

Job

[Part 2]

Job 5:1 [New King James] *“Call out now; is there anyone who will answer you? And to which of the holy ones will you turn?”*

The Hebrew word translated “*holy ones*” is “*qâdôsh*” which can refer to angels, saints as well as God, so we see that any appeal against God will find no support among angels. Those who are fretful under God’s chastening, [**Job 5:17**] are morally and spiritually senseless people. This ought to be a solemn warning against making such an appeal.

Job 5:2-7 [NIV] *“Resentment kills a fool, and envy slays the simple. I myself have seen a fool taking root, but suddenly his house was cursed. His children are far from safety, crushed in court without a defender. The hungry consume his harvest, taking it even from among thorns, and the thirsty pant after his wealth. For hardship does not spring from the soil, nor does trouble sprout from the ground. Yet man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward.”*

This is truth that Eliphaz deduces from his own observations of life. Trouble does not germinate itself, it springs from a human’s evil heart, as inevitably as sparks fly up from a fire.

Job 5:8-16 [New King James] *“But as for me, I would seek God, and to God I would commit my cause, Who does great things, and unsearchable, marvellous things without number. He gives rain on the earth, and sends waters on the fields. He sets on high those who are lowly, and those who mourn are lifted to safety. He frustrates the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot carry out their plans. He catches the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the cunning comes quickly upon them. They meet with darkness in the daytime, and grope at noontime as in the night. But He saves the needy from the sword, from the mouth of the mighty, and from their hand. So the poor have hope, and injustice shuts her mouth.”*

What Job’s friends say about the Creator God is true, but they base their advice on a falsehood, assuming that Job had committed some great sin that had caused his suffering.

Neither they or Job knew of Satan’s conversations with the Creator God, [**Job 1:6-12; Job 2:1-7**].

It is human nature to blame people for their own troubles, but Job’s story makes it clear that blame cannot always be attached to those whom trouble strikes.

1 Corinthians 3:19 [New King James] *“For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, ‘He catches the wise in their own craftiness’;”*

Paul quotes part of this scripture [**verse 13**] although God rebuked Eliphaz for being wrong in his advice to Job, [**Job 42:7**] not all that Eliphaz said was in error. The part Paul quoted was correct, people are often caught in their own traps, [*“craftiness”*].

This shows how scripture must be used to explain and comment on itself.

We must be familiar with the entire scope of God’s Word, the Christian Bible, to properly understand any difficult portions of it.

Job 5:17 [New King James] *“Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects; therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty.”*

Eliphaz is correct, it is a blessing to be disciplined by God when we do wrong, but Eliphaz’s advice did **not** apply to this situation in Job’s life.

Job 5:18-27 [New King James] *“For He bruises, but He binds up; He wounds, but His hands make whole. He shall deliver you in six troubles, yes, in seven no evil shall touch you. In famine He shall redeem you from death, and in war from the power of the sword. You shall be hidden from the scourge of the tongue, and you shall not be afraid of destruction when it comes. You shall laugh at destruction and famine, and you shall not be afraid of the beasts of the earth. For you shall have a covenant with the stones of the field, and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with you. You shall know that your tent is in peace; you shall visit your dwelling and find nothing amiss. You shall also know that your descendants shall be many, and your offspring like the grass of the earth. You shall come to the grave at a full age, as a sheaf of grain ripens in its season. Behold, this we have searched out; it is true. Hear it, and know for yourself.”*

The Almighty God hurts to heal, [verse 18]. Endure the hurt and the healing will extend to every conceivable trouble.

A person who is in harmony with the Creator God will also be in harmony with God’s physical creation, [verses 24-26].

There is much to admire in Eliphaz; he was the most sympathetic of Job’s friends, his verbal wounds were those of a faithful friend, not an enemy, [Proverbs 26:6]. Eliphaz shows himself as a man with real experience of the Eternal God, his words echoed the scriptures, [Psalms 94:12; Proverbs 3:11; Hebrews 12:5-6].

The fact that Eliphaz readily assumes that Job’s suffering was the result of his sinfulness, ill-equipped him to be a true comforter.

Job 6:1-13 [New King James] *“Then Job answered and said: ‘Oh, that my grief were fully weighed, and my calamity laid with it on the scales! For then it would be heavier than the sand of the sea, therefore my words have been rash. For the arrows of the Almighty are within me; my spirit drinks in their poison; the terrors of God are arrayed against me. Does the wild donkey bray when it has grass, or does the ox low over its fodder? Can flavourless food be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg? My soul refuses to touch them; they are as loathsome food to me. Oh, that I might have my request, that God would grant me the thing that I long for! That it would please God to crush me, that He would loose His hand and cut me off! Then I would still have comfort; though in anguish I would exult, He will not spare; for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One. What strength do I have, that I should hope? And what is my end, that I should prolong my life? Is my strength the strength of stones? Or is my flesh bronze? Is my help not within me? And is success driven from me?’”*

Job’s reply was a cry for fair play. Eliphaz obviously views Job’s impatience with disapproval, Job tells him that he is only looking at one side of the situation, not at Job’s side.

As a result of the pain he was enduring Job had lost his taste for life, which he compares to “insipid food that is saltless,” in contrast death tasted good, where there would be no more pain to endure.

The fearlessness of death that Job expressed is the product of his close relationship with the Creator God.

In his grief and great pain Job wanted to give up, but God did **not** grant him this because He had greater plans for Job.

To trust God in the good times is commendable, but to trust Him during difficult times tests us to our limits and exercises our faith if we endure, [Romans 8:28].

Job 6:14 [The New Jerusalem Bible] *“Refuse faithful love to your neighbour and you forsake the fear of Shaddai.”*

Job 6:15-23 [New King James] *“My brothers have dealt deceitfully like a brook, like the streams of the brooks that pass away, which are dark because of the ice, and into which the snow vanishes. When it is warm, they cease to flow; when it is hot, they vanish from their place. The paths of their way turn aside, they go nowhere and perish. The caravans of Tema look, the travellers of Sheba hope for them. They are disappointed because they were confident; they come there and are confused. For now you are nothing, you see terror and are afraid. Did I ever say, ‘Bring something to me’? Or, ‘Offer a bribe for me from your wealth’? Or, ‘Deliver me from the enemy’s hand’? Or, ‘Redeem me from the hand of oppressors’?”*

The reason that Job’s friends were failing him, as seen from Job’s viewpoint, was they were afraid to take Job’s side for fear that God would bring similar trials of them, and this was chilling their sympathy.

Job had **not** requested aid from his friends but he had expected sympathy.

Job 6:24-30 [New King James] *“Teach me, and I will hold my tongue; cause me to understand wherein I have erred. How forceful are right words! But what does your arguing prove? Do you intend to rebuke my words, and the speeches of a desperate one, which are as wind? Yes, you overwhelm the fatherless, and you undermine your friend. Now therefore, be pleased to look at me; for I would never lie to your face. Yield now, let there be no injustice! Yes, concede, my righteousness still stands! Is there injustice on my tongue? Cannot my taste discern the unsavoury?”*

Job’s friends had made the mistake of dealing with the wild speeches of a desperate man as if every word was cool and calculated.

To the end of this chapter there is a contrast between what Job expected from his friends and what he actually received. Job asked *“is my moral taste so perverted that I cannot differentiate between good and evil?”* [verse 30].

Job 7:1-10 [New King James] *“Is there not a time of hard service for man on earth? Are not his days also like the days of a hired man? Like a servant who earnestly desires the shade, and like a hired man who eagerly looks for his wages, so I have been allotted months of futility, and wearisome nights have been appointed to me. When I lie down, I say, ‘When shall I arise, and the night be ended?’ For I have had my fill of tossing till dawn. My flesh is caked with worms and dust, my skin is cracked and breaks out afresh. My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and are spent without hope. Oh, remember that my life is a breath! My eye will never again see good. The eye of him who sees me will see me no more; while your eyes are upon me, I shall no longer be. As the cloud disappears and vanishes away, so he who goes down to the grave does not come up. He shall never return to his house, nor shall his place know him anymore.”*

Job ponders on the hardness and beauty of life. This was most likely prompted by what he had just experienced and was still enduring the lasting physical and mental pain.

Job 7:11-16 [NIV] *“Therefore I will not keep silent; I will speak out in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. Am I the sea, or the monster of the deep, that you put me under guard? When I think my bed will comfort me and my couch will ease my complaint, even then you frighten me with dreams and terrify me with visions, so that I prefer strangling and death, rather than this body of mine. I despise my life; I would not live for ever. Let me alone; my days have no meaning.”*

Job expressed his deep anguish and bitterness to the Creator God he loved, letting out his frustrations.

When we follow Job’s example we can deal with our frustrations without them exploding and hurting other people.

Job had stopped talking to Eliphaz and was now talking directly to God. Although Job had lived a blameless life he was beginning to doubt the value of such a way. By doing this he was coming dangerously close to suggesting that God did **not** care about him and was **not** being fair.

Later God reproved Job for this attitude of mind, [**Job 38:2**] for we must avoid such thoughts because Satan exploits such thoughts to get us to forsake the Creator God.

Our painful suffering, like Job's, may not be the result of our sins, but we must be careful not to sin as a result of our suffering.

Job 7:17-21 [New King James] *“What is man, that You should exalt him, that You should set Your heart on him, that You should visit him every morning, and test him every moment? How long? Will You not look away from me, and let me alone till I swallow my saliva? Have I sinned? What have I done to You, O watcher of men? Why have You set me as Your target, so that I am a burden to myself? Why then do You not pardon my transgression, and take away my iniquity? For now I will lie down in the dust, and You will seek me diligently, but I will no longer be.”*

Job seems to consider that God's continual observation of the activities of human beings is a negative operation which is **impossible** for a God who is love itself, [**1 John 4:8, 16**].

In these verses we find a mistaken view of sin that argues, “I do not see how my sin as an insignificant person makes very much difference to the Eternal God.”

What happened at Calvary shows that it is because the Creator God has such love for His created children that their sin, even the smallest sin, does matter to Him, [John 3:16-17].

It is because the Eternal God is so great that He has taken such drastically sacrificial action to deal with people who are termed so lightly as *“little.”*

We must never forget that the Eternal Creator God looks on us with constant compassion, longing for us to repent of our self-willed sinful ways, [2 Peter 3:9] so that He can give us eternal life, [Romans 6:23] to experience a never-ending intimate relationship with Him.

John 17:3 [New King James] *“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”*

The Greek word translated *“know”* is *“ginōskō”* is also used in **Luke 1:34**, where it refers to the most intimate relationship that a man and woman can have.

Job 8:1-7 [New King James] *“Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said: ‘How long will you speak these things, and the words of your mouth be like a strong wind? Does God subvert judgment? Or does the Almighty pervert justice? If your sons have sinned against Him, He has cast them away for their transgression. If you would earnestly seek God and make your supplication to the Almighty, if you were pure and upright, surely now He would awake for you, and prosper your rightful dwelling place. Though your beginning was small, yet your latter end would increase abundantly.’”*

Bildad calls on Job to bow to traditional wisdom, rebuking his *“wild”* words which had involved a criticism of God's dealings with Job and with all humanity.

Bildad then stands forth as the champion of the justice of God, [**verse 3**].

Bildad tells Job that goodness and evil alike reap the harvest they have sown, [**verse 4**].

Bildad tells Job to adopt the attitude of a humble suppliant before God and sow goodness, [**verses 5-7**] Job's situation would then change.

Job 8:8-10 [New King James] *“For inquire, please, of the former age, and consider the things discovered by their fathers; for we were born yesterday, and know nothing, because our days on earth are a shadow. Will they not teach you and tell you, and utter words from their heart?”*

Bildad tells Job to listen to the voice of the past which has the “*last word*” to speak about the issues they were discussing.

Bildad then offers “*pearl after pearl*” of ancient wisdom for Job to examine, [**Job 8:11-19**].

Job 8:20-22 [New King James] *“Behold, God will not cast away the blameless, nor will He uphold the evildoers. He will yet fill your mouth with laughing, and your lips with rejoicing. Those who hate you will be clothed with shame, and the dwelling place of the wicked will come to nothing.”*

From Job’s viewpoint these words of Bildad were worse than useless, they lacked any sympathy for which Job craved.

Bildad’s assumption that the sudden death of Job’s family was divine punishment for their sinfulness was a sword thrust into an agonised heart, for Job knew it was untrue.

Like Eliphaz, Bildad wrongly assumed that people **only** suffer as a result of their sins.

Job 9:1-2 [New King James] *“Then Job answered and said: ‘Truly I know it is so, but how can a man be righteous before God?’”*

Bildad had said nothing new to Job. Job knew that the wicked ultimately perish, but his situation of great loss and pain confused him.

Why was he being punished in this way?

So he wanted his case presented before God, [**Job 9:32-35**].

Job recognised that arguing would be futile and unproductive, [**Job 9:3**].

Job did not claim to be perfect, [Job 7:20-21; Job 9:20] but he did claim to be faithful, [Job 6:29-30].

While Job showed impatience towards God, he did not reject or curse God.

Job knows that the Eternal God has infinite power along with His perfect wisdom, [Job 9:4-13].

Job then reminds himself just how futile it would be to argue with the Eternal Creator God, [Job 9:14-16].

Job 9:17-24 [New King James] *“For He crushes me with a tempest, and multiplies my wounds without cause. He will not allow me to catch my breath, but fills me with bitterness. If it is a matter of strength, indeed He is strong; and if of justice, who will appoint my day in court? Though I were righteous, my own mouth would condemn me; though I were blameless, it would prove me perverse. am blameless, yet I do not know myself; I despise my life. It is all one thing; therefore I say, ‘He destroys the blameless and the wicked.’ If the scourge slays suddenly, He laughs at the plight of the innocent. The earth is given into the hand of the wicked. He covers the faces of its judges. If it is not He, who else could it be?”*

This is a terrible picture of God from a mind that is tortured by loss and unending pain.

Job knew that even if he did stand before God, the terror he would experience would cause him to lose control of his speech, [**verse 20**].

As Job's suffering continued he became more impatient, and was making statements he would later regret.

In times of extended pain and sickness it is human nature to cause people to doubt, to despair and become more impatient.

During those times, people need someone to listen to them, to help them “work through their feelings and frustrations,” patiently with them.

Job 9:25-33 [New King James] *“Now my days are swifter than a runner; they flee away, they see no good. They pass by like swift ships, like an eagle swooping on its prey. If I say, ‘I will forget my complaint, I will put off my sad face and wear a smile,’ I am afraid of all my sufferings; I know that You will not hold me innocent. If I am condemned, why then do I labour in vain? If I wash myself with snow water, and cleanse my hands with soap, yet You will plunge me into the pit, and my own clothes will abhor me. For He is not a man, as I am, that I may answer Him, and that we should go to court together. Nor is there any mediator between us, who may lay his hand on us both.”*

Job turns from the pain of his present world to the shortness of his life, any optimistic feeling about life struggle to continue long, [verses 27-29].

Job longed for a human mediator in his complaint with the Eternal God, thankfully we now know that God the Father has provided such a perfect mediator in Jesus Christ, [1 Timothy 2:5] for this is the only possible answer to the situation that is bringing such mental pain to the righteous man Job.

Job 9:34-35 [New King James] *“Let Him take His rod away from me, and do not let dread of Him terrify me. Then I would speak and not fear Him, but it is not so with me.”*

This statement of Job in many ways is prophetic, pointing to what Jesus Christ would do for all humanity.

Job 10:1-7 [New King James] *“My soul loathes my life; I will give free course to my complaint, I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. I will say to God, ‘Do not condemn me; show me why You contend with me. Does it seem good to You that You should oppress, that You should despise the work of Your hands, and smile on the counsel of the wicked? Do You have eyes of flesh? Or do You see as man sees? Are Your days like the days of a mortal man? Are Your years like the days of a mighty man, that You should seek for my iniquity and search out my sin, although You know that I am not wicked, and there is no one who can deliver from Your hand?’”*

With no mediator to help him Job is forced to appeal directly to God in an attempt to solve the mystery of the divine antagonism towards him.

Every suggestion his distraught imagination can concoct is now expressed, no matter how extraordinary.

Job 10:8-9 [New King James] *“Your hands have made me and fashioned me, an intricate unity; yet You would destroy me. Remember, I pray, that You have made me like clay. And will You turn me into dust again?”*

This is an appeal to the divine Potter, [Isaiah 64:8; Romans 9:20-21] who has lavished such painstaking care upon His handiwork.

Job 10:10-12 [New King James] *“Did You not pour me out like milk, and curdle me like cheese, clothe me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews? You have granted me life and favour, and Your care has preserved my spirit.”*

Both in the antenatal period and the years that followed Job can see many signal evidences of divine preservation. **Job asks what was the goal in the divine mind in such dealings with him.**

Job 10:13-14 [New King James] *“And these things You have hidden in Your heart; I know that this was with You: if I sin, then You mark me, and will not acquit me of my iniquity.”*

In the answer that follows we see Job touching depths of doubt and despair blacker than anything elsewhere in the book. Has the Potter concentrated on making a vessel especially beautiful so that in the hour when He decides to break it, the contrast between the past and present may be all the more striking? Job feels that he is dealing with a God who is swift to note even trivial sin. Job’s imagination quails at the prospect of what would happen if he were really guilty, [**Job 10:15-17**].

Job 10:18-22 [New King James] *“Why then have You brought me out of the womb? Oh, that I had perished and no eye had seen me! I would have been as though I had not been. I would have been carried from the womb to the grave. Are not my days few? Cease! Leave me alone, that I may take a little comfort, before I go to the place from which I shall not return, to the land of darkness and the shadow of death, a land as dark as darkness itself, as the shadow of death, without any order, where even the light is like darkness.”*

There are two pathetic cries in these verses: *“Would that my one and only cradle had been the grave!”* and *“cannot I have a brief breathing space before the perpetual night of death?”*

Job 11:1-6 [New King James] *“Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said: ‘Should not the multitude of words be answered? And should a man full of talk be vindicated? Should your empty talk make men hold their peace? And when you mock, should no one rebuke you? For you have said, ‘My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in your eyes.’ But oh, that God would speak, and open His lips against you, that He would show you the secrets of wisdom! For they would double your prudence. Know therefore that God exacts from you less than your iniquity deserves.”*

Job is rebuked by Zophar for what he calls his empty words. Job cannot expect men who know better to be silent.

Zophar tells Job that his words have implied a claim to righteous words and living.

If only God would speak, Job would find both these claims shattered, his puny human wisdom would wilt before divine wisdom and Job would then discover the truth, that God was recompensing his sinfulness very lightly.

Job 11:7-12 [NIV] *“Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than the heavens, what can you do? They are deeper than the depths of the grave, what can you know? Their measure is longer than the earth and wider than the sea. If he comes along and confines you in prison and convenes a court, who can oppose him? Surely he recognises deceitful men; and when he sees evil, does he not take note? But a witless man can no more become wise than a wild donkey’s colt can be born a man.”*

God’s wisdom is magnified, [**Isaiah 55:8**]. It is this wisdom which passes its verdict upon a vain human and such a verdict must then be infallible.

Only when Job submits to this divine wisdom will a genuine understanding of his situation be known. Job has to give up his stubborn stupidity. The stupidity of human beings can **only** be lost in the vast sea of divine revelation.

Zophar now calls Job to repent of all his known sin and then portrays the glittering rewards of such repentance.

The ability to look the world in the face fearlessly and unashamedly.

It would lead to forgetting the misery of the past, whose darkness will be swallowed up in the brilliant light of the present, but if there was **no** repentance there would be **no** security or hope, [**Job 11:13-20**].

Zophar is very dogmatic and has two major flaws, characteristic of his type.

First, he is **too** confident in his religious standpoint, we find **no** traces of humility.

Zophar is right in maintaining he is in touch with the truth, [**Job 11:7-11**] when he speaks of the peerless transcendent wisdom of God, but he is wrong in thinking that he has all the truth.

For example, Zophar understands no more about the reason for Job's suffering than Job himself.

Secondly, Zophar is lacking in humility, he "*talks down*" to Job.

Unknown to Zophar, his deductions of Job's misery have a far greater stamp of the wild ass's colt, [**Job 11:12**] on them than the most agonised cries of Job the sufferer.

Before we confront anyone with the reason for their suffering we need to read and meditate on what Paul said to the Christians in Philippi.

Philippians 2:1-4 [New King James] *"Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfil my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."*

For this is the reflection of the very mind of our Saviour and Lord, [Philippians 2:5-8].