

Job

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Job 11



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Vss. 1-6

- Now finally we hear from the third of Job’s so-called friends, Zophar the Naamathite. Recall from Chapter 2 that his name has no clear known meaning. It could be a variation of “twittering bird” or “sharp nail” or even “goatlike jumper”. Naamah is probably the Jebel-el-Na’ameh in northwestern Arabia. The LXX, the Greek translation of the Old Testament (also known as The Septuagint), written around the 3rd century BC, calls Zophar “the king of the Mineans”, who were Semitic people in southern Arabia. Baptist scholar John D. W. Watts argues that Zophar was the most impetuous of the three, dogmatic, intense, passionate to the point of being reckless. He was the first to accuse Job of some hidden personal wickedness and rebukes Job for presuming to search for the unsearchable secrets of God.
- Zophar begins with sharp, accusing words. He does not draw on experience like Eliphaz or the wisdom of the ancients like Bildad. No, he has been taught the deep truths of God, thus equating his own wisdom with the wisdom of God.
- Zophar feels that Job has little to offer but “babble”, empty words with no substance. Yes, these words must be answered, but he cannot accept job’s plea of innocence. To Zophar, the proof is in the pudding. Job is in this mess purely because of his sin and because he refuses to confess and repent, Zophar is insensitive to Job’s plight. “He’s made his bed, let him lie in it.”
- Further, Zophar suggests that God is aware of Job’s sin and has already forgiven at least part of Job’s clearly extensive sin, otherwise God would have poured even more judgement out onto the man.

Vss.7-12

- One thing that really sets Zophar off is the idea that to him Job is lecturing God. “Can **you** discover the depths of God?” Who is Job, a mere mortal, to lecture God as if he could even begin to know the wisdom of the Divine?
- Zophar rightly points to the unknowable breadth and depth of God and His wisdom. The Wisdom of God he says is as “high as the heavens, what can you do? Deeper than Sheol, what can you know? Its measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea.”
- One things that Zophar and Job agree on is that God is God and is accountable to no one. The Lord is prosecutor, judge, and jury and His verdict is final and absolute. Where Zophar differs from

Job is how he understands God's use of His absolute power. To Zophar, God's complete wisdom gives Him total knowledge of each and every person and He recognizes an empty, baseless fool on the spot. To Zophar, because God is the embodiment of ultimate justice, what we are able to observe of how God treats people is all we need to know of a person's innocence or guilt.

- Thus for Zophar, God will bless the guilty when pigs fly or when "an 'idiot' will become intelligent (or) when the foal of a wild donkey is born a man."
- To Zophar, Job needs to give up any hope of being justified until he stops being a "false man" and finally gets honest with himself and God and confesses his sin and repents.

Vss. 13-20

- Zophar rightly points that true confession and repentance must come from the heart. And he makes it personal. In the Hebrew, the emphasis is on the "you" as if Zophar is pointing his finger at Job. It is as if he is suggesting that Job's lack of faith has led to his "foolishness", but even now there is still time if Job would only confess and repent.
- Repent (vs. 15) and Job would be physically and morally healed; he could live again as a strong man and without fear. And in time (vss. 16-17) he would forget all his past troubles and pain and the darkness of his present life would be lifted and sunshine would be all around him every day and Mr. Bluebird would be on his shoulders all day long (Parrish Revised Translation).
- In vss. 18-19 Zophar lists 4 qualities of life he believes Job will find after repentance. The first two are trust and hope. After getting right with God, Job will be able to lay down without any fear. Then there are peace and respect. Yes, in Job's new life after repentance no one will come to harm him. People will come only to seek his help and blessing.
- Zophar finishes his speech with a warning: failure to do as he has instructed, because he has the wisdom of God, will be disastrous; Job will have no hope of escape from the wrath of God. Death will be his only way out.
- In short, Zophar is the very picture of spiritual arrogance. While he argues that God's wisdom is too vast for people to begin to know, he claims that he in fact does know. And his advice is the advice of a young man who is wonderfully naïve. Clearly he hasn't lived very long if he truly believes that being right with God will protect you from all the world's dangers and harms. The Apostle Paul would have had no patience with such advice as he sat in Mamertine Prison waiting to be beheaded. And if Zophar believes that time alone will make Job forget the pain of the loss of all his children, then clearly, Zophar has not lived very long and his naiveté will keep him warm and safe at night.