . . Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this fate? 3 “I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

Jesus immediately offered another example:

4 “Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? 5 “I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”

IOW - Don't blame disaster on personal sin, but remember we are all sinners in need of repentance.

Pagans also believed bad things happen bc people are bad.

In BOA we read how TAP was shipwrecked on t/Med. Sea. He apparently floated to t/shore of Malta, a small island just S. of Sicily.

T/Natives received him there. While placing some sticks on t/fire they had made, a poisonous viper bit him. We read in Acts 28:4 - When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they began saying to one another, “Undoubtedly this man is a murderer, & though he has been saved from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live.”

In G’s providence, Paul t/Apostle escaped all physical harm.

Again we see this mind set, not uncommon today - even among Xns, that if something really bad happens, God must be punishing you. This was t/unshakable conviction of Job’s 3 friends.

[ii] Back to Job . . .

Our study has been on hold for sev. mos. I regret that. If you r a recent visitor & haven’t been part of this study, we are in the middle of t/book so you may feel a bit lost. But all of the previous 22 messages are available online, just go to our website or to GIG.com.

[iii] Title and main point

Title: *Disorder in the Court: The Last Words of Eliphaz*

Disorder in the court bc Eliphaz continues his legal assault against Job
The Last Words of Eliphaz bc this is t/last we hear of him in t/book.

Rem. there are 3 cycles of speeches in t/BOJ whereby t/3 friends (E/B/Z) take turns confronting Job, claiming he suffered bc of his sin. Here in chapt. 22 we see E. kick off t/last cycle of speeches. After chapt. 22 we are done w/him.

Central Idea: *You cannot apply right what you know wrong*
Eliphaz, like his 2 friends b4 him, says lots of things that are true.
Prob is w/application.

E. takes much of what is true on face value and misapplies it to Job.

You cannot apply right what you know wrong

Robert Alden, in his excell. comm. on t/book ==>“There is not much new in Eliphaz’s third speech. He touched on most of the themes that the friends had used. For the first time we read of specific accusations (vv. 6–9), a move that represents a further emboldening on his part and a wider rift between him and Job. Toward the end of the speech (vv. 21–30) is a fine evangelistic sermon with several well-turned phrases. While it would be applicable for many situations, Job was not the one who needed to hear it. It is another example of good medicine given to the wrong patient.” [Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary]

You cannot apply right what you know wrong . . .

[iv] I am compulsive when it comes to preparation

It takes me many hours of extensive study in prep. to teach
For every hour I preach there’s often 20-30 hours of prep.

Fear of unpreparedness is a common object of my dreams.

Last week I had a dream that I was attending a wedding. It was such a significant wedding that hundreds were in attendance and even the local news media was there. I arrive at t/wedding & notice that I’m not properly dressed. I’m wearing my usual year-round attire of shorts and T-shirt. Then I’m informed that I was to perform t/wedding—

—totally unprepared. I am in a blind panic, so much so that I force myself awake. I'm relieved. It's only a dream. I drift back off to sleep and what happens, I go right back to the same dream! This happens to me regularly: I dream that I'm about to teach/preach, 100s are there waiting; and I'm totally unprepared.

I know that I cannot preach well when I'm not prepared.

That can be good. I'm almost never unprepared.

But bc of my perfectionistic bent, I rarely feel adequately prepared.

Back to - *You cannot apply right what you know wrong*

Applies to E. as well. He is instructing Job, but he is unprepared when it comes to his application.

[v] There are 5 points to our outline that will take us through these 30 verses

I. False Assumptions by Eliphaz against Job

II. False Accusations by Eliphaz against Job

III. False Allegations

IV. False Applications

[vi]Look at the first 5 verses with me . . .

I. False Assumptions: The Depth of Job's Sin in Light of God's Indifference (22:1-5)

We see false assumptions by Eliphaz about God & Job here.

A. God's Assumed Indifference (1-3)

1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite responded, 2 “Can a vigorous man be of use to God, Or a wise man be useful to himself?”

1. The word the NAS translates “vigorous man” is the Hebrew ‘gibber’ - a “strong or vigorous man”

Does G. need, really need, even t/strongest & best of men? That's t/

2. Then Eliphaz turns to Job in verse 3

3 “Is there any pleasure to the Almighty ('Shaddai') if you are righteous, Or profit if you make your ways perfect?”

3. Eliphaz paints a picture of a God who is indifferent / aloof

a. Is that true?

It's not true that God is indifferent. On that count Eliphaz is wrong.
You cannot apply right what you know wrong.

It is true that G. doesn't need us. We need him, he doesn't need us.

(1) We call this God's attribute of aseity (“by self”)

He is perfect, complete, totally self-sufficient in Himself.
G. cannot be improved upon. He didn't need to create.

Acts 17:25: “The God who made the world and all that is in it ... is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything.”

“When men do worse than they could, do they take away the righteousness that is in God? Can they subtract from His majesty? Can they annihilate His glory and His honor? Can they shorten the boundaries of His kingdom? Not at all! . . . But as for us, let us consider whether or not it is our blessedness to take His side and to render ourselves His subjects in obedience.” [John Calvin]

You say, “Well he needed to create so that he could be glorified,” or “he needed to create in order to love.” No. for all of eternity there was perfect love & glory within t/Godhead: Father, Son, H.S.

But God’s aseity doesn’t mean indifference.

A. God’s Assumed Indifference (1-3)

B. Job’s Assumed Sinfulness (4-5)

4 **“Is it because of your reverence that He reproves you, That He enters into judgment against you?** Rhetorical sarcasm. IOW ...

“Reverence” = “fear.” / 3x in chaps 1-2 we are told that Job feared G.

5 **“Is not your wickedness great, And your iniquities without end?”** “Job, your wickedness abounds & your sins are innumerable”

Eliphaz takes t/words of Zophar, t/youngest of the 3 friends, & turns his generalities (“calamity befalls t/wicked”) into specifics against Job (“you are t/wicked man who suffered calamity bc of your sinfulness”).

You cannot apply right what you know wrong.

a. There has been a progression of frustration

In t/1st cycle of speeches t/3 friends talked in generalities,
w/a rare hint of sympathy.

Eliphaz was even complementary toward Job.

He begins t/1st cycle of speeches with affirmation:

4:3-4 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.

In 2d cycle t3 focus on t/dire fate of t/wicked,
whom Job is assumed to be.

In the 3d cycle here, all assumptions are off. Eliphaz gets personal.
Progression from bad to worse. No longer “he” / “him” / “they”
but “you Job.”

We move from ==>

I. False Assumptions: The Depth of Job’s Sin in Light of God’s Indifference (22:1-5)

To ==>

II. False Accusations: The Delineation of Job’s Sin in Light of Three Categories (22:6-11)

A. Job’s Sins Enumerated (6-9)

Here comes a list of Job’s supposed sins.

Job did say in chapt. 6 ==>

24 “Teach me, and I will be silent; And show me how I have erred.
E. is more than happy to oblige.

His list of sins are of omission (neglect) & social in nature.
Fall into 3 categories.

1. Against the Brethren (6)

6 “**For you have taken pledges of your brothers without cause, And stripped men naked.”**

a. Job is accused of granting loans from his countrymen and taking their clothing as surety

(1) This was condemned in the ANE and later in t/Mosaic Law
Exo. 22:25–26 25 “If you lend money to My people, to the poor among you, you are not to act as a creditor to him; you shall not charge him interest. 26 “If you ever take your neighbor’s cloak as a pledge, you are to return it to him before the sun sets,

2. Against the Weary and Hungry (7)

7 “**To the weary you have given no water to drink, And from the hungry you have withheld bread.”**

a. I take verse 8 as a parenthetical statement
8 “**But the earth belongs to the mighty man, And the honorable man dwells in it.”**

(1) There are different ways to understand this
I take it as a statement of fact w/implication that once-powerful Job, t/greatest of t/men of the East, is neither mighty nor honorable.

3. Against Widows and Orphans (9)

O.T. scholar John Walton ==>

“We know that these [accusations against Job] are generic offenses ... from the standpoint of ancient Near Eastern legal texts that regularly address the obligations of society to care for these vulnerable people.”

[NIV Applic. Commentary: Job]

9 “You have sent widows away empty, And the strength of the orphans has been crushed.”

a. Widows and orphans were the most vulnerable of society - defenseless - much like unborn babies today

To neglect W&O was egregious sin.

An “atrocious felony” acc. to 1 comm. [BKC]

(1) Oppression of widows / orphans is condemned t/o the O.T.

(2) Also a point of warning in the N.T.

James 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

A. Job's Sins Enumerated (6-9)

- 1. Against the Brethren (6)**
- 2. Against the Weary and Hungry (7)**
- 3. Against Widows and Orphans (9)**

All assumed by E. (prob. bc they were common sins of t/day).

You cannot apply right what you know wrong.

(3) Job denies these charges later in chapter 31 - a chapter that concludes with “The words of Job are ended”

16 “If I have kept the poor from their desire, Or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail, 17 Or have eaten my morsel alone, And the orphan has not shared it. . . . 19 If I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, Or that the needy had no covering, 20 If his loins have not thanked me, And if he has not been warmed with the fleece of my sheep, 21 If I have lifted up my hand against the orphan . . . 22 Let my shoulder fall from the socket, And my arm be broken off at the elbow.

B. Eliphaz commits “The Fallacy of Assuming the Cause” (10-11)

Something happens & we assume there's a connection, a direct cause, when there may not be. It's assumed.

Why was JFK assassinated? BC prayer was removed from t/schools. After all, it was only months after this decision of the S.C. that JFK was killed. That's a rather silly example, but you get t/point.

1. We all fall prey to this mistake

Like when we're suspicious about others. We don't think t/best about them bc we assume something we really don't know w/certainty.

When calamity strikes someone, like it did Job.

We assume we know t/cause when in fact we don't have all t/facts.

As believers we ought to think t/best of others & not assume we know what G. is doing in their lives - & why.

1. The fallacy of assuming the cause? Eliphaz is guilty

You cannot apply right what you know wrong.

Eliphaz imputes t/reason for Job's suffering squarely at Job's feet==>
10 “**Therefore snares surround you, And sudden dread terrifies you,** 11 **Or darkness, so that you cannot see, And an abundance of water covers you.**

Picture of suffocation / drowning. Snares, terrors, darkness, floods: common images for suffering & even death.

Eliphaz assumes t/cause. “Job, you lost your wealth & your children bc you are wicked. That’s why you are suffocating.”

You cannot apply right what you know wrong.

III. False Allegations: The Defiance of Job’s Sin in Light of God’s Transcendence (22:12-20)

Eliphaz establishes t/fact that God is transcendent. He stands over and above his creation. It’s the opposite of immanence: God is near.

A. God’s Transcendence (12)

12 “**Is not God in the height of heaven? Look also at the distant stars, how high they are!**”

Milky Way = approx. 100,000 million stars

Our Galaxy = approx. 100 billion

Hubbel Space Telescope, launched in 1990, recently discovered t/furthest star ever seen by humans = 9 billion light yrs away! Shudder God surpasses them all! That’s how big / transcendent God is. [^]

It's in t/light of that great G. that E. paints Job's defiance==>

B. Job's Alleged Defiance (13-17)

1. Eliphaz accuses Job of being a practical deist

Deism, from t/19th c., was a view that saw God as so transcendent that he was uninvolved w/His creation.

13 “**You say** [Job]: ‘**What does God know? Can He judge through the thick darkness?** 14 ‘**Clouds are a hiding place for Him, so that He cannot see; And He walks on the vault of heaven.**’

G. is so transcendent that he doesn't really care about what happens on planet earth.

a. Now there is zero evidence Job said any of this

b. These are words that those who don't know God say

Psa. 73:11 [The wicked] say, “How does God know? And is there knowledge with the Most High?”

What X-rejectors say today. They're on social media // celebrities // supposed smart people // prominent who know better than us // even your neighbor.

They live as practical deists, if they affirm G's existence at all.

Not true of us. Wasn't true of Job.

2. In verses 15-17 Eliphaz puts forth a challenge:

15 “Will you keep to the ancient path Which wicked men have trod, 16 Who were snatched away before their time, Whose foundations were washed away by a river? 17 “They said to God, ‘Depart from us!’ And ‘What can the Almighty do to them?’”

a. Phrase “Ancient path” used negatively here

“Job will you continue to live like the wicked do? Those whose lives were washed away like a flood?”

b. Eliphaz points out God’s common grace in verse 18

18 “Yet [in spite of their wickedness] He filled their houses with good things; [judgment for their wickedness will come later]
Eliphaz adds: **“But the counsel of the wicked is far from me.”**

(1) Job claimed the same words for himself in 21:16

Eliphaz takes Job’s words & rubs them in his face:

“No, Job, the counsel of t/wicked is far from me, not you.”

3. The sinner’s demise celebrated by the righteous (19-20)

These words of Eliphaz are also misguided.

19a “The righteous see and are glad . . .”

a. What do the righteous see? Calamity of the wicked (v. 16)

16 . . . snatched away before their time . . . foundations were washed away by a river?

They are so glad, they belittle them ==>

19b-20 19b . . . And the innocent mock them, 20 Saying, ‘Truly our adversaries are cut off, And their abundance the fire has consumed.’

(1) Are we to rejoice in the calamity of the wicked?

Not in t/sense reflected here. We may rejoice in a sov. G. who vindicates his children & righteously judges persistent X-rejectors.

I think that's t/sense of David's similar words in Psalm 52.

We're warned in Prov 24:17 “Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice.”

Matthew 5:44 “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,”

You cannot apply right what you know wrong.

Job didn't rejoice in the suffering of t/wicked ==>

31:29-30 29 “Have I rejoiced at the extinction of my enemy, Or exulted when evil befell him? 30 “No, I have not allowed my mouth to sin By asking for his life in a curse.

BTW - when Eliphaz claims t/righteous will “mock” t/calamity of t/wicked, t/same Heb. word for “mock” is used by Job in chapt. 21.

He began his reply in t/prev. chapt.

3 “Bear with me that I may speak; Then after I have spoken you may mock [me].”

Hmmm. Is Eliphaz justifying his belittling of Job? Maybe . . .

Last point ==>

IV. False Applications: The Direction of Job's Sin in Light of God's Restoration (22:21-30)

2 things we see here. Both start w/the letter "R" -

Repentance & Restoration.

IOW, Job is again being exhorted to repent if he wants to be restored.

A. Repentance (21-24)

1. Submit (21)

2. Learn (22)

3. Return (23-24)

1. Submit (21)

21 "Yield now and be at peace with Him; Thereby good will come to you."

2. Learn (22)

22 "Please receive instruction from His mouth And establish His words in your heart."

3. Return (23-24)

a. Here's a condition

23 "IF you return to the Almighty, you will be restored; If you remove unrighteousness far from your tent,"

24 **And place your gold in the dust, And the gold of Ophir [legendary gold of the East] among the stones of the brooks"**

[Bury your hope in riches and things, including loved ones]

Return to G. Forsake unrighteousness. Forsake wealth, people, power.

a. Job would later deny that he has done this

31:24-25,28 24 “**If I have put my confidence in gold, And called fine gold my trust, 25 If I have gloated because my wealth was great, And because my hand had secured so much; 28 That too would have been an iniquity calling for judgment, For I would have denied God above.**

A. Repentance (21-24)

B. Restoration (25-30) x6 Note the “If/Then” conditions

1. God Prized Above All (25)

25 “**THEN the Almighty will be your gold & choice silver to you.**

2. God Cherished Above All (26)

26 “**For then you will delight in the Almighty [Heb. Shaddai] And lift up your face to God.”**

a. Lifting up the face before God was a common way to express God’s favor Psa 31:16 Make Your face to shine upon Your servant...

3. Prayers Heard (27a)

27a “**You will pray to Him, and He will hear you . . .”**

In a twist of irony at t/end of t/book after G. confronts t/3 friends for misrepresenting Him, He says ==>

42:8 “. . . My servant Job will pray for you. For I will accept him so that I may not do with you according to your folly . . .”

4th aspect of Job’s restoration acc. to Eliphaz ==>

4. Vows Kept (27b)

27b “... And you will pay your vows.”

5. Decisions Confirmed / Life Illuminated (28)

28 “You will also decree [decide] a thing, and it will be established for you; And light will shine on your ways. [Cf. HCSB]

6. Usefulness to Others Promised (29-30) (couple of diff. vv.)

29 “When you are cast down, you will speak with confidence, And the humble person He will save. 30 “He will deliver one who is not innocent, And he will be delivered through the cleanliness of your hands.”

B. Restoration (25-30)

These are all good things. Even marks of spiritual renewal.
We want these things to characterize us!

1. God Prized Above All (25)

2. God Cherished Above All (26)

3. Prayers Heard (27a)

4. [Promises] Kept (27b)

5. Decisions Confirmed / Life Illuminated (28)

6. Usefulness to Others Promised (29-30)

How do we apply all of this. How do we take “disorder in the court” & turn it to “order in our lives.” Couple of concluding thots . . .

1. When falsely accused find refuge in God who knows the facts.

Dealt with this b4 — topic of false accusations in Job are so common.

You can face accusations/criticisms by resting in t/Man of truth: JC.

Year 2000 was one of the more difficult years in our lives.

Was forced to resign my pastorate in AZ under false allegations.

Had gone thru a period of burnout / depression which forced me to take a few mos off. A few men found out that I was taking medication for that depression & they objected.

I was called to a meeting whereby I was put in a circle of chairs to face my accusers. Then I was told that taking medication for depression disqualified me from ministry. I subsequently resigned.

In t/midst of false accusations & criticisms, Lois & I found refuge in God who knows our hearts and t/facts.

He used that for our good Rom. 8:28 style: I finished by master's degree // we had Giana // we joined w/a congreg. sympathetic to what we had endured.

Unknown to us at t/time, G. was working here. This CH had gone thru a very trying time. Senior pastor resigned. Lots of folks left.

Long story short, it opened t/door for G. to lead us here. 19 yrs ago.

1. When falsely accused find refuge in God who knows the facts.

2. Take accusations and criticisms seriously (check your heart)

Really hard for me to do. I am basically a faint-hearted person who gets discouraged easily.

But we need to be aware of our sin. If someone accuses me of failure in that regard, I need to check my heart to see if there's any element of truth there.

One of the Puritan divines prayed thus:

"Teach me how to take reproofs from friends, even though I think I do not deserve them; Use them to make me tenderly afraid of sin . . . more concerned to keep heart and life unblameable; cause them to help me, to reflect on my [lack] of spirituality . . . to look upon myself as unworthy . . . Blessed be [Your] Name for anything that life brings.

[The Valley of Vision, 148]

3. Be sure of the facts before you accuse or criticize someone else.

How often do we form opinions what we later learn were ignorant.

About 10 yrs ago CC went thru a time of signif. upheaval, fueled in part by ignorance.

Gossip, t/forming of opinions, factions, & attacks against t/leadership.

Once t/dust settled t/elders met w/each family that remained.

We clarified what we could. G. enabled t/CH to move on.

Rem. Satan is called "the accuser of the brethren."

He doesn't need help from us.

4. You cannot apply right what you know wrong.

True when it comes to how we think or speak about others; how we correct them.

Also tru when it comes to knowing biblical truth.

CHs are filled w/people who take t/bible and misinterpret it.

Can't apply bad theology in a good way.

Puritan Richard Rogers, when asked why he was so meticulous in his approach to God's Word, stated: "I serve a precise God."

You can only apply right what you know right.

5. Remember the One who was falsely accused.

Jesus was accused of having a demon (John 7:20; 8:48); Called an illegitimate child (John 8:41); A half-breed Samaritan (John 8:48); A sinner; (John 9:24; Matt. 11:19; Mark 3:21); a blasphemer (John 10:33). Even a deceiver & false prophet (Matt. 27:63; Mark 14:65). Ultimately He was crucified for crimes he didn't commit.

T/Jews had their reasons, as did t/Romans.

As we read in Acts chapt. 4, they all came together to do that which G. had predestined to occur. Was always part of t/plan, plan A.

To permit t/fall, t/ravages of sin, and to provide a sinless substitute, Himself G. who would live a sinless life & die an undeserved death on behalf of His people.

Swindoll cites a story about t/German Reformer, Martin Luther, who found himself condemned by Satan for his sin. The Satan began naming his sins one-by-one. Luther responded by saying, "Think a little harder. You must have forgotten some." Once Satan ran out of ammunition, the Reformer replied, "Now write across the list in red ink: 'The blood of Jesus Christ . . . cleanses me from it all.'" [Adapted from Swindoll, 181]

"Upon the Cross where Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied."