

## The Book of Job Chapters 11-14

After Bildad spoke and Job responded, Zophar spoke. He is the last of the three friends who came originally to console him. Zophar follows the same arguments as the other two friends. That is, Job has sinned and God is judging him.

### Zophar Responds to Job in Chapter 11

**Job 11:1-12** Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said: <sup>2</sup> "Should not the multitude of words be answered? And should a man full of talk be vindicated? <sup>3</sup> Should your empty talk make men hold their peace? And when you mock, should no one rebuke you? <sup>4</sup> For you have said, 'My doctrine *is* pure, And I am clean in your eyes.' <sup>5</sup> But oh, that God would speak, And open His lips against you, <sup>6</sup> That He would show you the secrets of wisdom! For *they would* double *your* prudence. Know therefore that God exacts from you *Less* than your iniquity *deserves*. <sup>7</sup> "Can you search out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limits of the Almighty? <sup>8</sup> *They are* higher than heaven-- what can you do? Deeper than Sheol-- what can you know? <sup>9</sup> Their measure *is* longer than the earth And broader than the sea. <sup>10</sup> "If He passes by, imprisons, and gathers *to judgment*, Then who can hinder Him? <sup>11</sup> For He knows deceitful men; He sees wickedness also. Will He not then consider *it*? <sup>12</sup> For an empty-headed man will be wise, When a wild donkey's colt is born a man.

#### Questions:

1. Is Zophar justified in what he says in verses 1-5?
2. Notice the harshness of Zophar's comments in verse 3.
3. Does verse 6 sound familiar: "... Know therefore that God exacts from you *Less* than your iniquity *deserves*."? Look at Psalm 103:8-11:  
<sup>8</sup> The LORD *is* merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. <sup>9</sup> He will not always strive *with us*, Nor will He keep *His anger* forever. <sup>10</sup> He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities. <sup>11</sup> For as the heavens are high above the earth, *So* great is His mercy toward those who fear Him.
4. Notice that Zophar is saying in verse 6 is that God's is not treating Job to the extent of his sin. This is very harsh given what Job is going through.

5. In verses 7-9, God will speak similar words in Job 38:4-5.

<sup>4</sup>"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell *Me*, if you have understanding. <sup>5</sup> Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it?

**Job 11:13-20** <sup>13</sup> "If you would prepare your heart, And stretch out your hands toward Him; <sup>14</sup> If iniquity *were* in your hand, *and you* put it far away, And would not let wickedness dwell in your tents; <sup>15</sup> Then surely you could lift up your face without spot; Yes, you could be steadfast, and not fear; <sup>16</sup> Because you would forget *your* misery, And remember *it* as waters *that have* passed away, <sup>17</sup> And *your* life would be brighter than noonday. *Though* you were dark, you would be like the morning. <sup>18</sup> And you would be secure, because there is hope; Yes, you would dig *around you*, *and* take your rest in safety. <sup>19</sup> You would also lie down, and no one would make *you* afraid; *Yes*, many would court your favor. <sup>20</sup> But the eyes of the wicked will fail, And they shall not escape, And their hope-- loss of life!"

### Questions:

1. What is Zophar saying essentially in these verses (13-20)?
2. What is Zophar implying about Job?
3. Are these things biblical?
4. Are they relevant in Job's case?

Compare these verses below with what Zophar is saying. Do they sound similar?

**Psalms 37:5-6** <sup>5</sup> Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring *it* to pass. <sup>6</sup> He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, And your justice as the noonday (NKJ).

**Psalms 91:5-8** <sup>5</sup> You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, *Nor* of the arrow *that* flies by day, <sup>6</sup> *Nor* of the pestilence *that* walks in darkness, *Nor* of the destruction *that* lays waste at noonday. <sup>7</sup> A thousand may fall at your side, And ten thousand at your right hand; *But* it shall not come near you. <sup>8</sup> Only with your eyes shall you look, And see the reward of the wicked (NKJ).

**Isaiah 58:10** <sup>10</sup> *If* you extend your soul to the hungry And satisfy the afflicted soul, Then your light shall dawn in the darkness, And your darkness shall *be* as the noonday (NKJ).

## Job Responds to Zophar in Chapters 12-14

**Job 12:1-5** Then Job answered and said: <sup>2</sup> "No doubt you *are* the people, And wisdom will die with you! <sup>3</sup> But I have understanding as well as you; I *am* not inferior to you. Indeed, who does not *know* such things as these? <sup>4</sup> "I am one mocked by his friends, Who called on God, and He answered him, The just and blameless *who is* ridiculed. <sup>5</sup> A lamp is despised in the thought of one who is at ease; *It is* made ready for those whose feet slip.

### Questions:

1. What is Job saying to Zophar in verses 1-5?
2. Is Job being serious or sarcastic?
3. What do you hear in verse 5?
4. Notice that the three friends do not encourage Job to humble himself or justify God. Instead, they keep putting Job on the defensive which causes Job to justify himself and speak as though God is in the wrong.

**Job 12:6-10** <sup>6</sup> The tents of robbers prosper, And those who provoke God are secure-- In what God provides by His hand. <sup>7</sup> "But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you; And the birds of the air, and they will tell you; <sup>8</sup> Or speak to the earth, and it will teach you; And the fish of the sea will explain to you. <sup>9</sup> Who among all these does not know That the hand of the LORD has done this, <sup>10</sup> In whose hand *is* the life of every living thing, And the breath of all mankind?

These are important statements made by Job.

### Questions:

1. What is Job's argument here in his defense? (Verse 9 is key.)
2. Is Job being polite towards Zophar in how he is making his argument?

**Job 12:11-25** <sup>11</sup> Does not the ear test words and the mouth taste its food? <sup>12</sup> Wisdom *is* with aged men, and with length of days, understanding. <sup>13</sup> "With Him *are* wisdom and strength, He has counsel and understanding. <sup>14</sup> If He breaks *a thing* down, it cannot be rebuilt; *If* He imprisons a man, there can be no release. <sup>15</sup> If He withholds the waters, they dry up; *If* He sends them out, they overwhelm the earth. <sup>16</sup> With Him *are* strength and prudence. The deceived and the deceiver *are* His. <sup>17</sup> He leads counselors away

plundered, and makes fools of the judges. <sup>18</sup> He loosens the bonds of kings, and binds their waist with a belt. <sup>19</sup> He leads princes away plundered, and overthrows the mighty. <sup>20</sup> He deprives the trusted ones of speech, and takes away the discernment of the elders. <sup>21</sup> He pours contempt on princes, and disarms the mighty. <sup>22</sup> He uncovers deep things out of darkness, and brings the shadow of death to light. <sup>23</sup> He makes nations great, and destroys them; He enlarges nations, and guides them. <sup>24</sup> He takes away the understanding of the chiefs of the people of the earth, and makes them wander in a pathless wilderness. <sup>25</sup> They grope in the dark without light, And He makes them stagger like a drunken *man*.

### Questions:

1. Essentially, what is Job saying in verses 11-25?
2. Is Job correct in these statements?

Examine the words of the Apostle Paul below. How significant are the words of the Apostle as they relate to Job's case?

**Romans 7:18** <sup>18</sup> For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but *how* to perform what is good I do not find.

**1 Corinthians 4:2-5** <sup>2</sup> Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. <sup>3</sup> But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. <sup>4</sup> For I know nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. <sup>5</sup> Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

**1 Corinthians 15:9-10** <sup>9</sup> For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. <sup>10</sup> But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God *which was* with me.

3. What are we seeing in Job's response that may be missing in Job?

The friends of Job are ministering to him in such a way that it is causing Job to defend his righteousness. However, what is missing in the friends' counseling and in Job's understanding, is the recognition that no matter how righteous we are, we are still condemned sinners, condemned by our sin. Therefore, God can never be unjust in His dealings with us.

## Job Continues to Respond to Zophar in Chapter 13

**Job 13:1-5** "Behold, my eye has seen all *this*, My ear has heard and understood it.

<sup>2</sup> What you know, I also know; I *am* not inferior to you. <sup>3</sup> But I would speak to the Almighty, And I desire to reason with God. <sup>4</sup> But you forgers of lies, You *are* all worthless physicians. <sup>5</sup> Oh, that you would be silent, And it would be your wisdom!

### Questions:

1. Reading these first five verses, where is Job emotionally with respect to his three friends?
2. What is verse three revealing about Job?
3. What is verse three saying about his opinion of his friend's helpfulness?
4. Compare verse five with **Proverbs 17:28**:  
"Even fools who keep silent are considered wise; when they close their lips, they are deemed intelligent (NRS)."

**Job 13:6-23** <sup>6</sup> Now hear my reasoning, And heed the pleadings of my lips. <sup>7</sup> Will you speak wickedly for God, And talk deceitfully for Him? <sup>8</sup> Will you show partiality for Him? Will you contend for God? <sup>9</sup> Will it be well when He searches you out? Or can you mock Him as one mocks a man? <sup>10</sup> He will surely rebuke you if you secretly show partiality. <sup>11</sup> Will not His excellence make you afraid, And the dread of Him fall upon you? <sup>12</sup> Your platitudes *are* proverbs of ashes, your defenses are defenses of clay. <sup>13</sup> "Hold your peace with me, and let me speak, then let come on me what *may*! <sup>14</sup> Why do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in my hands? <sup>15</sup> **Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.** Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him. <sup>16</sup> He also *shall* be my salvation, For a hypocrite could not come before Him. <sup>17</sup> Listen carefully to my speech, And to my declaration with your ears. <sup>18</sup> See now, I have prepared *my* case, I know that I shall be vindicated. <sup>19</sup> Who *is* he *who* will contend with me? If now I hold my tongue, I perish. <sup>20</sup> "Only two *things* do not do to me, Then I will not hide myself from You: <sup>21</sup> Withdraw Your hand far from me, And let not the dread of You make me afraid. <sup>22</sup> Then call, and I will answer; Or let me speak, then You respond to me. <sup>23</sup> How many *are* my iniquities and sins? Make me know my transgression and my sin.

## Questions:

1. Notice the great display of Job's faith in verse 15.
2. Notice in verses 15-23 that Job is requesting a hearing before God. Job has prepared his case and is certain that he will be vindicated (v. 18).
3. What is Job requesting from God in verses 20-22 in order that Job can have a hearing before God?
4. What does Job hope to accomplished in this hearing (v. 23)?
5. Look at verse 19 and then compare it with **Romans 8:31-34**:

“<sup>31</sup>What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? <sup>33</sup> Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? *It is* God who justifies. <sup>34</sup> Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.”

6. Can any person justify themselves before God as Job contends in verse 18?
7. Hear what the New Testament says about being justified by God in **Romans 3:20-24**:

<sup>20</sup> Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin. <sup>21</sup> But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, <sup>22</sup> even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

**Job 13:24-28** <sup>24</sup> Why do You hide Your face, And regard me as Your enemy?  
<sup>25</sup> Will You frighten a leaf driven to and fro? And will You pursue dry stubble?  
<sup>26</sup> For You write bitter things against me, and make me inherit the iniquities of my youth. <sup>27</sup> You put my feet in the stocks, and watch closely all my paths. You set a limit for the soles of my feet. <sup>28</sup> "Man decays like a rotten thing, like a garment that is moth-eaten.

### Questions:

1. Job is expressing that he is so insignificant, but God seems to take such interest in him and will not let him know why God is treating him like an enemy. It is similar to what the Psalmist says:

**Psalm 8:3-4** <sup>3</sup>When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, <sup>4</sup> What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?

**Psalm 144: 3-4** <sup>3</sup> LORD, what is man, that You take knowledge of him? Or the son of man, that You are mindful of him? <sup>4</sup> Man is like a breath; His days are like a passing shadow.

2. What is Job implying in verse 26?

### Job Continues to Respond to Zophar in Chapter 14

**Job 14:1-12** "Man *who is* born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. <sup>2</sup> He comes forth like a flower and fades away; He flees like a shadow and does not continue. <sup>3</sup> And do You open Your eyes on such a one, and bring me to judgment with Yourself? <sup>4</sup> Who can bring a clean *thing* out of an unclean? No one! <sup>5</sup> Since his days *are* determined, the number of his months *is* with You; You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass. <sup>6</sup> Look away from him that he may rest, till like a hired man he finishes his day. <sup>7</sup> "For there is hope for a tree, If it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its tender shoots will not cease. <sup>8</sup> Though its root may grow old in the earth, and its stump may die in the ground, <sup>9</sup> *Yet* at the scent of water it will bud and bring forth branches like a plant. <sup>10</sup> But man dies and is laid away; indeed he breathes his last And where *is* he? <sup>11</sup> *As* water disappears from the sea, and a river becomes parched and dries up, <sup>12</sup> So man lies down and does not rise. Till the heavens *are* no more, they will not awake nor be roused from their sleep.

### Statement:

1. Again, Job is expressing how much God takes interest in people despite that we are here today and gone tomorrow, and we will always be unclean in God's eyes. The Psalmist writes of this in Psalm 51:2-5:

<sup>2</sup> Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. <sup>3</sup> For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin *is* always before me. <sup>4</sup> Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done *this* evil in Your sight-- That You may be found just when You speak, *And* blameless when You

judge. <sup>5</sup> Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.

**Job 14:13-22** <sup>13</sup> "Oh, that You would hide me in the grave, that You would conceal me until Your wrath is past, That You would appoint me a set time, and remember me! <sup>14</sup> **If a man dies, shall he live *again*? All the days of my hard service I will wait, till my change comes. <sup>15</sup> You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands. <sup>16</sup> For now You number my steps, but do not watch over my sin. <sup>17</sup> My transgression *is* sealed up in a bag, and You cover my iniquity. <sup>18</sup> "But *as* a mountain falls *and* crumbles away, and *as* a rock is moved from its place; <sup>19</sup> *As* water wears away stones, *and as* torrents wash away the soil of the earth; So You destroy the hope of man. <sup>20</sup> You prevail forever against him, and he passes on; You change his countenance and send him away. <sup>21</sup> His sons come to honor, and he does not know *it*; They are brought low, and he does not perceive *it*. <sup>22</sup> But his flesh will be in pain over it, and his soul will mourn over it."**

### Questions:

1. Verses 14-15 are another faith statement from Job. What is Job asserting in these verses?
2. How important are these faith statements for Job or for anyone going through turmoil in their lives?
3. Do you think it is correct what Job says in verse 19?
4. Even though Job expresses his faith, what is Job saying in verses 16-22?