

Zophar's First Speech (c. 2200 BC)

Job 11

Zophar Rebukes Job Sharply—God Has Punished You Less Than Your Guilt Deserves

- 1 Then Zophar the Naamathite answered,
- 2 “Shall a multitude of words go unanswered,
And a talkative man be acquitted?
- 3 “Shall your boasts silence men?
And shall you scoff and none rebuke?
- 4 “For you have said, ‘My teaching is pure,
And I am innocent in your eyes.’
- 5 “But would that God might speak,
And open His lips against you,
- 6 And show you the secrets of wisdom!
For sound wisdom has two sides.
Know then that God forgets a part of your iniquity.

God's Ways Are Beyond Understanding, and He Can See Your Iniquity

- 7 “Can you discover the depths of God?
Can you discover the limits of the Almighty?
- 8 “*They are* high as the heavens, what can you do?
Deeper than Sheol, what can you know?
- 9 “Its measure is longer than the earth
And broader than the sea.
- 10 “If He passes by or shuts up,
Or calls an assembly, who can restrain Him?
- 11 “For He knows false men,
And He sees iniquity without investigating.
- 12 “An idiot will become intelligent
When the foal of a wild donkey is born a man.

If You Will Repent, God Will Again Bless You

- 13 “If you would direct your heart right
And spread out your hand to Him,
- 14 If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away,
And do not let wickedness dwell in your tents;
- 15 “Then, indeed, you could lift up your face without *moral* defect,
And you would be steadfast and not fear.
- 16 “For you would forget *your* trouble,
As waters that have passed by, you would remember *it*.
- 17 “Your life would be brighter than noonday;
Darkness would be like the morning.
- 18 “Then you would trust, because there is hope;
And you would look around and rest securely.
- 19 “You would lie down and none would disturb *you*,
And many would entreat your favor.
- 20 “But the eyes of the wicked will fail,
And there will be no escape for them;
And their hope is to breathe their last.”

Job's Response to Zophar (c. 2200 BC)

Job 12–14

Job Responds With Sarcasm

12:1 Then Job responded,

- 2 “Truly then you are the people,
And with you wisdom will die!
- 3 “But I have intelligence as well as you;
I am not inferior to you.
And who does not know such things as these?

Job Points Out the Irony—He is Derided by his Friends, While the Tents of Robbers are Peaceful

- 4 “I am a joke to my friends,
The one who called on God and He answered him;
The just *and blameless man* is a joke.
- 5 “He who is at ease holds calamity in contempt,
As prepared for those whose feet slip.
- 6 “The tents of the destroyers prosper,
And those who provoke God are secure,
Whom God brings into their power.

Even the Animals Know Your “Wisdom”

- 7 “But now ask the beasts, and let them teach you;
And the birds of the heavens, and let them tell you.
- 8 “Or speak to the earth, and let it teach you;
And let the fish of the sea declare to you.
- 9 “Who among all these does not know
That the hand of the LORD has done this,
- 10 In whose hand is the life of every living thing,
And the breath of all mankind?
- 11 “Does not the ear test words,
As the palate tastes its food?
- 12 “Wisdom is with aged men,
With long life is understanding.

God Is Sovereign—But He Does Not Always Act in Ways You Might Expect

- 13 “With Him are wisdom and might;
To Him belong counsel and understanding.
- 14 “Behold, He tears down, and it cannot be rebuilt;
He imprisons a man, and there can be no release.
- 15 “Behold, He restrains the waters, and they dry up;
And He sends them out, and they inundate the earth.
- 16 “With Him are strength and sound wisdom,
The misled and the misleader belong to Him.
- 17 “He makes counselors walk barefoot
And makes fools of judges.
- 18 “He loosens the bond of kings
And binds their loins with a girdle.
- 19 “He makes priests walk barefoot

And overthrows the secure ones.

- 20 “He deprives the trusted ones of speech
And takes away the discernment of the elders.
- 21 “He pours contempt on nobles
And loosens the belt of the strong.
- 22 “He reveals mysteries from the darkness
And brings the deep darkness into light.
- 23 “He makes the nations great, then destroys them;
He enlarges the nations, then leads them away.
- 24 “He deprives of intelligence the chiefs of the earth’s people
And makes them wander in a pathless waste.
- 25 “They grope in darkness with no light,
And He makes them stagger like a drunken man.

Job Tells His Friends to Be Silent and Let Him Address His Case Directly to God

- 13:1 “Behold, my eye has seen all *this*,
My ear has heard and understood it.
- 2 “What you know I also know;
I am not inferior to you.
- 3 “But I would speak to the Almighty,
And I desire to argue with God.
- 4 “But you smear with lies;
You are all worthless physicians.
- 5 “O that you would be completely silent,
And that it would become your wisdom!
- 6 “Please hear my argument
And listen to the contentions of my lips.
- 7 “Will you speak what is unjust for God,
And speak what is deceitful for Him?
- 8 “Will you show partiality for Him?
Will you contend for God?
- 9 “Will it be well when He examines you?
Or will you deceive Him as one deceives a man?
- 10 “He will surely reprove you
If you secretly show partiality.
- 11 “Will not His majesty terrify you,
And the dread of Him fall on you?
- 12 “Your memorable sayings are proverbs of ashes,
Your defenses are defenses of clay.

Job Is Certain of His Vindication

- 13 “Be silent before me so that I may speak;
Then let come on me what may.
- 14 “Why should I take my flesh in my teeth
And put my life in my hands?
- 15 “Though He slay me,
I will hope in Him.
Nevertheless I will argue my ways before Him.
- 16 “This also will be my salvation,

For a godless man may not come before His presence.

- 17 “Listen carefully to my speech,
And let my declaration *fill* your ears.
18 “Behold now, I have prepared my case;
I know that I will be vindicated.
19 “Who will contend with me?
For then I would be silent and die.

Job Addresses God—Two Pre-Trial Conditions

- 20 “Only two things do not do to me,
Then I will not hide from Your face:
21 Remove Your hand from me,
And let not the dread of You terrify me.
22 “Then call, and I will answer;
Or let me speak, then reply to me.

Job Addresses God—Explain My Fault, Why Are You Doing This to Me?

- 23 “How many are my iniquities and sins?
Make known to me my rebellion and my sin.
24 “Why do You hide Your face
And consider me Your enemy?
25 “Will You cause a driven leaf to tremble?
Or will You pursue the dry chaff?
26 “For You write bitter things against me
And make me to inherit the iniquities of my youth.
27 “You put my feet in the stocks
And watch all my paths;
You set a limit for the soles of my feet,
28 While I am decaying like a rotten thing,
Like a garment that is moth-eaten.

Job Addresses God—The Brevity of Life

- 14:1 “Man, who is born of woman,
Is short-lived and full of turmoil.
2 “Like a flower he comes forth and withers.
He also flees like a shadow and does not remain.
3 “You also open Your eyes on him
And bring him into judgment with Yourself.
4 “Who can make the clean out of the unclean?
No one!
5 “Since his days are determined,
The number of his months is with You;
And his limits You have set so that he cannot pass.
6 “Turn Your gaze from him that he may rest,
Until he fulfills his day like a hired man.

Job Addresses God—The Terrible Finality of Death

- 7 “For there is hope for a tree,
When it is cut down, that it will sprout again,

And its shoots will not fail.

- 8 “Though its roots grow old in the ground
And its stump dies in the dry soil,
9 At the scent of water it will flourish
And put forth sprigs like a plant.
10 “But man dies and lies prostrate.
Man expires, and where is he?
11 “As water evaporates from the sea,
And a river becomes parched and dried up,
12 So man lies down and does not rise.
Until the heavens are no longer,
He will not awake nor be aroused out of his sleep.

Job Addresses God—A Hope after Death

- 13 “Oh that You would hide me in Sheol,
That You would conceal me until Your wrath returns *to You*,
That You would set a limit for me and remember me!
14 “If a man dies, will he live *again*?
All the days of my struggle I will wait
Until my change comes.
15 “You will call, and I will answer You;
You will long for the work of Your hands.
16 “For now You number my steps,
You do not observe my sin.
17 “My transgression is sealed up in a bag,
And You wrap up my iniquity.

Job Addresses God—Hope Fades and Despair Returns

- 18 “But the falling mountain crumbles away,
And the rock moves from its place;
19 Water wears away stones,
Its torrents wash away the dust of the earth;
So You destroy man’s hope.
20 “You forever overpower him and he departs;
You change his appearance and send him away.
21 “His sons achieve honor, but he does not know *it*;
Or they become insignificant, but he does not perceive it.
22 “But his body pains him,
And he mourns only for himself.”