

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

Job 20

**Zophar is Offended by Job's Rebuke**

- 1 Then Zophar the Naamathite answered,  
2 "Therefore my disquieting thoughts make me respond,  
Even because of my inward agitation.  
3 "I listened to the reproof which insults me,  
And the spirit of my understanding makes me answer.

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

- 4 "Do you know this from of old,  
From the establishment of man on earth,  
5 That the triumphing of the wicked is short,  
And the joy of the godless momentary?  
6 "Though his loftiness reaches the heavens,  
And his head touches the clouds,  
7 He perishes forever like his refuse;  
Those who have seen him will say, 'Where is he?'  
8 "He flies away like a dream, and they cannot find him;  
Even like a vision of the night he is chased away.  
9 "The eye which saw him sees him no longer,  
And his place no longer beholds him.  
10 "His sons favor the poor,  
And his hands give back his wealth.  
11 "His bones are full of his youthful vigor,  
But it lies down with him in the dust.  
12 "Though evil is sweet in his mouth  
And he hides it under his tongue,  
13 *Though* he desires it and will not let it go,  
But holds it in his mouth,  
14 *Yet* his food in his stomach is changed  
To the venom of cobras within him.  
15 "He swallows riches,  
But will vomit them up;  
God will expel them from his belly.  
16 "He sucks the poison of cobras;  
The viper's tongue slays him.  
17 "He does not look at the streams,  
The rivers flowing with honey and curds.  
18 "He returns what he has attained  
And cannot swallow *it*;  
As to the riches of his trading,  
He cannot even enjoy *them*.  
19 "For he has oppressed *and* forsaken the poor;  
He has seized a house which he has not built.  
20 "Because he knew no quiet within him,  
He does not retain anything he desires.  
21 "Nothing remains for him to devour,  
Therefore his prosperity does not endure.  
22 "In the fullness of his plenty he will be cramped;  
The hand of everyone who suffers will come *against* him.  
23 "When he fills his belly, *God* will send His fierce anger on him  
And will rain *it* on him while he is eating.  
24 "He may flee from the iron weapon,  
*But* the bronze bow will pierce him.  
25 "It is drawn forth and comes out of his back,  
Even the glittering point from his gall.

- Terrors come upon him,  
 26 Complete darkness is held in reserve for his treasures,  
 And unfanned fire will devour him;  
 It will consume the survivor in his tent.  
 27 “The heavens will reveal his iniquity,  
 And the earth will rise up against him.  
 28 “The increase of his house will depart;  
*His possessions* will flow away in the day of His anger.  
 29 “This is the wicked man’s portion from God,  
 Even the heritage decreed to him by God.”

## Job’s Response to Zophar (c. 2200 BC)

### Job 21

#### Job Tells His Friends to Listen

- 1 Then Job answered,  
 2 “Listen carefully to my speech,  
 And let this be your *way of* consolation.  
 3 “Bear with me that I may speak;  
 Then after I have spoken, you may mock.  
 4 “As for me, is my complaint to man?  
 And why should I not be impatient?  
 5 “Look at me, and be astonished,  
 And put *your* hand over *your* mouth.  
 6 “Even when I remember, I am disturbed,  
 And horror takes hold of my flesh.

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

- 7 “Why do the wicked *still* live,  
 Continue on, also become very powerful?  
 8 “Their descendants are established with them in their sight,  
 And their offspring before their eyes,  
 9 Their houses are safe from fear,  
 And the rod of God is not on them.  
 10 “His ox mates without fail;  
 His cow calves and does not abort.  
 11 “They send forth their little ones like the flock,  
 And their children skip about.  
 12 “They sing to the timbrel and harp  
 And rejoice at the sound of the flute.  
 13 “They spend their days in prosperity,  
 And suddenly they go down to Sheol.  
 14 “They say to God, ‘Depart from us!  
 We do not even desire the knowledge of Your ways.  
 15 ‘Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him,  
 And what would we gain if we entreat Him?’  
 16 “Behold, their prosperity is not in their hand;  
 The counsel of the wicked is far from me.

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

- 17 “How often is the lamp of the wicked put out,  
 Or does their calamity fall on them?  
 Does God apportion destruction in His anger?  
 18 “Are they as straw before the wind,  
 And like chaff which the storm carries away?  
 19 “*You say*, ‘God stores away a man’s iniquity for his sons.’  
 Let God repay him so that he may know *it*.

- 20 “Let his own eyes see his decay,  
And let him drink of the wrath of the Almighty.  
21 “For what does he care for his household 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 God knowledge,  
In that He judges those on high?  
23 “One dies in his full strength,  
Being wholly at ease and satisfied;  
24 His sides are filled out with fat,  
And the marrow of his bones is moist,  
25 While another dies with a bitter soul,  
Never even tasting *anything* good.  
26 “Together they lie down in the dust,  
And worms cover them. [cf. [Ecc 2:15–17](#)]

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

- 27 “Behold, I know your thoughts,  
And the plans by which you would wrong me.  
28 “For you say, ‘Where is the house of the nobleman,  
And where is the tent, the dwelling places of the wicked?’  
29 “Have you not asked wayfaring men,  
And do you not recognize their witness?  
30 “For the wicked is reserved for the day of calamity;  
They will be led forth at the day of fury.  
31 “Who will confront him with his actions,  
And who will repay him for what he has done?  
32 “While he is carried to the grave,  
*Men* will keep watch over *his* tomb.  
33 “The clods of the valley will gently cover him;  
Moreover, all men will follow after him,  
While countless ones *go* before him.  
34 “How then will you vainly comfort me,  
For your answers remain *full of falsehood?*”

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