

**Job 4:1 ¶ Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,
Job 4:2 If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? but who can withhold himself from speaking?**

Eliphaz the Temanite is the first of Job's friends to speak in answer to Job. It's like he couldn't wait to have his say. He expresses the hope that he doesn't want to cause Job further grief, but he must share what is on his heart. Implied—I care about you too much to stay quiet.

Job 4:3 Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands.

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

Job 4:5 But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.

Job 4:6 Is not *this* thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?

Eliphaz notes that Job has taught and counseled many who were troubled and weak (in faith I think is the implication). Though he has provided strength and encouragement to others, he had not responded any better than those he had counseled in his time of trouble. He asks Job if he cannot find strength in his faith in God based on innocence of any wrongdoing.

Job 4:7 ¶ Remember, I pray thee, who *ever* perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?

Job 4:8 Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.

Job 4:9 By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.

Maybe Eliphaz thinks he is exercising tough love, but he is just sticking a knife into Job's heart and twisting it. He asks Job if he can recall anyone that had suffered destruction that was innocent. Implied—Do you really think you are an exception?

Eliphaz declares that experience has taught him that those that sow wickedness will reap the same. He then states that what they reap is a direct result of the judgment of God.

It seems to be me that Eliphaz has a small circle of experience. Speaking from the human point of view, history reveals many examples of "the innocent" suffering and the wicked prospering. Even the psalmist struggled with this truth. I quote from the NLT for clearer understanding.

Psalms 73:1–20 "Truly God is good to Israel, to those whose hearts are pure. But as for me, I came so close to the edge of the cliff! My feet were slipping, and I was almost gone. For I envied the proud when I saw them prosper despite their wickedness. They seem to live such a painless life; their bodies are so healthy and strong. They aren't

troubled like other people or plagued with problems like everyone else. They wear pride like a jeweled necklace, and their clothing is woven of cruelty. These fat cats have everything their hearts could ever wish for! They scoff and speak only evil; in their pride they seek to crush others. They boast against the very heavens, and their words strut throughout the earth. And so the people are dismayed and confused, drinking in all their words. "Does God realize what is going on?" they ask. "Is the Most High even aware of what is happening?" Look at these arrogant people — enjoying a life of ease while their riches multiply. Was it for nothing that I kept my heart pure and kept myself from doing wrong? All I get is trouble all day long; every morning brings me pain. If I had really spoken this way, I would have been a traitor to your people. So I tried to understand why the wicked prosper. But what a difficult task it is! Then one day I went into your sanctuary, O God, and I thought about the destiny of the wicked. Truly, you put them on a slippery path and send them sliding over the cliff to destruction. In an instant they are destroyed, swept away by terrors. Their present life is only a dream that is gone when they awake."

Job 4:10 The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions, are broken.

Job 4:11 The old lion perisheth for lack of prey, and the stout lion's whelps are scattered abroad.

The best I can make of these verses is pretty heartless. Eliphaz compares Job's life to a lion that begins life strong and healthy but ends up weak and hungry with no offspring around to help him.

Job 4:12 ¶ Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof.

Job 4:13 In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men,

Job 4:14 Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.

Job 4:15 Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up:

Job 4:16 It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying,

Eliphaz next tells Job that he had been given a revelation in a vision one night while others were soundly sleeping. This vision was one that made him shake in fear. He stated that a spirit passed before his face and made the hair on his skin stand up. He couldn't discern the exact shape of the spirit, but he heard a voice speak in the quiet of the night.

As we read what the spirit said, I think it will become clear that it was an evil spirit.

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

The obvious answer to both of these questions is "No."

Job 4:18 Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly:

Job 4:19 How much less *in* them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation *is* in the dust, *which* are crushed before the moth?

Job 4:20 They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever without any regarding *it*.

Job 4:21 Doth not their excellency *which is* in them go away? they die, even without wisdom.

The spirit is basically saying, “If God couldn’t trust His angels, many of whom rebelled against Him, what makes you think that he puts trust in any man. Men are just creatures made from dirt that can be crushed as easily as a moth. In the space of a day they can die and quickly be forgotten. The body they leave behind returns to dust. I think the last phrase is implying annihilation, saying that nothing of the person remains.

Part of what the spirit says is true. Men are weak creatures made from dirt that die and return to dust. However, it is not true that God has no regard for any man and that a person’s existence ends after death. This is one of the most popular methods of deceit used by Satan and his legions—to mix truth with lies.

I truly think Eliphaz is concerned for Job and wants to help him, but he is seduced into depending upon his own wisdom for understanding—not God’s. He was not blessed to have the written word of God at his disposal or the indwelling Holy Spirit to help him recognize the deception of the enemy and guide him into truth. Did he even think to pray and ask for God’s help in doing so?