

Job

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Job 22

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Vss. 1-11



- At this point Job's 3 friends have lost their patience. After Job's last speech in Ch.21, Eliphaz has had it with Job's obstinance not to come to see things his way and the way of the other two friends. As one commentator put it, Eliphaz is committing the all too common, but extremely dangerous sin, of reasoning out things in his own mind to the point he certain that he is right, and then ascribing his own personal views to God, making his position God's position.
- Eliphaz is not wrong when he says that God is just and that people have a propensity for sin. Where he fails is in understanding of God's relationship to sinful people and the Lord's response to that sin. Eliphaz knows nothing of God's love and grace. He only sees a god who is easily offended and quick tempered with a vengeful wrath.
- Curiously, Eliphaz puts a different spin on Satan's question. Satan proposed that people follow God just to see what they can get out of it, purely from a profit motive. Here Eliphaz is asking, "Can a righteous person be profitable to God?" To Eliphaz God is far too great and self-sustaining for anything we may do to be profitable to Him. He cannot conceive of God's assessment of Job to Satan in 1:8 and 2:3. In these verses God is delighted to tell Satan that Job is "a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil." The Father *is free* to be proud of His children from time to time.
- No, to the minds of the 3 friends, when looking at Job's situation, there are only two possible conclusions: either God is unjust, which is impossible, or Job is a vile and wicked sinner. The idea of a third reason for Job's misery, a time of testing, is not something that they can even imagine.
- At this point, Eliphaz tears into Job since Job's wickedness is the only explanation he can fathom. He lists the sins that wicked wealthy and powerful people like Job commit. "For you have taken pledges of your brothers without cause and stripped men naked. To the weary you have given no water to drink and from the hungry, you have withheld bread... You have sent widows away empty and the strength of the orphans has been crushed." Such a person, says Eliphaz, can only live in fear of the darkness of the coming judgement.

Vss. 12-20

- Eliphaz rightly points out how the wicked feel they can act with impunity, because God is so far away. People who are determined to run their own lives, free from God, often resort to this logic. God is far away, walking in the vault of Heaven. This idea gave way to the Enlightenment's theological view of Deism, the idea that God created the world but then abandoned it to us and that He can be known only by reason and nature, never by any kind of supernatural revelation. We're on our own and whether we live or die is totally up to us.
- In verses 15-16, Eliphaz is asking if Job is following the way of wicked humanity before Noah, who were washed away in the flood.
- Yes, says Eliphaz, the wicked may do well materially for a while, but in the end "...their abundance the fire has consumed."

Vss. 21-30

- Again, Eliphaz returns to the original plea of the 3: "Yield now and be at peace with Him. Thereby good will come to you...If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored. If you remove unrighteousness far from your tent." It is interesting how he is suggesting Satan's theory that people are righteous before God only for what they can get out of it.
- Repent and throw away your materialism. Do this and Eliphaz beautifully points out, "Then the Almighty will be your gold and choice silver to you." If only he had stopped there. But no, Eliphaz goes straight to all the automatic benefits of heeding his advice. God will always hear and answer your prayers. "You will also decree a thing, and it will be established for you and light will shine on your ways!" God will give you whatever you want! If you're having a bad day, don't worry! He will deliver you "through the cleanness of your hands." Stay righteous and nothing but good will ever happen to you, says Eliphaz. So why is Job rolling his eyes?