

Job Chapter 20

V: 1-3 Zophar responds to Job in what will be the end of round 2.

NASB - “I listened to the reproof which insults me, and the spirit of my understanding makes me answer.

- Zophar finds Job’s remarks insulting, he’s angry and feels compelled to respond quickly.
- When we’re angry, that’s when we should respond slowly...

James 2:19 “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.”

V: 4-29 In the rest of this chapter Zophar describes the awful fate of the wicked.

V: 4-11 Their lives will be short.

V: 12-19 Their pleasures will be temporary.

V: 20-29 Their death will be painful.

V: 4-9 “Don’t you know...?” He is saying there are certain “truths”, realities of life, from the beginning of time.

- He says that the triumphing of the wicked and the joy of the hypocrite are short lived:
- It seemed like Caine lived a lot longer than Abel. The Lord waited 120 years before sending the flood. God gave the wicked Canaanites 4 centuries to turn from their sin before He judged them.
- Zophar is saying that the wicked die young, their lives are short lived: David Brainerd died when he was 28 years old as a missionary to the American Indians. Jim Elliot, missionary to the Auca indians died when he was 24, Cassie Bernal was 17 when she was killed in the Columbine massacre.
- You have to wonder where Zophar is getting his information.
- God does deal with sin, but not the way Zophar is suggesting:

Numbers 32:23 “... ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out.”

- Sooner or later things will be revealed, whether it's here or in heaven, sooner or later the secret things shall be discovered.
- ⁷Zophar is saying that Job will just fade away and disappear, like his own dung... (Nice comparison.)
- He's saying that Job's life will be like a dream, as though it didn't actually happen.
- The obvious insinuation in all of this is that Job is wicked, and a hypocrite.

V: 10-11 "His children shall seek to please the poor, and his hands shall restore their goods."

- When Job / the wicked is dead and gone his descendants (which are already dead) will have to make restitution for all the things he stole and cheated to get.
- There really is no over riding rule or guideline that determines when people, the good or the bad will or will not die.
- Generally speaking, people who ignore God's laws are more vulnerable to the problems associated with an early death; sexual promiscuity, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, a reckless lifestyle in general can help shorten a persons life - but there is no guarantee that will happen either.
- It's always amazing how some godless people live to a ripe old age.
- Often times when people turn 100 they'll be asked "what's the secret?" The responses are always interesting and they vary greatly? You don't hear "... two packs of cigarettes and a shot of whiskey every day!" Because they're already dead! I think the real reason is that God is giving them the grace to yield to him.

V: 12-19 Zophar uses eating as the basic image here. The wicked man enjoys sin the way people enjoy food. Keeping it in his mouth, savoring it, enjoying the taste - then swallowing it. But it goes from being a sweet taste to something bitter when it gets into his stomach, it become poison, like that of an asp.

Hebrews 11:25 "... the pleasures of sin for a season."

- Sin can be pleasant for a season, but there is always a price.

Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death..."

- You've exploited the poor, that is why you're so rich. But the wicked will not prosper; he's gobbled up other peoples riches now he will vomit it back up.

Proverbs 20:17 “The bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.”

- ¹⁶The viper’s tongue shall slay him - The tongue of the serpent killed Adam & Eve.
- ¹⁷He won’t see the rivers, the floods or the brooks of honey and butter.
- God’s judgment involves more than we realize: the wicked man not only gets sick from his sin, but he does not enjoy the everyday blessing of life. He won’t see the rivers or the streams.
- Exodus & Leviticus describe that the land of Canaan was a land flowing with milk and honey. Milk and honey were staples in those days, not luxuries. A land flowing with milk and honey spoke of a rich land that could support livestock, and be able to support people.
- But the wicked man has lost, loses his taste for basic foods, and nothing satisfies him anymore. His taste for sin has ruined his enjoyment of the fundamental blessings of life. (Alcoholics, drug addicts, sex addicts...)
- While this is a biblical truth, Zophar is misapplying it to Job.
- Zophar is accusing Job of having forsaken and oppressing the poor, of having taken their houses violently - but there is no basis for these accusations - he has moved away from truth into speculation.

V: 20-25 Wealth & riches will not be able to keep death from coming to the wicked.

- The wicked (meaning Job) shall not feel quietness, or peace.

Isaiah 48:22 “There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked.”

- Everything he has will be taken away, the hand of the wicked shall be upon him, God’s wrath will be upon him, he will be shot through with arrows, run through with the sword.

V: 26-29 “... a fire not blown” Not a man made fire, but the fires of hell will consume him.

- Heaven and earth shall bear witness against you... this is the portion of a wicked man, this is what you get from God, this is your recompense, your reward.
- I’m sorry but all I can think at the moment is “blah, bla blah blah, blah...”

- Insane discussion, nothing new, no attempt at real comfort, or even real investigation; mindless presumption and meaningless dialogue.
- In the previous chapter Job begged for pity, but all he got was chapter 20...
- Sadly (not) this will be the last time we hear from Zophar...

Job Chapter 21

- Job replies to Zophar's statements and refutes each of them, point by point.
- Job says that the wicked appear to have long lives, as opposed to short lives, they aren't sent calamity often, and that the death of the wicked is no different than any other men.

V: 1-3 Let what I'm about to say comfort you... allow me to speak, then you can continue mocking me...

Proverbs 17:5 "Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker:"

V: 4-5 My beef isn't with men, it isn't with you... it's with God. My complaint is to God. I don't understand the ways of God. I don't know why God has allowed these things to happen to me, for I don't know the reason or the cause, what evil I have done."

Then he says:

"**5 mark me...**" - listen to my words.

"**be astonished**" - you think I've said some pretty radical things, watch this, I'm just getting started!

"**And put your hand on your mouth**" - You know when someone says something that is so shocking, that just shocks you, and you say "Ooh! and put your hand over your mouth. Go ahead and put your hand over your mouth because here it comes!

V: 6 My own thoughts trouble me, I shudder to even think about it...

7-13 Describing the seeming prosperity of the wicked, this is notable to him because he has sought to be the opposite, he's sought out God's righteousness, but he's been cursed it would seem.

- Zophar just said that the portion of the wicked is to be cut off, they lose everything - Job is saying, "OK, but lets look at reality!" Look around you, what do you see?

- The wicked live and grow old, they become rich and powerful. They live securely, and God doesn't seem to punish them.
- Their livestock re-produce without problems, meaning their wealth increases.
- Their children are like flocks, lots of them, and they dance merrily and rejoice - living a care free life.
- This is of course an enigma, this is the heart of the problem for Job. Why do the righteous often times suffer so much, and why do the wicked prosper.
- Zophar and company: their Philosophy or theology says that if you're righteous, your going to be blessed, things will go well. You'll never have any problems. If you're righteous, you will be prosperous, and your prosperity will be a sign of your righteousness.
- Paul talks about those who would pervert the scriptures by declaring that "Godliness is a way of prosperity", a way to get rich.

Paul declares:

2 Corinthians 9:10 "Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness."

- There are many today that espouse that kind of heresy, that godliness is a way to get rich. Many in the church are saying that, you can see them on the BHC. (Big Hair Channel)
- Godliness is not a way to prosperity, God doesn't promise that He's going to make us rich. In fact we're warned against riches.

Proverbs 30:8-9 "8Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: 9Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain."

1 Timothy 6:9 "But they that will be rich fall into temptations and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition."

- God doesn't promise riches to the righteous, it's just the opposite:

2 Timothy 3:12 "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

- Job is facing this reality, his comforters are simply dreamers, religious philosophers who espouse a false dogma.

Dogma: a principle or set of principles laid down by an authority as incontrovertibly true: *the Christian dogma of the Trinity*

- The wicked may live rich, abundant, prosperous lives - but in a moment it's all gone.

V: 14-15 They seemingly provoke God, they are arrogant saying they want nothing to do with God, self-sufficiency, we don't want to know about Him.

- We hear these words and this attitude expressed presently in our culture, a practical sort of atheism.
- Who is the Almighty that we should serve Him or pray to Him?
- Pharaoh uttered pretty much the same words - and God answered that question first through the 10 plagues that fell upon Egypt, then with the waters of the Red Sea.
- A lot of people today don't want anything to do with God, and if possible they want to remove God from our society, and from our lives as well.
- If they continue in that stubborn attitude, God would relent and allow them to be separated from Himself, that is their desire - but generally they don't know what that is because God has always been near them, keeping them, blessing, and loving them in spite of them selves.
- God doesn't want them to make that choice, nonetheless He respects their choice.

2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord... is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

- This is all very consistent with **Psalm 73:3-19** ([Turn to](#))
- Sadly, too many Christians admire, envy, or emulate the lifestyle of the rich and shameless.
- We need to have an eternal perspective, a long view of things.

V: 16 Job has just described how the wicked think, but that is not how he thinks.

- The counsel of the wicked is far from him - as it should be!

Psalm 1:1 "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

V: 17-18 Continuing his argument, Job says, “How often do you see the wicked snuffed out? In reality, it’s just the opposite. When the winds of adversity blow, the wicked are like chaff. They just go with the flow, unaffected by it at all.”

- The wicked are like the chaff driven by the wind:

V: 19-20 The sins of the parents visited upon their children; children born with STD’s & Aids, children born with fetal alcohol, addicted to drugs from the womb and the long term effects of that.

- Sadly, so often the sins that the parents engage in, their children also pick up, and then they pass them onto their children. The only way to break that cycle is through Jesus Christ.
- The Bible is clear that the fathers are not to be judged for the sins of their children, neither are the children judged for the sins of their fathers.

Ezekiel 18:20 “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.”

- Parents may be deeply hurt by the sins of their children, and children may suffer from the consequences of their parents sin, but the judgment of God is always just.
- It was cruel for these men to suggest that Job’s children were killed because of his sin.
- Don’t envy the wicked; they will drink of the wrath of God!

V: 21-22 The wicked man doesn’t care what happens to his house, his family after he’s dead. He’s lived a good life, rich, and full - what happens to his kids is their problem, when they too are judged by God.

- None of us are going to counsel or teach God, there is no appeal, it’s the other way around: He is the final authority and judge.

Isaiah 40:13 “Who hath directed the spirit of the Lord, or being His counsellor hath taught Him?”

V: 23-26 Some die in the prime of life, living prosperously - others have never seen those pleasures, they die in bitterness of their soul - but they’re both eaten by the worms.

- Death is the great equalizer. Job is talking about physical death, not spiritual death - when death comes, as it surely will there will be a huge difference in the spiritual realm.

Hebrews 9:27 “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”

V: 27-28 “I know what you’re thinking,” Job says. “You’re going to tell me stories of the wicked men who were once rich but were later judged.”

V: 29 Job is saying ask the guy on the street, what evidence have they seen? Do the wicked seem to get away with stuff? Does it pay to do righteously? That depends on whether you take a short view or a long view of things. Short term / long term.

V: 30-31 The wicked seem to be protected from judgment and calamity, others are taken in it but they seem to survive every time.

- ³¹Who shall declare his way to his face?
- Job is asking: If you really believed that the wicked are destined for an early death, have you ever warned them? Have you ever denounced them to their face?
- If they said “no, we have never talked to the wicked about their future,” then Job could have said, Then why are you warning a righteous man about his future? Seems inconsistent.”

V: 32-33 Yet they will face death; there will be a big wake, a big procession following him, glowing remarks and tributes -no matter what kind of life they lived, just like those that have gone before him.

V: 34 How can you expect to comfort me with words that are not true?

- The only comfort any of us will find is in the truth; because Jesus is truth. He is our only hope.

John 14:6 “... I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.”