

## THE SECOND DEBATE

Since Job is the first book of the Hebrew wisdom literature of the bible, we chose to study the Book of Job as a seven-act play.

We will study selective passage from each of the seven acts that give us an understanding of what occurred in each act.

We are presently studying Job 15-21 entitled Act 4 and The Second Debate.

In Act 3 and the First Debate (chs.4-14), Job's three friends argued that Job's suffering was the result of divine discipline for some unconfessed sin.

**Eliphaz** said, "Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty." (5:17; Heb.12: 5-11)

**Bildad** said, "Surely God does not reject a blameless man or strengthen the hands of evil doers." (8:20)

**Zophar** said, "If you put away the sin that is in your hand and allow no evil to dwell in your tent, then you will lift up your face without shame; you will stand firm and without fear." (11:14-15)

**Job's** response to their counsel was "Though I were innocent, I could not answer Him; I could only plead with my Judge for mercy." (9:15)

**Job** concluded that since his friends would not argue his case of innocence, he will have to argue it himself – "But I desire to speak to the Almighty and to argue my case to God. You, however, smear me with lies; you are worthless physicians, all of you." (13:3-4)

**Job** said, "Though He slay me, yet will I hope in Him; I will surely defend my ways to His face. Indeed, this will turn out for my deliverance, for no godless man would dare come before Him!" (13:15-16; Phil.1: 19-21).

The statement, "for no **godless man** would dare come before Him," became the theme of the Second Debate.

<b>This lesson will study four aspects of Act 4 and the Second Debate.</b>
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<b>The outline of Act 4 has only one prayer offered by Job.</b>		
Eliphaz (ch.15) Job's response (16:1-7)	Bildad (ch.18) Job's response (ch.19)	Zophar (ch.20) Job's response (ch.21)
Job's prayer (16:7-17:16)		

### **1. In Act 4, Eliphaz's disposition changed from diplomacy to disgust and harsh (15:1-6).**

He became more like the other two friends in dealing with Job and his suffering – "Are God's consolations not enough for you, words spoken gently to you?" (15:11/ Eliphaz)

Eliphaz is saying, "I tried gently words and it didn't work so now I will try harsh words."

**2. Job responded to this harsh counsel in all of his responses (16:1-6; 19:1-6; 21:1-6).**

Job has pleaded for words of comfort and encouragement from his friends. But they have been “miserable comforters.” (16:1)

“But my mouth would encourage you; comfort from my lips would bring you relief.” (16:5)

“How long will you torment me and crush me with words? Ten times now you have reproached me; shamelessly you attack me.” (19:2-3; Prov.12: 25; 16:24)

“So how can you console me with your nonsense? Nothing is left of your answers but falsehood!” (21:34)

However, they travel long distance to be of some comfort to Job (2:11-13). “When Job’s three friends heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him.” (2:11)

**3. Job feels that he has been treated worst than an unbeliever by God and doesn’t know why and is angry with God (16:12-22; 19:11; 21:4; Prov.27: 9).**

“Is my complaint directed to man? Why should I not be impatient? (21:4)

“God assails me and tears me in His anger and gnashes His teeth at me.” (16:9/ Job’s prayer/ 16:7-17:16)

“All was well with me, but He shattered me; He seized me by the neck and crushed me. He has made me His target.” (16:12)

“Give me, O God, the pledge you demand. Who else will put up security for me?” (17:3)

“Job is asking God for a guarantee that he is right, that he is not guilty of sins that deserve punishment (as his counselors have said).” (NIV, Job 17:3; Prov.15: 4; 18:14)

“My spirit is broken, my days are cut short, the grave awaits me.” (17:1) “Where then is my hope? Who can see any hope for me? (17:15)

**4. Job wonders why the blameless (saved) suffer and the wicked (unsaved) seem to get a free pass? (21:7-9, 13-15, 30) “Why do the wicked live on, growing old and increasing in power?” (21:7)**

“Yet they (unsaved) say to God, ‘Leave us alone! We have no desire to know your ways. Who is the Almighty that we should serve him? What would we gain by praying to him? (21:14-15)

This resulted in a doctrinal debate regarding God’s dealing with the ungodly (unsaved). Eliphaz – “The wicked man writhes in pain all his days, and numbered are the years stored up for the ruthless.” (15:20)

In Act 4, each gives a poem on the fate of the wicked. **Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar** want to convince Job that he is wrong when he claims that the righteous suffers and the wicked prosper. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar are absolutely certain that every wicked person gets paid in full, in this life, for his wicked deeds. (15:20-35; 18:5-21; 20:1-29) (Prov.14: 11; 24:16)

In his response to Bildad, Job hopes that his defense would be recorded so that if not before at least after his death God might finally vindicate his righteous life against all these false accusations (19:23-27 / Handel’s Messiah).