



[Job 4:12-21](#)

(12) "Now a word was secretly brought to me,
And my ear received a whisper of it. (13) In disquieting thoughts from
the visions of the night,
When deep sleep falls on men, (14) Fear came upon me, and trembling,
Which made all my bones shake. (15) Then a spirit passed before my
face;
The hair on my body stood up. (16) It stood still,
But I could not discern its appearance.
A form *was* before my eyes;
There was silence;
Then I heard a voice *saying*: (17) 'Can a mortal be more righteous than
God?
Can a man be more pure than his Maker? (18) If He puts no trust in His
servants,
If He charges His angels with error, (19) How much more those who
dwell in houses of clay,
Whose foundation is in the dust,
Who are crushed before a moth? (20) They are broken in pieces from
morning till evening;
They perish forever, with no one regarding. (21) Does not their own
excellence go away?
They die, even without wisdom.'

New King James Version

When we closely examine the nature of the being that troubled Job's friend, we learn that this spirit appealed to the carnal desire for a special revelation. If we remember the content of the serpent's appeal to Eve, "Your eyes will

be opened, and you will be like [God](#), knowing good and evil" ([Genesis 3:5](#)), we see a similarity.

We notice that the spirit came at nighttime, in the form of a nightmare, an approach that could be characterized as intimidation, not an approach that God chooses to use with believers. We remember from Paul's second letter to Timothy that "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" ([II Timothy 1:7](#)).

Generally in Scripture, when people express fear at the appearance of angels, the angels comfort them, saying something akin to "Fear not" (see, for example, [Daniel 10:12](#); [Luke 1:13](#), 30; [Revelation 1:17](#)). Yet, this elusive being in Job 4 prefers to remain obscure and daunting, something atypical throughout God's Word.

We also observe that this spirit's message begins with an accusation, a technique usually ascribed to [Satan](#) ([Revelation 12:10](#)). The being insinuates that God does not trust the angels. However, we understand that God often entrusted His Word and weighty responsibilities to angels. If this spirit is so sensitive about God charging some of His angels with folly, it is perhaps that this message came from one of the rebellious angels who followed Satan. It is no wonder this evil spirit had bitterness and animosity against God.

In several places, the Bible contradicts the assertions that this demon makes. In fact, God Almighty has trusted His church—human beings!—with the mandate to carry His priceless gospel throughout [the world](#). As for no one observing when a person perishes, we are assured by [Christ](#) Himself that no human being ever dies without God being mindful. As He keeps meticulous records of all the falling sparrows ([Matthew 10:29](#)), He also keeps track of the deaths of His saints, which He regards as precious ([Psalm 116:15](#)). Our God is not intent on destroying us, as the demon intimates, but as Paul writes in [Romans 8:28](#), "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."

Several Bible commentaries, including *Barnes Notes*, erroneously suppose that this communication is consistent with God's revelations. We can extrapolate from God's stern rebuke of Job's friends ([Job 42:7-9](#)) that He considered the communication not to have been consistent with His character.

Remember, the main principle of interpreting Scripture is that the Bible interprets itself. Contextually, then, Eliphaz probably received his counsel from a familiar spirit totally out of sync with the whole counsel of Scripture.

— David F. Maas

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