

**Day 57 - SUNDAY: December 25th**

Job 11

Job 11:1-20 NKJV

Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said: "Should not the multitude of words be answered? And should a man full of talk be vindicated? Should your empty talk make men hold their peace? And when you mock, should no one rebuke you? For you have said, 'My doctrine is pure, And I am clean in your eyes.' But oh, that God would speak, And open His lips against you, 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. "Can you search out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than heaven—what can you do? Deeper than Sheol—what can you know? Their measure is longer than the earth And broader than the sea. "If He passes by, imprisons, and gathers to judgment, Then who can hinder Him? For He knows deceitful men; He sees wickedness also. Will He not then consider it? For an empty-headed man will be wise, When a wild donkey's colt is born a man. "If you would prepare your heart, And stretch out your hands toward Him; If iniquity were in your hand, and you put it far away, And would not let wickedness dwell in your tents; Then surely you could lift up your face without spot; Yes, you could be steadfast, and not fear; Because you would forget your misery, And remember it as waters that have passed away, And your life would be brighter than noonday. Though you were dark, you would be like

the morning. And you would be secure, because there is hope; Yes, you would dig around you, and take your rest in safety. You would also lie down, and no one would make you afraid; Yes, many would court your favor. But the eyes of the wicked will fail, And they shall not escape, And their hope—loss of life!"

### **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]