

## JOB 15

## ELIPHAZ: "JOB DOES NOT FEAR GOD!"

Perhaps Job was so well-satisfied with the goodness of his own cause, that he thought that if he had not convinced his three friends, yet he had at least silenced them. But it seems that he had not; for in this chapter, they began a second attack upon him – each of them charging him afresh with as much vehemence as before. Eliphaz began to speak again, and he kept close to the principles upon which he had formerly condemned Job. A good use may be made of his reproofs (for they are very plain) and of his doctrine (for it is sound) – although both of them, in this case, were misapplied to Job.

Eliphaz began his attack by unjustly charging Job with casting off the fear and regard of the Lord, and of withholding prayer. In this charge, notice how true religion is summed up as fearing God and praying to Him; the former is a most necessary principle, and the latter is a most necessary practice. If this charge against Job had been true, it would have been a heavy charge indeed; but since it was false, it made Eliphaz a transgressor. We may safely conclude that a prayerless soul is a graceless soul. And on the contrary, we know that where a spirit of supplication is poured out, that soul will delight to draw near to God!

Eliphaz also charged Job with self-conceit, with contempt of the counsels and comforts given him by his friends, and with opposition to God. Surely this was a very unkind – not to mention unjust – interpretation which Eliphaz put upon Job's words. He had indeed complained in the bitterness of his soul; but he complained to God, and not *against* God. Eliphaz ought not to have put such harsh interpretations upon the words of one who was so well-known for piety, but who was now under the strains of temptation. It is plain that these disputants were deeply convinced of the doctrine of original sin, and of the total depravity of human nature. Shall we not admire the patience of God in bearing with us sinful creatures? And should we not admire even more His love to us, in working out redemption for us through Christ Jesus, His beloved Son?

How taunting were the questions which Eliphaz asked! And what profit did they serve, especially when we consider them proceeding from the lips of one who supposedly came as a friend to condole with Job upon his calamities? It is very important to visit those who are sick and afflicted; yet while we ought to remain faithful, we should not be harsh and severe in our observations to such persons especially. However, if we separate Eliphaz's words, just for a moment, from any connection with either Job or his friends – what strong and forcible truths they contain! How sure and certain! How just and humbling! But we

**Outline of the chapter:**

- ❖ Eliphaz reproves Job for justifying himself, and for other evil things – verses 1-13
- ❖ He urges Job to humble himself before the Lord – verses 14-16
- ❖ He gives a long lecture concerning the woeful judgments of wicked people who harden their hearts against God – verses 17-35



must not overlook the sweet testimonies within these words of the truth of the Gospel! If human beings are unclean, if saints can find no standing before God, and if the heavens are not clean in His sight – then we can get some understanding of the vast necessity and importance of a righteousness which the Lord will accept. And where shall we find that, except in the Person of Jesus? Although even the holiness of angels could not be enough to justify us in the sight of God; yet He does accept the Person and righteousness of His dear Son, as the sinners' Substitute! Even though the heavens themselves are not clean in His sight, He said concerning Christ, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!" We must not overlook this! We may enjoy great comfort and holy joy when we go to our Father in prayer; for we are enabled to tell Him of the purity and spotlessness of Jesus, and of His righteousness as our covering!



Eliphaz asserted that the wicked are always miserable in this life; and from this reasoning, he tried to infer that those who are miserable in this world must certainly be wicked – and therefore, Job must have been wicked, too. But just because many of God's people have sometimes prospered in this world, it does not necessarily mean that those who are afflicted and made poor – as Job was – are not God's people.

In the latter portion of this chapter (verses 17-35), Eliphaz showed that wicked people – particularly tyrannical oppressors – are subject to continual terror. They live very uncomfortably, and they perish very miserably. And although such wicked persons are not always brought to such extreme afflictions in this lifetime, yet the earthly prosperity of these presumptuous sinners shall indeed end very miserably, as described here! Therefore, we ought to let the mischiefs which befall others serve as warnings to ourselves.

As mentioned above, Eliphaz's chief intention here was to show that where a life of misery is, there must have been much wickedness. But Job, on the contrary, had contended that God sometimes *does* afflict His people, and that afflictions are not *always* marks of Divine displeasure. And this is so very agreeable to the whole essence of the Gospel, that there can be no doubt that Job was under the same Divine Teacher as we are. In fact, in Job's heavy trials and afflictions, he became a foreshadow of the Lord Jesus, the great Author of the Gospel Himself!

*Lord, we repent of times when we have been like Job's friends – harsh and severe to those who are sick or afflicted, thereby adding to their grief and misery. We pray for grace, O Lord, to be an encouragement and a comfort to such persons! Amen.*