

Zophar's Second and Last Speech (c. 2200 BC)

Job 20

Zophar is Offended by Job's Rebuke

- 1 Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said,
- 2 “Therefore my disquieting thoughts bring me back
for the sake of my inward excitement.
- 3 I hear discipline that insults me,
and a spirit beyond my understanding answers me.

Zophar Expands on Bildad's Perspective—The Joy of the Wicked is Short and They are Quickly Punished by God

- 4 “Did you know this from of old,
since the setting of *the* human being on earth,
5 that *the* rejoicing of *the* wicked *is* short,
and the joy of *the* godless lasts only a moment?
6 Even though his stature mounts up to the heaven,
and his head reaches to the clouds,
7 he will perish forever like his dung;
those who have seen him will say, ‘Where *is* he?’
8 He will fly away like a dream, and they will not find him,
and he will be chased away like a vision of *the* night.
9 *The eye that* saw him will not see him again,
and his place will no longer behold him.
10 His children will seek favors from *the* poor,
and his hands will return his wealth.
11 His bones were full of his vigor,
but it will lie down with him on *the* dust.
12 “Though wickedness tastes sweet in his mouth,
and he hides it under his tongue,
13 *though* he spares it and does not let it go
and holds it back in the midst of his palate,
14 in his bowels his food is turned,
the venom of horned vipers *is* within him.
15 He swallows riches, but he vomits them *up*;
God drives them out from his stomach.
16 He will suck *the* poison of horned vipers;
the viper's tongue will kill him.
17 He will not enjoy the streams,
the torrents of honey and curds.
18 Returning *the* products of *his* toil, he will not swallow;
according to the profit of his trade, he will not enjoy,
19 for he has oppressed; he has abandoned *the* poor;
he has seized a house but did not build it.
20 Because he has not known satisfaction in his stomach,
he lets nothing escape that he desires.
21 There is nothing left after he has eaten;
therefore his prosperity will not endure.
22 In the fullness of his excess he will be in distress;
all of misery's power will come *upon* him.
23 When his stomach fills up, *God* will send his burning anger upon him,
and he will let *it* rain down upon him as his food.
24 “He will flee from an iron weapon,
but an arrow of bronze will pierce him.
25 He draws *it* forth, and it comes out from *his* body,
and *the* glittering point comes from his gall-bladder;
terrors come upon him.
26 Total darkness is hidden for his treasures;
an unfanned fire will devour him;

- the* remnant will be consumed in his tent.
- 27 *The* heavens will reveal his guilt,
and *the* earth will rise up against him.
- 28 The products of his house will be carried away
like gushing waters on the day of his wrath.
- 29 This *is* a wicked human being's portion from God
and the inheritance of his decree from God."

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

Job 21

Job Tells His Friends to Listen

- 1 Then Job answered and said,
- 2 "Listen carefully to my words,
and let *this* be your consolation.
- 3 Bear *with* me, and I myself will speak;
then after my speaking you can mock.
- 4 *As for* me, *is* my complaint for human beings?
And if *so*, why cannot I be impatient?
- 5 Turn to me and be appalled,
and place *your* hand on *your* mouth.
- 6 And when I think of *it*, I am horrified,
and shuddering seizes my flesh.

Job Points Out Exceptions to Their Worldview—The Wicked Are Prosperous

- 7 "Why do *the* wicked live,
grow old, even grow mighty *in* power?
- 8 With them their offspring *are* established before them,
and their descendants before their eyes.
- 9 Their houses *are* safe without fear,
and the rod of God *is* not upon them.
- 10 His bull breeds and does not fail;
his cow calves and does not miscarry.
- 11 They send out their little ones like the flock,
and their children dance around.
- 12 They sing to *the* tambourine and lyre,
and they rejoice to *the* sound of *the* long flute.
- 13 They spend their days in prosperity,
and in peace they go down to Sheol.
- 14 And they say to God, 'Turn away from us,
for we do not desire to know your ways.
- 15 Who *is* Shaddai that we should serve him,
or what would we benefit when we plead with him?'
- 16 Look, their prosperity *is* not in their hands;
the schemes of *the* wicked are repugnant to me.

Job Points Out Exceptions to Their Worldview—The Wicked Are Long-lived

- 17 "How often is *the* lamp of *the* wicked put out,
and their disaster comes upon them?
He distributes pains in his anger.
- 18 *How often* are they like straw before the wind,
and like chaff that *the* storm carries away?
- 19 'God stores up his iniquity for his children?'
Then let him repay *it* to him that he may know.
- 20 Let his eyes see his decay,
and let him drink from the wrath of Shaddai,
- 21 for what does he care for his house after him,

when the number of his months is cut off?

Prelude to Ecclesiastes—The Prosperous and the Impoverished Suffer the Same Fate

- 22 Can anyone teach knowledge to God,
since he himself judges high ones?
23 This *one* dies in full prosperity,
completely at ease and secure.
24 His vats are full *with* milk
and the marrow of his bones is moist.
25 Yet another dies with a bitter inner self
and has not tasted prosperity.
26 They lie down together in *the* dust,
and maggots cover them. [cf. [Ecc 2:15–17](#)]

Ask Those Who Travel the World—They Will Confirm the Peace and Prosperity of the Wicked

- 27 “Look, I know your thoughts
and *the* schemes you devise against me.
28 For you say, ‘Where is the nobleman’s house,
and where *are* the tents in which the wicked dwell?’
29 Do you not ask *those* traveling *the* roads,
and do you not take notice of their accounts?
30 Indeed, *the* wicked is spared from *the* day of disaster;
he is delivered from *the* day of wrath.
31 Who denounces his way to his face?
And who repays him *for what* he has done?
32 When he is brought to *the* grave,
then someone stands guard over *the* tomb.
33 *The* clods of *the* valley are sweet to him;
everyone will follow after him,
and before him they are innumerable.
34 So how will you comfort me *with* emptiness,
when fraud is left *in* your answers?”

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