

Hello everyone,

PERCENT OF BIBLE COMPLETED: 5.1%

Weekly Readings will cover: Job 11 - 21

Sunday: Job 11

Monday: Job 12 & 13

Tuesday: Job 14

Wednesday: Job 15

Thursday: Job 16 & 17

Friday: Job 18 & 19

Saturday: Job 20 & 21

Current # of email addresses in group: 557

I hope you have enjoyed your first week's reading of the book of Job. I know Job can be a hard book to read, especially if you also are currently in the midst of a difficult trial. I'm very thankful for God preserving the story and life of Job. When we fall into various trials, we should examine our lives for sins and what we may have done to cause our circumstances, but the book of Job shows that no matter how righteous and blameless one may be in this life, if you are a true child of God, you will go through trials (see Acts 14:22). God continues to work to refine all of His children until they take their final breath. God was always with Job, even if Job felt completely abandoned by God. Nothing happened to Job that God didn't allow and wasn't ultimately working for good in God's great plan for Job and all involved.

As I read though this new week of chapters 11 to 21, I again did not often find many places where it was necessary or meaningful to dig deep into words. I will again rely heavily on the UCG reading plan for these chapters.

Website archive location for audio files & PDFs:

<https://www.ucg.org/congregations/san-francisco-bay-area-ca/posts/audio-links-re-three-year-chronological-deep-dive-reading-program-circa-2022-2025-903711>

3 YEAR CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY: Week 10

Read the following passages & the Daily Deep Dive on the daily reading.

Day 57 - SUNDAY: December 25th

Job 11

Daily Deep Dive:

In this chapter, we will hear for the first time from Zophar. We've already heard from Eliphaz, then Bildad, and now the third friend has his turn to speak. Like the other two friends, we will see again that this friend speaks aspects of truth, but it's misapplied or lacking a full understanding of how God truly works with His people.

Here's the UCG reading plan for this chapter:

"Zophar the Naamathite is even more tactless and insensitive than Bildad. Obviously incensed at what Job has said, seeing it as a mockery of the truth, Zophar decides he needs to really "let Job have it." And why not? For in Zophar's misapplied theology, Job must be one of the greatest sinners ever.

In verse 4, Zophar seems to exaggerate what Job has said about his innocence, as the book does not record Job as having said that his doctrine—that is, his teaching—is pure. However, it may be that Job has said or implied this in the past and now Zophar sees it all as utter pretense and hypocrisy.

In fact, Zophar remarks that if God were to give testimony, it would reveal Job to be a worse sinner than even his suffering demonstrates. The New International Version translates the end of Job 11:6 as "Know this: God has even forgotten some of your sin." *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* says that it reads literally as "God has forgotten for you some of your sin" and that it could, according to an Aramaic reading, mean "God has made (allowed) you to forget" (footnote on verse 6). The point Zophar is making is that Job doesn't know how sinful he really is—that he deserves worse punishment than he is receiving. Perhaps the implication is that Job deserves to die and it is only God's mercy that preserves him.

The irony here is that there is some truth in what Zophar is saying. All of us deserve death for even the smallest of sinful thoughts and attitudes we have ever had. God is under no obligation to keep us from the worst

pain and suffering. It is through God's mercy that humanity is not destroyed for its constant sin. And it is through His grace that His servants are preserved despite their stumbling. Job will actually discover at the end of the book that his own righteousness is nowhere close to what God truly requires to have a relationship with Him. Yet Zophar means none of this. He views Job's suffering as punishment for major sins in his life, yet with God mercifully pulling some punches.

The Nelson Study Bible notes on verses 7-9: "When Zophar interrogates Job about the impossibility of comprehending the *deep things of God*, he employs for *search out* the same term Job used to describe God's wonders as beyond 'finding out' (Job 9:10). Thus Zophar may be trying to turn Job's words against him by saying that Job's actions are inconsistent with his theology. Since these verses anticipate portions of the Lord's speeches [later in the book] (see Job 38:16-18, Job 38:34-38), Zophar's doctrine is correct, but the application is wrong. Biblical truth misapplied perverts the intent of the Scriptures and misleads. [Moreover] sound doctrine without love does not please the Lord."

Zophar is harshly accusatory of Job. The statement in verse 11 regarding God knowing deceitful men is no doubt meant to imply that Job was such a person—either that he was intentionally hiding his sin or that, in the deceitfulness of his heart, he was not admitting his sin to himself. And "as a retort to Job's rhetorical question (Job 6:5) in which he compared his own cries to the braying of the 'wild donkey,' Zophar employs what may be a proverbial statement about the wild donkey...[possibly] implying that Job's 'empty talk' indicates that he is *empty headed* ([Job 11] vv. 3, 12)" (note on verses 10-12).

As *The Bible Reader's Companion* explains in its summary of chapters 11-14, here is the solution Zophar gives in his irrelevant sermonizing: "The paraphrase: 'Be devoted to the Lord. Pray. Stop sinning. Then everything will be fine ([Job 11] vv. 13-16). What a dagger in the heart

of a man who has been devoted to God, but is suffering anyway! And what pain Zophar's description of divine blessing must have caused (vv. 17-20). This is exactly what Job's life was like—and all has been lost, in spite of the fact that Job is not at fault!" [END]

Day 58 - MONDAY: December 26th

Job 12 & 13

Daily Deep Dive:

Job will now respond to all three of his friends.

The UCG reading plan states: "Job responds to his friends with cutting sarcasm: "No doubt you are the people [i.e., the right people to go to for all the answers], and wisdom will die with you" (verse 2)—as if all the wisdom in the world were concentrated in these three men. Job is essentially saying, "So you think you know it all." He follows this by noting that he knows as much as them. In fact, he points out that what they have been saying is common knowledge (verse 3).

Yet again Job points out that in accusing him the truths they are relating are being misapplied—as he is innocent (verse 4). In contrast to their ideas, the wicked often prosper—despite the fact that all life is in God's hand, as the whole creation could teach them (verses 5-10). This was another stab at the notion that they "knew it all" when it came to God. The fact is, they were ignoring what was obvious." [END]

Verse 6 – This verse reminded me of the book of Ecclesiastes. If those who sin are always punished by God, how do we account for those who are clearly sinners who seem to live as peace and be prosperous? So clearly that isn't true. I think we humans want a list of rules that will always ensure peace, happiness and prosperity. Unfortunately, the world we currently live in isn't that simple.

Adam Clarke's states about verse 6: "Those who live by the plunder of their neighbors are often found in great secular prosperity; and they that provoke God by impiety and blasphemy live in a state of security and affluence. These are administrations of Providence which cannot be accounted for; yet the Judge of all the earth does right. Therefore prosperity and adversity are no evidences of a man's spiritual state, nor of the place he holds in the approbation or disapprobation of God."

The UCG reading plan concludes chapter 12 with: "Job points out in verses 11-12 that people learn from what they hear and experience, gaining a measure of wisdom over the course of a lifetime. But real wisdom and strength, he explains in verse 13, lies with God. The arrogance of man, he goes on to show, is brought to nothing by the sovereign God who can do whatever He wants (verses 14-25). It is just foolishness for anyone to try to pin down and understand everything that God is up to in His dealings with mankind." [END]

Chapter 13:

Job continues speaking in this chapter.

Verse 4 – Job is not calling all doctors "worthless physicians". This word for physician comes from a root for "to mend (by stitching)". God has allowed mankind to learn a great deal about His awesome design of our bodies. Not every physician is the same. There are some that use their acquired knowledge to greatly assist the body in healing as God designed it to do. No doctor heals, only God miraculously or God through the processes He designed in the body heals the body. Not all physicians are good at what they do. Here Job compares his friends advice to doctors who don't know what they are doing or talking about.

The UCG reading plan states: "Rather than deal anymore with his friends, Job would much rather take his case directly to God (Job 13:3).

The friends have proven themselves "worthless physicians"—failing to diagnose the real problem—and even "forgers of lies" with their unjust accusations against him (verse 4). It would be better for them to cease from their grandiose speeches and just listen (verse 5).

Job points out that their mouths were going to get them into trouble. In their rush to defend God, they were basically bearing false witness against Job (verses 7-8). They were not even being honest in their defense of God, as they ignored evidence that ran counter to their beliefs about Him. Job says that God would ultimately rebuke them for that—as indeed He will at the end of the book. This passage is remarkable on two counts. First, it shows that even if people put on a great display of piety in standing for God's integrity, God will not accept this unless it is heartfelt, deeply considered and in keeping with His overall ways. Second, we see here that despite Job's struggle to understand what God is doing in the world and in his own situation, he still trusts in God's flawless character and justice. This is why he believes he can ultimately find resolution with God.

"Job was so sure he would be vindicated that he repeated his desire for a hearing before God (vv. 13-19). He viewed this boldness on his part as one of the evidences that what they said about him was not true. If Job were a hypocrite, would he be willing to put his life in jeopardy in this way (v. 16)? Such a man would not dare come before God" (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, note on verses 1-27).

In Job 13:20, Job launches into His appeal to God. He asks two things: (1) that God would stop terrifying him with unrelenting suffering (verse 21) and (2) that God would stop hiding Himself and reveal the specific charges He has against him (verses 22-24).

In verse 26, Job mentions the iniquities of his youth—showing that his life has not been completely sinless. But have not these been forgiven

since he committed to a relationship with God? Yet his early period of waywardness is the only thing Job can think of that could merit what is now happening to him.” [END]

Day 59 - TUESDAY: December 27th

Job 14

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan starts with: “Job sinks back into despair, uttering a poem on the plight of man, agreeing with Eliphaz's assessment that a person is born for trouble and viewing himself as the premier example of that. In verses 7-12, which may be a continuation of the poem, Job implies that life is better for a tree than a person—because at least a tree cut down can sprout again while death marks the end for a human being, at least until far in the future.” [END]

Verse 12 – What an exciting verse. Here we see that Job has a strong understanding of what happens at death and that God had shared this knowledge with those He was working with early in the Bible. He understood that when you die you remain dead in your grave for a period of time the Bible refers to as “sleep/rest” (compare Dan 12:2). Job understood there was a time in the future when those who were dead (asleep) would be “awaken”. This will occur at the resurrections (compare 1 Thes 4:15-17, John 5:28-29). Job looked forward to this time (verse 14).

Here’s what the UCG reading plan adds about these verses: “He asks that God would bring him the relief of the grave until His wrath is past—that God would then call him forth at the appointed time. "To capture the force of Job's meaning of *halipati*, ['my change' or] 'my renewal' [NIV]), we must note that the same root is used in v. 7 concerning the tree. There the NIV [and NKJV] translated it 'sprout.' A basic meaning is 'to have succession.' In this verse Job is speaking of succession after death, not the healing of his body in this life"

(Expositor's Bible Commentary, footnote on verse 14). The Greek Septuagint translates this as a word meaning "rebirth."

But Job's flicker of hope is short-lived here. As the remainder of chapter 14 shows: "Job knew that eventually God would cover all his offenses and long for him as the beneficent Creator who delights in those he made. But despite his faith in God's power over death, Job was convinced that God would not even allow him the exquisite release of death.... The waters of suffering continue to erode till his bright hope was a dim memory (v. 19) and nothing mattered anymore but the pain of his body and the continual mourning of his soul (v. 22)" (note on 13:28-14:22). In this world, it appears that he, along with the rest of mankind, has no hope and no future.

Yet through all this, Job who was suffering inconceivable distress, still did not curse God's name. We can only begin to grasp the mental strain Job endured during his time of suffering." [END]

This is the last chapter of what is known as the 1st Cycle of Job. This cycle goes from Chapter 4 through 14, and records the first speeches of all three friends (and Job's response to them). Then the cycle begins again in Job 15.

Day 60 - WEDNESDAY: December 28th

Job 15

Daily Deep Dive:

Chapter 15 begins what is known as the 2nd Cycle of the book of Job. This cycle again will have Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar each speak and Job respond after each one. This runs from chapter 15 through 21. This second cycle deals with the high-level theme of the "Fate of the Wicked".

Verse 2 – The NKJV translates this as “And fill himself with the east wind?” Jamieson-Faucet-Brown states “stronger than the previous “wind,” for in that region the east wind is the most destructive of winds.” (Compare Isa 27:8, Jer 18:17). This wind is used in the dream of Pharaoh in Genesis 41:6, 23, 27 which in his dreams blasts the thin heads of grain and the thin cows.

John Gill’s commentary add: “which is noisy and blustering, rapid and forcible, bearing all before it, and very infectious in hot countries; and such notions Job, according to Eliphaz, satisfied himself with, and endeavoured to insinuate them into others; which were nothing but great swelling words of vanity, and tended to subvert the faith of men, and overthrow all religion, and were very unwholesome, infectious, and ruinous to the minds of men, as suggested.”

Verse 4 – Notice how many false baseless accusations they make toward Job. They are completely missing the mark in their comments and feeling self-righteous in doing so.

The UCG reading plan states: “Eliphaz now speaks a second time. It seems that Job's statements are taking their toll on him. They are uncomfortable and, rather than really consider them, Eliphaz decides to lash out at Job in a torrent of accusation.

Job's words, Eliphaz says, are like a destructive east wind that brings harm. Notice verse 4 in the NIV: "But you even undermine piety and hinder devotion to God." *The Bible Reader' Companion* notes on this verse: "Some today are also shocked that anyone would ask questions about matters of faith. To express doubt or uncertainties, or to struggle with difficult questions, is viewed as an attack on belief in God. But God is great enough to survive our questions and doubts. Anyone who is honest in his or her struggle to understand God is far more likely to come to faith than lose it. The person who truly undermines piety is the

one who insists others be satisfied with superficial or pat answers, is unwilling to face difficulties, and is afraid to ask questions. Remember again, it is Job who is the man of faith and the three friends that God condemns at the end of this book" (Lawrence Richards, 1991)." [END]

Verse 7 – Eliphaz states “Or were you made before the hills?” (Compare Psa 90:2 regarding God existing from the beginning and Prov 8:25 in regards to the personification of wisdom).

Articles of science point to a time in earth’s history when there were no mountains. Some Christians believe that the mountains were formed as part of the intense geologic processes that occurred at and after the time of the flood. From a flooding of the entire earth, it certainly would take much less water if there weren’t the high peaks that exist today, of course God can do whatever he wants, including engulfing Mount Everest under water.

Even standard thought among evolutionists believe the mountains on earth to be relatively recent in the span of the entire history of the earth.

Verse 19 – The word “alien or foreigner” comes from a root word meaning “to turn aside”. It often is used for a “stranger”, but it can also mean someone who turned away from the truth to a strange idea. This verse in context with the one before and after seems to indicate that Eliphaz is getting his knowledge from wise men of generations before that are unpolluted from the “strange” ideas that people have now in the land. He then goes on to again imply that Job has to be a wicked man and here’s what he knows happens to wicked men.

Here’s the rest of the UCG reading plan on this chapter: “Eliphaz goes on to state that all Job is saying is condemning himself (verse 6). He refers to his earlier statements to Job as "the consolations of God...spoken gently" (verse 11)—yet which Job has arrogantly rejected. Eliphaz then repeats the thought from his night vision that lowly, vile

man cannot stand before God (verses 14-16; compare 4:17-19). So how dare Job call on God to question Him?

In Eliphaz's mind, the time for soft words is over. He proceeds to really blast Job. He says outright that it is the wicked who writhe continually in pain (verse 20), who live in dread and whose prosperity is destroyed (verse 21), who are hopeless (verse 22) and who defy God (verses 25-26). In short, he is calling Job wicked.

As Eliphaz sees it, the wicked might prosper for a moment—illustrated by the fatness of verse 27—but they will soon get their deserved comeuppance (verses 28-35). Once again, there is truth in this in the context of eternity—and often even in this life over the long haul. Yet Eliphaz does not see the frequent reality of the wicked prospering for years—or the righteous suffering for a long time.

Regarding the final remarks of this speech, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* points out that "Eliphaz made sure that all the things that had happened to Job were included—fire consumes (vv. 30, 34; cf. 1:16), marauders attack (v. 21; cf. 1:17), possessions are taken away (v. 29; cf. 1:17), and houses crumble (v. 28; cf. 1:19). Although the modern reader often misses the point that these barbs are all directed at Job, we can be sure that Job himself felt their sting" (note on verses 21-35)."
[END]

Day 61 - THURSDAY: December 29th

Job 16 & 17

Daily Deep Dive:

Job again responds in chapter 16 & 17 to Eliphaz.

The UCG reading plan states: "Job reproaches his friends for their treatment of him, calling them "miserable comforters" (Job 16:2) or, literally, "comforters of trouble"—people who make matters worse rather than better. If the shoe were on the other foot, he would not act

like they are now acting but would try to be a source of encouragement and comfort to them (verses 4-5), in keeping with godly character.

"The phrase *shake my head at you* indicates a mocking posture (as in Psalms 22:7). However, the word *comfort*, meaning 'to *nod* the head sympathetically,' is used in [Job] 2:11 of the friends who came to console him. [Yet they obviously failed in their mission.] In effect, Job is saying: 'Please nod your head with understanding instead of mocking and ridiculing me'" (*The Nelson Study Bible*, note on 16:4-5).

But they would not. Job sinks back into mourning his condition. Shockingly, he seems to refer to God as his tearing, hating, gnashing adversary or enemy (verse 9), though it is possibly that he is personifying his *illness*—continuing from the previous verse where he said, "My leanness rises up against me." The Hebrew word for "adversary" here can mean "a narrow or tight place," figuratively meaning trouble or affliction (Strong's Lexicon, No. 6862). Of course, it is clear, as we have seen, that Job thinks God counts *him* as if an enemy (Job 13:24; see also Job 19:11). Interestingly, however, in chapter 18 Bildad seems to think that Job is referring to him and the other two counselors as tearing beasts (and thus Job's enemy referred to here) and retorts that Job is the one tearing himself (see Job 18:3-4). It is true that Job saw himself as a fallen man who was being kicked while he was down—seemingly something only enemies would do. It is also conceivable that Job realized that Satan, as the enemy of humanity and God, was particularly his own enemy.

In any case, whoever or whatever Job is labeling as his devastating enemy, there is no question in his mind that his illness and even the torment from his friends is ultimately from God—either directly or because God has allowed it. And this was in fact so. Job is correct in verse 11 when he states: "God has delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over to the hands of the wicked." For as we know, God had

told the very king of the wicked, Satan the devil, "Behold, he is in your hand" (2:6).

Yet by the wicked here, Job probably had particular people in mind—passersby perhaps—who were taunting and even striking him and spitting on him, though he may be using these terms metaphorically for mistreatment (Job 16:10; Job 17:6; see also Job 30:1, Job 30:9-12). Indeed, if metaphorical, it is possible that Job is referring to his friends, classifying them among the wicked.

Job 16:9-11 seems to also be a foreshadowing of the suffering of Jesus Christ. The words "They gape at me with their mouth" are later used by David in Psalms 22:13—this psalm picturing the future suffering of the Messiah. In His time of greatest torment, Jesus finally came to the point where He, like David, cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Psalms 22:1; Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34). Christ obviously felt some of what Job was feeling.

"[Job 16] verses 18, 22, and 17:1 indicate that Job thought he would die before he could be vindicated before his peers; so he was concerned that the injustice done to him should never be forgotten. That is what he meant when he called on the earth never to cover his blood or bury his cry (v. 18). In Genesis 4:10-11 Abel's innocent blood was crying out to God as a witness against Cain. So Job was consoled to think his cry would continue after his death. And there is one in heaven who would listen to it (vv. 19-21)" (*The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, note on 16:18-17:2).

In Job 16:21, Job longs for someone to intercede for him with God. On one level, this was probably a desire for Job's friends to cease from their accusations and start praying for him. Yet it may also anticipate the role of Jesus Christ, our Intercessor and Advocate (see Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1)." [END]

Chapter 17:

The UCG reading plan continues: “In praying to God in Job 17:3, "Job uses the language of ancient business contracts and asks some 'pledge' (down payment) from God as security against the vindication that will surely come. Only God can demonstrate Job's innocence and despite his despair and ambivalence he believes that God will" (*The Bible Reader's Companion*, note on verses 3-9).

The translation of verses 8-9 is disputed. Some see the meaning as truly righteous people being unhappy with the hypocritical friends—or that they would be if they were made aware of the situation. Yet others see Job as being sarcastic here—speaking of "the innocent" (his friends) stirred up against "the hypocrite" (himself). In context, the latter seems more likely. The Good News Bible paraphrases the passage this way: "Those who claim to be honest are shocked, and they all condemn me as godless. Those who claim to be respectable are more and more convinced that they are right." This flows right into verse 10: "As for all of you, come back and try again! But I will not find a wise man among you" (New Living Translation).

In the Hebrew wording of verses 11-16, it is not clear if Job is entertaining the possibility of hope and realizing the foolishness of wishing for death or if he is belittling the idea of hope and is in fact wishing for the relief death would bring.” [END]

Job ends this response in such a place of hopeless and sadness. How awful this trial was, how awful to have to go through it alone without the love and comfort of good friends.

Day 62 - FRIDAY: December 30th

Job 18 & 19

Daily Deep Dive:

Bildad now takes his second turn in addressing Job.

Here is the UCG reading plan on chapter 18: “Bildad takes offense at what he believes Job has implied about him and the other two counselors: *So you think we're beasts. So you think we're stupid* (compare verse 3). He then lashes out in a rather vicious diatribe. Bildad paints Job as the wicked punished with disease and loss of family—and whose memory and posterity is to be wiped from the earth.

Why was Bildad really here? Was it to comfort Job? Or was it to feel good about himself—to be able to congratulate himself for doing some good deed? If the former, he should have expected a suffering, grief-stricken person to say some highly emotional things. And he should have been ready to roll with the punches, as it were. Yet Job had *offended* him—this noble man who was here to help. How dare someone put him down?

Furthermore, Job's words were probably causing Bildad to question some deeply ingrained beliefs. Indeed, Job was demanding that these beliefs be questioned—and overturned. Bildad was incensed at the audacity. And rather than face the disturbing questions, he did as Eliphaz had done and reacted emotionally—basically more forcefully trying to ram the same old argument that the wicked receive total retribution in this life down Job's throat.

In all likelihood, Bildad still justified his approach with the notion that he was helping Job in leading him to a proper understanding. Previous arguments hadn't worked—so now it was time to put some fear into Job. Of course, this was ridiculous considering how much Job had already lost and the fact that he had no doubt completely mulled all of this over already for the past several months. Moreover, it was cruel and insensitive considering what Job had gone through and was still experiencing. Did Bildad truly think this was going to fix the problem?

For all of us, Job's three friends are a tremendous example of what not to do and how not to react when trying to comfort a suffering, grieving person." [END]

Chapter 19:

Job now responds to Bildad.

Here again is the UCG reading plan: "The words of Job's friends do not bounce right off him. They wound him deeply—leaving him shattered—on top of what he's already going through. His friends have wronged him with all their accusation and lack of pity and comfort (verses 1-3).

Job's response to their using the disgrace of his disease to plead the case that he is guilty of sin is to say that *God* has wronged him (verses 5-6). Perhaps softening this accusation is the fact that the word translated "wronged" could also be rendered "overthrown," as it is in the earlier King James Version and in Green's Literal Translation. Either way, while it is true that God bears responsibility for what is happening to Job, Job's understanding of what is occurring is gravely mistaken. Furthermore, as has already been stated, people in great suffering often blurt out things they don't fully mean. The great God of perfect compassion understands.

Job goes on to relate more of his unrelenting sufferings—unable to comprehend why God would afflict him with these things. Verse 9 shows him stripped of glory and crown—demonstrating that Job was probably a king (see also Job 29).

In Job 19:20, after Job says, "My bone clings to my skin and to my flesh," we see words that have become an idiom in the English language for a narrow escape: "I have escaped by the skin of my teeth" or, as it is more properly rendered in the earlier King James Version, "with the skin of my teeth." The idea that a narrow escape is meant

here is probably incorrect. In context, perhaps he is simply saying that of all his bones, his teeth alone do not cling to skin—as they have no skin. On the other hand, some see the skin of the teeth as meaning the gums—and that Job is saying that only his gums are unaffected by his illness. *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible* offers this intriguing possibility: "Some have thought that Satan, when he smote Job from head to feet with ulcers, spared his mouth, lips, and teeth, the instruments of speech, that he might therewith curse God, which was the thing he aimed at, and proposed to bring him to, by getting a grant from God to afflict him in the manner he did."

Suffering as he does, having described his abandonment by friends and family (verses 13-19) and seemingly by God, he cries out from his isolation to his three visiting friends for pity (verses 21-22).

Then in verses 23-24 Job wishes that his words would be written down, engraved as a permanent record. His thought here was the same as in Job 16:18, where he asked that the earth not cover his blood when he died—that it would remain as a witness. Bildad had warned how death would remove the memory of Job from the earth (Job 18:12). The amazing fact is that Job's words have remained for all time—preserved through this book of Job we are now reading.

Surprisingly, in the midst of his despair, we learn that Job is confident that God will *not* forget him. He looks forward to the far future when his "Redeemer"—the divine Kinsman who would buy him back from suffering and death and ultimately vindicate him—would at last stand on the earth (verse 25).

Job seems immediately to relate this to his own resurrection at that time. The NKJV says: "And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God" (verse 26). The last clause here is disputed. As *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* notes, "The debate centers

around whether it is 'in the flesh' or 'apart from the flesh' that Job [will have] this experience. The Hebrew could go either way" (note on verses 25-27). The Holy Scriptures translation by the Jewish Publication Society (JPS), renders it: "Then without my flesh shall I see God." Many insist that the meaning here must be "in my flesh" because Job mentions his *eyes* then beholding God (verse 27), which is only possible with a body. The truth of the matter, however, is that it is possible to have a body that is not made of flesh. Indeed, 1 Corinthians 15 explains that the resurrection bodies of the saints will be composed of spirit, as "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (verse 50; compare verses 45, 49).

Yet there is another possible translation of this passage that does allow for "in my flesh"—and fits in context with Job's lamenting. Note it in the new JPS translation: "But I know that my Vindicator lives; in the end He will testify on earth—this, after my skin will have been peeled off. *But I would behold God while still in my flesh*, I myself, not another, would behold Him; would see with my own eyes" (verses 25-27, Tanakh). In other words, this translation sees Job as basically saying, "I know I will see God at the resurrection, but I would really like to face Him right now—to confront Him with my situation."

Job ends in verses 28-29 with a warning to his friends. Rather than be all concerned with trying to establish the fact of his sin, they should be worried about their own wrong in how they are dealing with him. For they are right about one thing—a judgment is coming." [END]

Day 63 - SATURDAY: December 31st

Job 20 & 21

Daily Deep Dive:

Chapter 20:

Zophar, the third friend, now speaks for his second time.

Verse 3 – Zophar is letting his “spirit” lead him to respond. He should have fought this desire. Our “spirit” will lead us to say many things we shouldn’t (compare James 3:8).

The UCG reading plan says: “Zophar now speaks for the second and last time. He "took Job's words, especially [Job's] closing words in Job 19:28-29, as a personal affront. Job had dared to assert that on Zophar's theory of retribution Zophar himself was due for punishment. To Zophar such could only happen to the wicked. Zophar was the most emotional of the three; and he was not about to let Job's rebuke go unanswered, though in chapter 19 Job had earnestly pled for a withdrawal of their charges. Here he had nothing new to say to Job but said it with passion. The speech is full of terrifying imagery" (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, note on verses 1-3).

Indeed, Zophar's speech is utterly scathing. Where Job had asked the earth to not cover his blood and stated that he had a witness in heaven (Job 16:18-19), Zophar says that the earth would rise up against the wicked—meaning Job—and that heaven would reveal his sin. In fact, Zophar said that the wicked person would perish forever like his own dung (verse 7), which is buried in the earth.

It is staggering to witness the steeply escalating excoriation and threatening warnings in the speeches of Job's friends. As he scrapes at his painful boils and struggles in agony to understand what is happening to him, crying out to his friends ever more fervently for caring pity and comfort, they instead hammer and bludgeon him worse than before.” [END]

Chapter 21:

We conclude our week’s reading plan and the end of the second cycle of the book of Job with Job’s response to Zophar.

We will end with the UCG reading plan: “Job makes another attempt to answer his friends but believes they will just keep mocking him as they have been (verses 1-3). He responds to their notion that the wicked always get what they deserve in this life in short order with observations of just the opposite—that they usually seem to live out their lives pretty comfortably.

In verse 19, he anticipates a response of, "Well, at least their children will pay for what they've done." But how, he asks, would that be justice when the wicked themselves are left unaffected—when they won't even know what their children are experiencing because they'll be dead? (verses 19-21).

The translation of verse 30 is disputed. In the New King James Version, the meaning seems to be that the wicked will ultimately get theirs on the final day of judgment—implying that most of them have smooth sailing until then. Yet other versions render this as the wicked being kept *from* any present day of judgment—being brought out *in escape* from current calamity.

In verse 22, Job seems to admit that he is not worthy or capable of instructing God on what is righteous and just, but he just has to question what God is thinking here. It is a hard matter, and Job thinks his friends are ridiculous for thinking they have it all figured out—especially when he is here shredding their arguments, showing their answers to be empty and false (verse 34).

In actuality, their arguments bore a kernel of truth. The apparently idyllic life of the wicked is often an outward façade. Sin does carry consequences in the here and now. Automatic penalties for faithlessness and disobedience are often at work in the lives of the wicked, denying them true happiness and fulfillment. However, Job's friends were completely mistaken in thinking that sinful living would

result in almost immediate direct retribution from God. They also denied the obvious fact that the wicked did not live in constant terror and agony. And further, they were completely wrong in their assumption that those who faithfully serve God never experience terror and agony except when they stumble and sin." [END]