

Job Chapter 5

Job 5:1 "Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?"

“Saints”:

Angelic beings (4:18), are in view.

Job was told that not even the angels could help him.

He must recognize his mortality and sin if he would be healed.

According to Eliphaz, Job was abandoned and heaven would not answer his “call” for assistance because of his assumed wrongdoing.

If God did not help Job, there was surely no help available to him through any of the saints.

Verses 2-6

Job was told not to be a fool or simpleton, but to recognize that sin is judged, wrath kills, envy slays, foolishness is cured (verses 2-5), and this wasn’t merely a physical matter (verse 6), but came from man’s sin.

Sin is inevitable in man; so is trouble (verse 7).

Job 5:2 "For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one."

That is, say some, a man’s wrath and impatience prey upon his spirit, and so hasten his death.

But the meaning seems rather to be, as Bishop Patrick observes, that “God in his anger and indignation destroys the wicked, and such as err from his precepts.”

It is probable that Eliphaz intended to distinguish Job by the characters of foolish and silly one, to insinuate that all his misfortunes were owing to his folly and weakness, or to his sins and vices.

By the foolish is meant the rash and inconsiderate man, who does not weigh things impartially.

And by the silly one, the man who, for want of true wisdom, is soon deceived with false opinions, and with appearances of present things.

Eliphaz believed that Job had placed his trust in something, or someone, other than God.

He couldn't figure out with his mind what was happening to Job, and he was seeking reasons that were logical.

We find that with many of the people who study the book of Job, they are so busy trying to figure out what Job did to cause this calamity that they miss the whole meaning of the book.

Job did not do anything to bring this problem on.

The fact that he was righteous in the sight of God caused this.

Verses 3-7

Eliphaz was convinced that ‘trouble’ always starts somewhere; it does not just “happen” such as (“trouble spring out of the ground”).

By saying that he had seen sinners prosper (“taking root”), only to lose everything in the end, Eliphaz wrongly suggested that Job’s sin led to the death of his children.

Job 5:3 "I have seen the foolish taking root: but suddenly I cursed his habitation."

I have observed the wicked man whom I term foolish, as being destitute of true, that is of heavenly wisdom.

Not only prosperous for the present, but as it seemed, firm and secure for the future.

Being strongly fortified with power and riches, and children too.

So that there was no likelihood or apparent danger of a change; but suddenly, in a moment, before any one’s expectation.

"I cursed his habitation":

I saw, by the event which followed his prosperity, that he was a man under a divine curse.

And that, notwithstanding the seeming depth and strength in which he vainly promised himself a permanent, unshaken situation for many years, all his hopes were built on a weak and false foundation.

Thus, Eliphaz answers an objection concerning the present seeming prosperity of the wicked, which he confesses that he himself had sometimes observed.

But which, he insists was of short duration, destructive judgments from God unexpectedly overwhelming them.

Eliphaz was saying that he had seen people who dealt foolishly with God, and were destroyed. He still believed that something that Job did caused God to turn on him.

Job 5:4 "His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither [is there] any to deliver [them]."

"They are crushed":

Rather perhaps, they crush one another.

Their internal rivalries and dissensions bring them to ruin.

They exemplify the house divided against itself.

We see Eliphaz blaming Job for the death of his children.

He was saying, the sins of the father had fallen upon his children.

Job 5:5 "Whose harvest the hungry eateth up, and taketh it even out of the thorns, and the robber swalloweth up their substance."

Which they now justly and confidently expect to reap, after all their cost and labor for that end, but are sadly and suddenly disappointed.

Which is a great aggravation of their misery.

"The hungry":

I.e. the poor, whose necessities make them greedy and ravenous to eat it all up.

And from whom he can never recover it, nor any thing in recompence of it.

"Out of the thorns":

Or out of the fields, notwithstanding the strong thorn hedges wherewith it is enclosed and fortified, and all other dangers or difficulties which may be in their way.

They will take it, though they be scratched and wounded by the thorns about it.

"The robber":

So called from their long hair, which such persons nourished.

Either because of their wild and savage kind of life, which made them neglect the trimming of their hair and body.

Or that they might look more terribly, and so frighten all those who should endeavor to oppose them.

Or the thirsty, as the word may signify from another root.

And so it answers well to the hungry, in the former branch.

Swallowed up greedily, and so as there is no hope of recovering it.

We see that Job's land had been over-run by those who would steal his crops.

His servants were dead, and could not keep them away.

There were not even enough servants left to tend the crops, and they were over-run with thorns.

Job 5:6 "Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground;"

Or rather, "for" or "indeed", this being a reason showing that wicked men are justly afflicted and punished.

Seeing their afflictions come not from the creatures, though they may be instruments, but from God for the sins of men.

"Neither doth trouble spring out of the ground":

The same thing as before in different words, neither sin, the cause of trouble, the effect of sin.

Sin may very fitly be expressed by a word which signifies trouble, because it is both troublesome, wearisome, and offensive to God, and brings trouble to the bodies and souls of men here and hereafter.

Here Eliphaz begins to lower the tone of his voice, and to speak to Job in a seemingly more kind and friendly manner.

Observing to him the spring of afflictions, and giving him advice how to behave under them.

Eliphaz was still trying to say that the evil that Job had done was like a seed that brought in a crop of affliction.

Job 5:7 "Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward."

"Sparks":

Literally "the sons of Resheph," an expression which describes all sorts of fire-like movement (Deut. 32:24; Psalm 78:48; SOS 8:6).

Eliphaz was telling Job that man was evil, and that it was inevitable for trouble to come.

Just as sure as a spark of a fire goes up and not down, the troubles come to all.

Verses 8-27

Speaking in spiritual platitudes, Job's friend presumed to know the cause of Job's suffering.

Eliphaz also told him if he would just submit ("despise not"), to the ("chastening of the Almighty"), Job would reap a harvest of blessing.

But no one can make such a prediction.

Eliphaz modeled how *not* to address another person's affliction.

Job 5:8 "I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause:"

Job's solution was to go to God and repent, his friend thought.

Eliphaz was telling Job, if this was him, he would repent and seek God's help.

Verses 9-16

The whole of Eliphaz's argument is based on the moral perfection of God, so he extolled God's greatness and goodness.

Job 5:9 "Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvelous things without number:"

Here Eliphaz enters upon a discourse of the infinite perfection and greatness of God's nature and works; which he does partly as an argument to enforce the exhortation to seek and commit his cause to God (Job 5:8).

Because God was infinitely able, either to punish him yet far worse, if he continued to provoke him, or to raise him from the dust, if he humbly addressed himself to him.

And partly that by a true representation of God's excellency and glory.

And of that vast disproportion which was between God and Job, he might both convince Job of his great sin in speaking so boldly and irreverently of him, and prevent his relapse into the same miscarriage.

Eliphaz seemed to be a man who knew a great deal about God.

His real mistake was in judging his friend.

Sometimes people who mean well, say cruel things to those they love.

We know that God does do great and wonderful things.

In the next few verses, we will see the things Eliphaz listed as some of these great and wonderful things of God.

Job 5:10 "Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields:"

Not upon the land of Israel only, as the Targum and Jarchi (see Deut. 11:11); but upon the whole earth.

This is particularly mentioned as being of God, and which none of the vanities of the Gentiles can give.

And it is a free gift of his, which tarries not for the desert of men, and is bestowed on the godly and ungodly.

And is a great blessing of goodness, which enriches the earth, makes it fruitful, and through it, it produces plenty of good things for man and beast.

"And sendeth waters upon the fields":

Or "out places"; places outside of cities and towns, such as gardens, fields, and deserts, where showers of rain are sent of God to water them.

Many of which are not under the care of man, but are under the providence of God.

The Targum and Jarchi interpret this of Gentile lands, as distinct from the land of Israel, to whom God "gives" rain, and to the other "sends" it.

Some render it, "upon the streets".

That is, upon persons that lie in the streets, and have no houses to dwell in, and to whom rain in hot and dry countries was welcome.

God had promised to give rain in due season for those who loved him.

Eliphaz reminded Job that God would do this for him, if he would repent and return to God.

The truth was, Job had never wandered from God.

Job 5:11 "To set up on high those that be low; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety."

The consequences which proceed from the fore-mentioned happy change, from God's sending a refreshing rain upon the earth, after a long drought are inexpressibly great and beneficial.

Those who had been reduced to straits and difficulties, and, by the pressing necessities arising therefrom, had been brought very low.

And obliged to submit to mean and laborious employments, are now enabled to lift up their heads with joy, and appear in a very different condition.

"That those which mourn may be exalted to safety":

That through the blessings of Providence flowing in upon them.

Like a plentiful stream of water upon a barren and thirsty land, they may be raised from their former state of extreme poverty and want, and may find themselves placed in a comparatively safe and comfortable situation.

Without any apparent reason to fear a relapse into their former difficulties and distresses.

Thus, he gives Job another example of God's great and wonderful works, to comfort and encourage him to seek unto him.

Forasmuch as he could easily raise him from the depth of his distress, however great, as he was accustomed to raise others in the like condition.

God is no respecter of persons.

He would be the One to raise the lowly.

Those who mourned God would bring joy.

Job 5:12 "He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform [their] enterprise."

Such as are determined to work evil, and to cover it with lies, as hypocrites normally do, and as Job's friends charged him with doing.

God breaks the hopes and designs of such men; as he has now removed their expectation and taken away their outward happiness.

"Their enterprise":

Or anything what is solid or substantial.

Or wisdom, i.e. their wise counsel or crafty design.

They cannot execute their cunning contrivances.

Eliphaz was possibly saying, that Job's wisdom was not wisdom at all.

That he was crafty and scheming to get where he was.

God would tear down such an enterprise, but Job did not do that.

Job 5:13 "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong."

Paul used this line from Eliphaz (in 1 Cor. 3:19), to prove the foolishness of man's wisdom before God.

Eliphaz again, was warning Job that the wicked were caught in the trap they had laid for others.

He was even saying, that the counsel that Job had given others was of no use at all.

Job 5:14 "They meet with darkness in the daytime, and grope in the noonday as in the night."

I.e. In plain things they run into gross mistakes and errors, and commonly choose those counsels and courses which are worst for themselves.

"Darkness":

Often notes misery, but here ignorance or error, as it is also used (Job 12:25; 37:19), and elsewhere.

"Grobe":

Like blind men to find their way, not knowing what to do.

Eliphaz said that Job's light had gone out, and that he was groping around in the dark even though the sun was up outside.

Job 5:15 "But he saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty."

According to the order in which the words stand in the Hebrew, the translation is, But he saveth from the sword,

"From their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty":

The poor.

Schultens thinks it should be interpreted, from the sword which proceedeth out of their mouth, meaning, their cutting and killing reproaches.

A sense this which is approved by Buxtorf, and which receives no small confirmation from different passages of Scripture, in which reproachful language is stigmatized by the name of a sword (see Psalm 57:4; 64:3).

Dr. Waterland's translation of the verse is to the same purpose.

But he saveth the poor from destruction by their mouth,

"And from the hand of the mighty":

The general sense undoubtedly is, that God saveth such as, being poor, are defenseless, and therefore flee to him for refuge, from the censures, slanders, threatenings, and deceitful insinuations of their enemies.

From the false swearing of witnesses, and the unrighteous sentences of corrupt judges, by which things their characters, or estates, or lives, may be exposed to great hazards.

God truly does save the poor from the oppressor.

He not only saves them from being destroyed by their actions, but by their words as well.

Job knew this was true, but he knew that he was not the oppressor, which he was being accused of being either.

Job 5:16 "So the poor hath hope, and iniquity stoppeth her mouth."

See (Psalm 107:42), where the same phrase occurs.

This was a reprimand of Job for complaining of his plight.

Eliphaz said that God had stopped the mouth of Job.

Job 5:17 "Behold, happy [is] the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:"

"Happy is the man whom God correcteth":

Eliphaz put a positive spin on his advice by telling Job that enviable or desirable is the situation of the one God cares enough to chasten.

"If only Job admitted his sin, he could be happy again" was the advice.

This was a true statement which did not apply to Job.

It was not God who was chastening Job, it was Satan. We know, and I am sure that Job knew, that God chastens those he loves.

Verses 18-27

The language of this section promising blessing for penitence was strongly reminiscent of (Lev. Chapter 26), which elaborated the blessing of a faithful covenant relationship with God.

If Job confessed, he would have prosperity, security, a family, and a rich life.

Job 5:18 "For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole."

That is, he afflicts.

"And bindeth up":

He heals.

The phrase is taken from the custom of binding up a wound (see notes on Isa. 1:6; 38:21).

This was a common mode of healing among the Hebrews; and the practice of medicine appears to have been confined much to external applications.

The meaning of this verse is, that afflictions come from God, and that He only can support, comfort, and restore.

Health is his gift; and all the consolation which we need, and for which we can look, must come from him.

By the grace of God, we are healed, or we are sick. It is God who decides the circumstances that we live in.

God controls His creation.

Job 5:19 "He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee."

To wit, if thou seek to him by prayer and repentance.

"Six":

I.e. manifold or repeated; as six is used for many (Prov. 6:16).

There shall no evil touch thee":

To wit, so as to undo or destroy thee, as touching is used (Joshua 9:19; Heb. 11:28; 1 John 5:18; see also Gen. 26:11, 29; 2 Sam. 14:10; Psalm 105:15; Zech. 2:8).

Thou shalt have a good issue out of all thy troubles, though they are both great and many.

We see some encouragement here.

Eliphaz was telling Job that possibly, after 7 troubles came upon him, the LORD would help him.

He believed the 7 troubles to be justified punishment for the sins of Job.

Job 5:20 "In famine he shall redeem thee from death: and in war from the power of the sword."

From that terrible kind of death.

Eliphaz might think that Job feared perishing by want, as being so poor, that he needed the contributions of his friends for his relief.

"And in war from the power of the sword":

These things he utters with more confidence, because the rewards or punishments of this life were more constantly distributed to men in the Old Testament, according to their good or bad behavior, than they are now.

And, because it was his opinion, that great afflictions were the certain evidences of wickedness.

And consequently, that great deliverances would infallibly follow upon true repentance.

Throughout the Bible, we see famine as a severe punishment from God on the unfaithful.

War is another punishment we have seen, that God sends on those who are unfaithful. God did eventually remove them both, and turned and blessed His people.

Job 5:21 "Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue: neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh."

I.e. protected, as in some secret and safe place.

"From the scourge of the tongue":

From false accusations and virulent slanders and reproaches, either by diverting their tongues to other persons or things, or by clearing thy integrity.

"Neither shalt thou be afraid":

Thou shalt have no cause to fear it, because God will secure thee in it and from it.

"When it cometh":

To wit, upon others; near thee, or round about thee.

God will protect those of His own from the destruction of the evil tongue.

He will keep them from destruction.

Those who are truly of God have no need to fear these things.

Job would be delivered too, even though his friend did not believe he would.

He had done nothing to cause this problem.

Job was persecuted without a cause.

This perhaps, could be a type that Job was going through of the suffering of the righteous One on the cross.

Jesus was without sin, and yet was persecuted.

Job 5:22 "At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh: neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth."

Rather, devastation.

"And famine":

Rather, dearth.

The word is not the same as that used (in verse 20), but a weaker cue.

"Thou shalt laugh":

Thou shalt smile".

"Neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth":

I.e., destructive and ferocious wild beasts, like the Indian "man-eaters" are enumerated among God's "four severe plagues" (Ezek. 14:21; compare 2 Kings 17:25).

In ancient times, they were sometimes so numerous in a country that the men were afraid to occupy it.

The LORD afflicts His own, to cause them to return to Him.

Those who belong to God should not fear famine or wild beasts.

God is our very present help in trouble.

This friend of Job's was trying to convince Job that he had to be a sinner, or else God would be His protector in all of this.

Job 5:23 "For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee."

"In league ... at peace":

Even the created order will be in harmony with the man whose relationship with God is corrected through God's disciplinary process.

This is a description of the condition of those who are in fellowship with God.

They will not even dash their foot against a stone.

It appears that they would be in harmony with all of God's creation.

Job 5:24 "And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle [shall be] in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin."

That thy tent is in safety.

"Tabernacle shall be in peace":

Or, tent or dwelling is in peace.

"Visit thy habitation":

Or, perhaps muster or look over, thy homestead.

The reference is to his cattle and possessions.

"Shalt not sin":

Literally shalt not miss or fail.

That is probably, he shall find that his actual possessions correspond to what he expected.

The general meaning is, thou shalt miss nothing.

These promises from God to those who love Him, were spoken by Eliphaz to cause Job to repent and get back in right standing.

Again, I say they are futile as Job was already in right standing with God.

The only one angry with Job was Satan, because he could not get Job to curse God.

Job 5:25 "Thou shalt know also that thy seed [shall be] great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth."

Partly by assurance from God's promises, and the impressions of his Spirit; and partly by experience in due time.

"Thy seed shall be great":

Thy posterity, which God will give thee instead of those which thou hast lost, shall be high, and honorable, and powerful.

Or, shall be many.

"Thine offspring":

Which shall come out of thy own loins as branches out of a tree, as the word signifies.

And this word seems added to the former to restrain and explain it, by showing that he did not speak of his spiritual seed, as Abraham's seed is in part understood, but of the fruit of his own body.

As the grass of the earth; both for its plentiful increase, and for its flourishing greenness.

Job was aware of the promises of God to bless his offspring if he remained faithful to God.

Job was a man who knew and understood the promises of God.

Eliphaz tried to say that Job rejected the chastisement of God, and all of this had been taken from him.

Job 5:26 "Thou shalt come to [thy] grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season."

That is, thou shalt have long life; thou shalt not be cut down prematurely, nor by any sudden calamity.

It is to be remembered that long life was regarded as an eminent blessing in ancient times (see notes at Isa. 65:22).

"Like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season":

Margin, "ascended."

As a sheaf of grain is harvested when it is fully ripe.

This is a beautiful comparison, and the meaning is obvious.

He would not be cut off before his plans were fully matured.

Before the fruits of righteousness had ripened in his life.

He would be taken away when he was ripe for heaven, as the yellow grain is for the harvest.

Grain is not cut down when it is green; and the meaning of Eliphaz is, that it is as desirable that man should live to a good old age before he is gathered to his fathers.

As it is that grain should be suffered to stand until it is fully ripe.

In the pain and suffering that Job had endured, he had no desire to live a long life.

He had even wished he had never been born.

Job 5:27 "Lo this, we have searched it, so it [is]; hear it, and know thou [it] for thy good."

It is not my single opinion, but my brethren concur with me, as thou wilt hear from their own mouths.

This is no rash or hasty conceit, but what we have learned by deep consideration and hard study, long experience and diligent observation.

Both of God's word, so far as he hath been pleased to reveal himself, and of the course and methods of his providence and dealing with men in the world.

"Know thou it":

For to us thou seem by thy words and carriage to be wholly, or in a great part, ignorant of these things.

For thy good; let the advantage which will come unto thee by following this counsel remove thy prejudice against it.

Eliphaz said to Job, that he had said all of this for his own good.

He tried to tell Job that he should listen and repent.

Job was in right standing with God.

He knew all of these things and believed them, except he knew in his own heart, that he had not turned away from God.

Job Chapter 5 Questions

1. If God did not help Job, who would?
2. For _____ killeth the foolish man.
3. What did Eliphaz believe that Job had done?
4. Why do many people overlook the meaning of the book of Job?
5. What caused the trouble of Job?
6. What was Eliphaz saying in verse 3?
7. In verse 4, he was blaming Job for the _____ of his children.
8. Why could the robbers come in and take Job's crops?
9. What terrible thing was Eliphaz still trying to say about Job in verse 6?
10. Just as sure as _____ fly upward, man is born to trouble in this life.
11. Eliphaz told Job, if this were him, he would do what?
12. What was Eliphaz's mistake?
13. Who sends the rain?
14. God is no _____ of persons.
15. What was Eliphaz saying about Job's wisdom?
16. What did he say about the counsel Job had given others?
17. Eliphaz said that Job was _____ around in darkness.
18. Happy is the man whom God _____.
19. Despise not the _____ of the Almighty.
20. It is _____ who decides the circumstances we live in.

21. Throughout the Bible, _____ is used as a severe punishment from God.
22. Job was persecuted without a _____.
23. Who was Job a type of?
24. God is our very present _____ in trouble.
25. Eliphaz was trying to convince Job of what?
26. In verse 23, it is speaking of being in harmony with all of God's _____.
27. Why would Job not want to live to old age?
28. What did Job know in his heart?