

BAND of BROTHERS

FALL SERIES 2024 – WEEK 5

Job 4-5, 15, 22: Eliphaz the Eloquent

*For your iniquity teaches your mouth, and you choose the tongue of the crafty.
Your own mouth condemns you, and not I; your own lips testify against you.
– Job 15:5-6 ESV*

- **The gloves come off**

- Job has finished his diatribe (chapter 3)
- Now Eliphaz responds
- He shares Job's theology

*Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:
"If one ventures a word with you, will you be impatient?
Yet who can keep from speaking?
Behold, you have instructed many,
and you have strengthened the weak hands.
Your words have upheld him who was stumbling,
and you have made firm the feeble knees.
But now it has come to you, and you are impatient;
it touches you, and you are dismayed.
Is **not your fear of God** your confidence,
and **the integrity of your ways** your hope?" – Job 4:1-6 ESV*

- He contradicts God without knowing it
 - He questions God's character
 - "You used to be blameless"
 - "You were upright but not anymore"
 - "You've lost your fear of God"
 - "You no longer turn away from evil"

*“Remember: who that was innocent ever perished?
Or where were the upright cut off?
As I have seen, those who plow iniquity
and sow trouble reap the same.” – Job 4:7-8 ESV*

- You’re no longer the man you used to be
 - You’re obviously guilty of sin
 - Your suffering is the proof

- You’re getting what you **deserve**
 - You don’t perish for being **innocent**
 - The **upright** don’t get cut off
 - **Good people** reap rewards not retribution
 - **Bad people** get their just desserts

*“By the breath of God **they perish**,
and by the blast of his anger **they are consumed**.
The roar of the lion, the voice of the fierce lion,
the teeth of the young lions **are broken**.
The strong lion perishes for lack of prey,
and the cubs of the lioness **are scattered**.” – Job 4:9-11 ESV*

- **Using wisdom like a fool**

- Eliphaz lobs pious-sounding platitudes
- The sayings of the sages are his go-to weapon
- He treats Job like a fool
- But displays his own ignorance

*Although they claimed to be wise, **they became fools**. – Romans 1:22 BSB*

*“**My people are fools**; they have not known Me. They are foolish children, without understanding.” – Jeremiah 4:22 BSB*

*“Now **a word was brought to me** stealthily;
my ear received the whisper of it.
Amid **thoughts from visions** of the night,
when deep sleep falls on men,
dread came upon me, and trembling,
which made all my bones shake.
A spirit glided past my face;
the hair of my flesh stood up.
It stood still,
but I could not discern its appearance.
A form was before my eyes;
there was silence, then I heard a voice:” – Job 4:12-16 ESV*

- Eliphaz turns from the sages to a spirit
 - o He claims to have received a message
 - Delivered by a scary “spirit”
 - Who imparted “secret knowledge”

“The message was ‘stolen’ and given in a ‘whisper,’ implying that it was something not for ordinary mortals but only for a select few. He suggests that these are truths that God keeps hidden from humanity but that the spirit has managed to sneak out of heaven. Eliphaz is claiming to have a secret knowledge that goes beyond that of the ordinary sage.” – Duane A. Garrett, *Job: Evangelical Exegetical Commentary*

- **A nightmarish view of God**

*“Can mortal man be in the right before God?
 Can a man be pure before his Maker?
 Even in his servants he puts no trust,
 and his angels he charges with error;
 how much more those who dwell in houses of clay,
 whose foundation is in the dust,
 who are crushed like the moth.”* – Job 4:17-19 ESV

- Initially, the “spirit’s” counsel sounds right
“No human is more righteous than God”
 - The “spirit” espouses an **indisputable truth**
 - But draws **indefensible conclusions**
 - ~ To God, all men are untrustworthy
 - ~ He puts no confidence in them
 - ~ Even His angels are corrupt and prone to error
 - ~ What hope do mortal men have?
 - ~ They’re little more than “clay houses”
 - ~ They’re like insects to be crushed
 - ~ Their mortality makes them despicable to God

- **The message of the enemy**

- This messenger is more **demonic** than **divine**
- Eliphaz is working on behalf of the enemy
- Compare his words to those of David

*...what is man that **you are mindful of him,**
 and the son of man that **you care for him?**
 Yet you have made him a little lower than the
 heavenly beings **and crowned him with glory**
and honor.
You have given him dominion over the works of
 your hands; **you have put all things under his feet.** – Psalm 8:4-6 ESV*

- The “spirit” mocks Job

*“Call now; is there anyone who will answer you?
To which of the holy ones will you turn
Surely vexation kills the fool,
and jealousy slays the simple.” – Job 5:1-2 ESV*

- It dares Job to call out to God
 - But no one will hear him
 - No one will help him
- It declares Job to be the cause of his problems

*“As for me, I would seek God,
and to God would I commit my cause,
who does great things and unsearchable,
marvelous 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.” – Job 5:8-11 ESV*

- If I were you...
 - Eliphaz claims to be wise and virtuous
“Seek God like I do!”
 - ~ He mistakes wisdom for devotion
 - ~ He confuses theology with love for God
 - He bombards Job with wisdom sayings
- He gives Job a **theological lecture**
My God... does great things too marvelous to understand
performs countless miracles
gives rain for the earth and water for the fields
gives prosperity to the poor
protects those who suffer
frustrates the plans of schemers
traps the wise in their own cleverness
rescues the poor from the strong and powerful
corrects, disciplines, wounds, strikes, and saves

ALL THESE STATEMENTS ARE TRUE

So what does Eliphaz have wrong? **Job’s guilt** and **God’s purposes**

- **Ignorance masquerading as arrogance**

- Eliphaz has no idea what Job has done
- And no clue what God is doing
- He has assumed what God is doing
- He has assumed God's guilt
- He has asserted God's judgment
- And he has assured Job's restoration
- But Job's **restoration** requires **repentance**

*"But consider the joy of those corrected by God!
Do not despise the discipline of the Almighty
when you sin.*

For though he wounds, he also bandages.

He strikes, but his hands also heal." – Job 5:17-18 ESV

- **Making promises to God**

- **He will** deliver you from disaster – vs 19
- **He will** redeem you from famine – vs 20
- *and from the power of the sword* – vs 20
- **You will** be shielded – vs 21
- **You will** have no fear – vs 21, 22
- **You will** know that all is well – vs 24

THEY'RE ALL CONDITIONAL

- God will...if you will **confess** and **repent**
- Eliphaz is condemning Job
- He is also coercing him with guarantees
- And obligating God to reward Job

*"Eliphaz has indeed become absolutist in his thinking and rigid in his application of wisdom principles. For him, godliness must lead to wealth and safety; to say otherwise is to doubt the word of God. Therefore, the wretchedness of Job can only mean that his sin is very great." – Duane A. Garrett, *Job: Evangelical Exegetical Commentary**

- **When dogma becomes dogmatism**

dogma – doctrine(s) concerning faith or morals formally stated and authoritatively proclaimed

dogmatism – the expression of an opinion or belief **as if it were a fact**

- positiveness in assertion of opinion especially when unwarranted or arrogant

*"Look, **God does not even trust the angels.***

*Even **the heavens are not absolutely pure** in his sight.*

*How **much less pure is a corrupt and sinful***

***person with a thirst for wickedness!"** – Job 15:15-16 NLT*

*“The wicked writhe in pain **throughout their lives.**” – Job 15:20 NLT*

*“If you return to the Almighty, **you will be restored...***

*“**You will succeed in whatever you choose to do,**
and light will shine on the road ahead of you.” – Job 22:23, 28 NLT*

Godly conviction –

A work of the Spirit that produces adherence to biblical truths

Strong personal opinion –

A work of the flesh that promotes self and produces self-righteousness

*...the people of Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, and they listened eagerly to Paul’s message. **They searched the Scriptures day after day to see if Paul and Silas were teaching the truth.** – Acts 17:11 NLT*

Not many [of you] should become teachers [serving in an official teaching capacity], my brothers and sisters, for you know that we [who are teachers] will be judged by a higher standard [because we have assumed greater accountability and more condemnation if we teach incorrectly]. – James 3:1 Amplified Bible

*Out of the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. These things, my brothers, should not be this way [for we have a moral obligation to speak in a manner that **reflects our fear of God and profound respect for His precepts**]. – Acts 3:10 Amplified Bible*

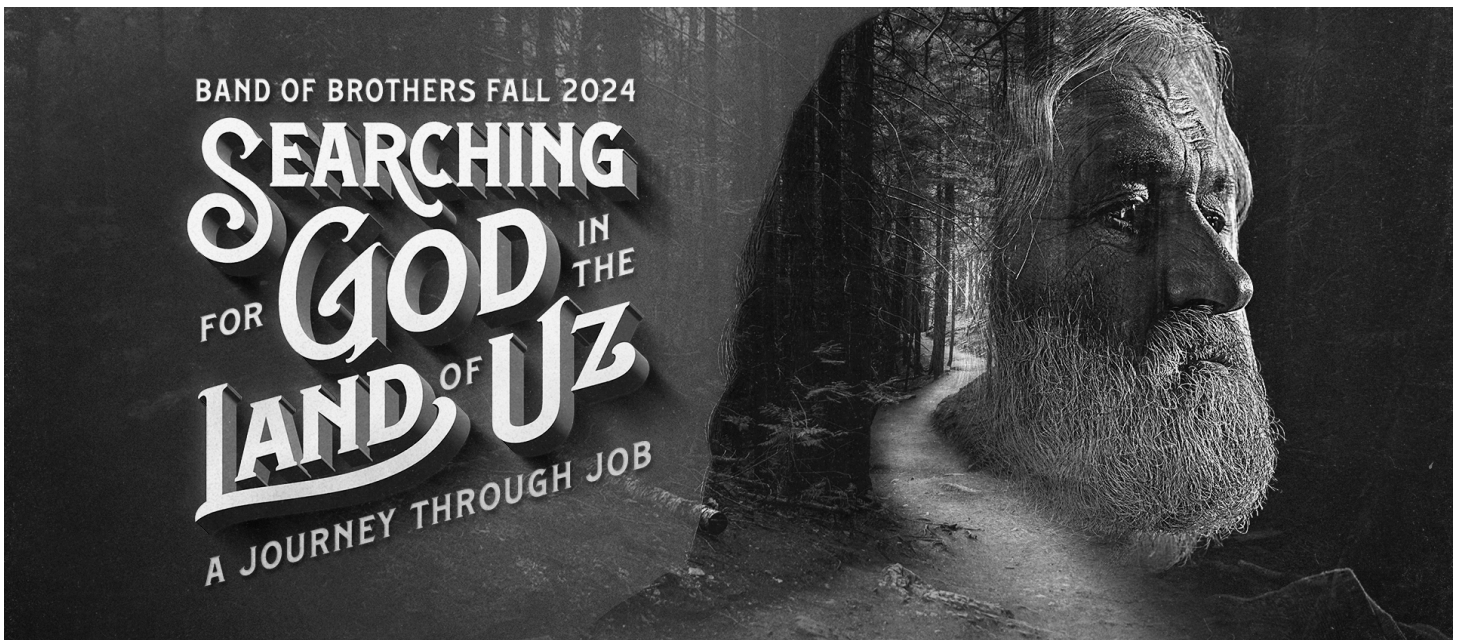
*“Eliphaz...displays all the worst characteristics of a bad religious life based on poor theology. Unable to overcome a theological opponent, he groundlessly accuses him of every kind of sin....Wanting to show that Job has no reason to complain about his fate, he presents him with a horrible vision of an aloof God who has no joy in those we serve him. This is the religion of a man who has no relationship with God. It is judgmental, materialistic, and in the end, profoundly cynical about God.” – Duane A. Garrett, *Job: Evangelical Exegetical Commentary**

- **Discussion questions**

How would a more accurate knowledge of God make our witness more attractive to others?

How do we keep our dogma (beliefs about God) from becoming dogma (opinions about God)?

How can we begin to “speak in a manner that **reflects our fear of God and profound respect for His precepts?**” Be specific and tangible.



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FALL SERIES 2024 – WEEK 6 HOMEWORK

WEEK 6 – Bildad the Bully – Job 8, 18, 25

In this week's lesson, we examine the three long-winded speeches delivered by the second of Job's opinionated friends. Bildad will pick up where Eliphaz left off but add little new information to the conversation. He will simply up the ante and increase the attacks on Job, refusing to accept his pleas of innocence. Bildad had God figured out and Job dead to rights. But, as we will see, his understanding of God was incomplete, inaccurate, and unhelpful. His words of "comfort" did more harm than good and reveal the danger of interpreting life through an inaccurate view of God.

- Read Job 8, 18, and 25. Just like last week, there is a lot more reading so pace yourself. As you did with Eliphaz, look for statements from Bildad that demonstrate his faulty or incomplete understanding of how God works. Simply write down the Scripture reference and a brief note as to why he is wrong.
- Now read pages 59-64, 119-121, 163-166 of Ken's Devotionary™ on Job. I apologize for the length of these readings. I know they will seem repetitive and you might lose your way, but try to underline anything that jumps out at you.
- Look back at chapter 8. What are some things Bildad says about God that sound a little off?

What is Bildad recommending Job do in verses 8-10?

Why does he think this will help and what is something we may say to those who are suffering that sounds similar?

In verses 11-19, Bildad uses lessons from horticulture. What do you think is his main point and how is this supposed to help Job?

- Scan through chapter 18 and take note of statement that sound foolish or like the opinions of men.

Now look up the following Proverbs and rewrite them in your own words:

Proverbs 17:28 –

Proverbs 18:2 –

Proverbs 28:26 –

Proverbs 29:9 –

Proverbs 29:11 –

How do these Proverbs apply to Bildad and his friends?

- Finally, look back over chapter 25. How does Bildad describe God in verses 2-3 and what do you think he hopes to accomplish by using this kind of language?

Look closely at verses 4-6. What assumptions does Bildad make about Job and why is he not only wrong but way off base in doing so?