**The Wisdom of Job**

**(Job despairs and Eliphaz responds)**

**Job 3 - 5 (New Living Translation)**

**3**At last Job spoke, and he cursed the day of his birth. **2**He said:

**3**“Let the day of my birth be erased,
    and the night I was conceived.
**4**Let that day be turned to darkness.
    Let it be lost even to God on high,
    and let no light shine on it.
**5**Let the darkness and utter gloom claim that day for its own.
    Let a black cloud overshadow it,
    and let the darkness terrify it.
**6**Let that night be blotted off the calendar,
    never again to be counted among the days of the year,
    never again to appear among the months.
**7**Let that night be childless.
    Let it have no joy.
**8**Let those who are experts at cursing—
    whose cursing could rouse Leviathan—
    curse that day.
**9**Let its morning stars remain dark.
    Let it hope for light, but in vain;
    may it never see the morning light.
**10**Curse that day for failing to shut my mother’s womb,
    for letting me be born to see all this trouble.

**11**“Why wasn’t I born dead?
    Why didn’t I die as I came from the womb?
**12**Why was I laid on my mother’s lap?
    Why did she nurse me at her breasts?
**13**Had I died at birth, I would now be at peace.
    I would be asleep and at rest.
**14**I would rest with the world’s kings and prime ministers,
    whose great buildings now lie in ruins.
**15**I would rest with princes, rich in gold,
    whose palaces were filled with silver.
**16**Why wasn’t I buried like a stillborn child,
    like a baby who never lives to see the light?
**17**For in death the wicked cause no trouble,
    and the weary are at rest.
**18**Even captives are at ease in death,
    with no guards to curse them.
**19**Rich and poor are both there,
    and the slave is free from his master.

**20**“Oh, why give light to those in misery,
    and life to those who are bitter?
**21**They long for death, and it won’t come.
    They search for death more eagerly than for hidden treasure.
**22**They’re filled with joy when they finally die,
    and rejoice when they find the grave.
**23**Why is life given to those with no future,
    those God has surrounded with difficulties?
**24**I cannot eat for sighing;
    my groans pour out like water.
**25**What I always feared has happened to me.
    What I dreaded has come true.
**26**I have no peace, no quietness.
    I have no rest; only trouble comes.”

**4**Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied to Job:

**2**“Will you be patient and let me say a word?
    For who could keep from speaking out?

**3**“In the past you have encouraged many people;
    you have strengthened those who were weak.
**4**Your words have supported those who were falling;
    you encouraged those with shaky knees.
**5**But now when trouble strikes, you lose heart.
    You are terrified when it touches you.
**6**Doesn’t your reverence for God give you confidence?
    Doesn’t your life of integrity give you hope?

**7**“Stop and think! Do the innocent die?
    When have the upright been destroyed?
**8**My experience shows that those who plant trouble
    and cultivate evil will harvest the same.
**9**A breath from God destroys them.
    They vanish in a blast of his anger.
**10**The lion roars and the wildcat snarls,
    but the teeth of strong lions will be broken.
**11**The fierce lion will starve for lack of prey,
    and the cubs of the lioness will be scattered.

**12**“This truth was given to me in secret,
    as though whispered in my ear.
**13**It came to me in a disturbing vision at night,
    when people are in a deep sleep.
**14**Fear gripped me,
    and my bones trembled.
**15**A spirit swept past my face,
    and my hair stood on end.
**16**The spirit stopped, but I couldn’t see its shape.
    There was a form before my eyes.
In the silence I heard a voice say,
**17**‘Can a mortal be innocent before God?
    Can anyone be pure before the Creator?’

**18**“If God does not trust his own angels
    and has charged his messengers with foolishness,
**19**how much less will he trust people made of clay!
    They are made of dust, crushed as easily as a moth.
**20**They are alive in the morning but dead by evening,
    gone forever without a trace.
**21**Their tent-cords are pulled and the tent collapses,
    and they die in ignorance.

**5**“Cry for help, but will anyone answer you?
    Which of the angels will help you?
**2**Surely resentment destroys the fool,
    and jealousy kills the simple.
**3**I have seen that fools may be successful for the moment,
    but then comes sudden disaster.
**4**Their children are abandoned far from help;
    they are crushed in court with no one to defend them.
**5**The hungry devour their harvest,
    even when it is guarded by brambles.
    The thirsty pant after their wealth.
**6**But evil does not spring from the soil,
    and trouble does not sprout from the earth.
**7**People are born for trouble
    as readily as sparks fly up from a fire.

**8**“If I were you, I would go to God
    and present my case to him.
**9**He does great things too marvelous to understand.
    He performs countless miracles.
**10**He gives rain for the earth
    and water for the fields.
**11**He gives prosperity to the poor
    and protects those who suffer.
**12**He frustrates the plans of schemers
    so the work of their hands will not succeed.
**13**He traps the wise in their own cleverness
    so their cunning schemes are thwarted.
**14**They find it is dark in the daytime,
    and they grope at noon as if it were night.
**15**He rescues the poor from the cutting words of the strong,
    and rescues them from the clutches of the powerful.
**16**And so at last the poor have hope,
    and the snapping jaws of the wicked are shut.

**17**“But consider the joy of those corrected by God!
    Do not despise the discipline of the Almighty when you sin.
**18**For though he wounds, he also bandages.
    He strikes, but his hands also heal.
**19**From six disasters he will rescue you;
    even in the seventh, he will keep you from evil.
**20**He will save you from death in time of famine,
    from the power of the sword in time of war.
**21**You will be safe from slander
    and have no fear when destruction comes.
**22**You will laugh at destruction and famine;
    wild animals will not terrify you.
**23**You will be at peace with the stones of the field,
    and its wild animals will be at peace with you.
**24**You will know that your home is safe.
    When you survey your possessions, nothing will be missing.
**25**You will have many children;
    your descendants will be as plentiful as grass!
**26**You will go to the grave at a ripe old age,
    like a sheaf of grain harvested at the proper time!

**27**“We have studied life and found all this to be true.
    Listen to my counsel, and apply it to yourself.”

**QUESTIONS**

1. **Observation (What does it say?)**
2. Can you describe the setting for the discourses in this passage?
3. What does Job have to say about the day of his birth?
4. What does Job have to say about dying?
5. Does Eliphaz agree with Job’s assessment?
6. How does Eliphaz want Job to respond to his situation?

**b. Interpretation (What does it mean?)**

1. The empathy shown by Job’s friends encourages him to share openly. How would you summarize Job’s thoughts?
2. How do you feel about Job’s discourse? Does it make you feel uncomfortable? Why/why not?
3. What do you think Eliphaz is trying to accomplish in his discourse?
4. Read Job 5:17-27 again. How would you summarize these verses?
5. Do you agree/disagree with all/some of Eliphaz’s response? Please take time to motivate your answer.

**c. Application (What do I do with this?)**

1. How do you think Christians generally respond to people like Job, who say they would be better off dead? What kind of response would be helpful?
2. Where did you find wisdom in this passage, and how can we apply it to our lives?