

Day 63 - SATURDAY: December 31st

Job 20 & 21

Job 20:1-29 NKJV

Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said:

"Therefore my anxious thoughts make me answer,
Because of the turmoil within me. I have heard the
rebuke that reproaches me, And the spirit of my
understanding causes me to answer. "Do you not know
this of old, Since man was placed on earth, That the
triumphing of the wicked is short, And the joy of the
hypocrite is but for a moment? Though his haughtiness
mounts up to the heavens, And his head reaches to the
clouds, Yet he will perish forever like his own refuse;
Those who have seen him will say, 'Where is he?' He will
fly away like a dream, and not be found; Yes, he will be
chased away like a vision of the night. The eye that saw
him will see him no more, Nor will his place behold him
anymore. His children will seek the favor of the poor, And
his hands will restore his wealth. His bones are full of his
youthful vigor, But it will lie down with him in the dust.

"Though evil is sweet in his mouth, And he hides it under
his tongue, Though he spares it and does not forsake it,
But still keeps it in his mouth, Yet his food in his stomach
turns sour; It becomes cobra venom within him. He
swallows down riches And vomits them up again; God
casts them out of his belly. He will suck the poison of
cobras; The viper's tongue will slay him. He will not see
the streams, The rivers flowing with honey and cream.
He will restore that for which he labored, And will not
swallow it down; From the proceeds of business He will

get no enjoyment. For he has oppressed and forsaken the poor, He has violently seized a house which he did not build. "Because he knows no quietness in his heart, He will not save anything he desires. Nothing is left for him to eat; Therefore his well-being will not last. In his self-sufficiency he will be in distress; Every hand of misery will come against him. When he is about to fill his stomach, God will cast on him the fury of His wrath, And will rain it on him while he is eating. He will flee from the iron weapon; A bronze bow will pierce him through. It is drawn, and comes out of the body; Yes, the glittering point comes out of his gall. Terrors come upon him; Total darkness is reserved for his treasures. An unfanned fire will consume him; It shall go ill with him who is left in his tent. The heavens will reveal his iniquity, And the earth will rise up against him. The increase of his house will depart, And his goods will flow away in the day of His wrath. This is the portion from God for a wicked man, The heritage appointed to him by God."

Job 21:1-34 NKJV

Then Job answered and said: "Listen carefully to my speech, And let this be your consolation. Bear with me that I may speak, And after I have spoken, keep mocking. "As for me, is my complaint against man? And if it were, why should I not be impatient? Look at me and be astonished; Put your hand over your mouth. Even when I remember I am terrified, And trembling takes hold of my flesh. Why do the wicked live and become old, Yes, become mighty in power? Their descendants are established with them in their sight, And their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear,

Neither is the rod of God upon them. Their bull breeds without failure; Their cow calves without miscarriage. They send forth their little ones like a flock, And their children dance. They sing to the tambourine and harp, And rejoice to the sound of the flute. They spend their days in wealth, And in a moment go down to the grave. Yet they say to God, 'Depart from us, For we do not desire the knowledge of Your ways. Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? And what profit do we have if we pray to Him?' Indeed their prosperity is not in their hand; The counsel of the wicked is far from me. "How often is the lamp of the wicked put out? How often does their destruction come upon them, The sorrows God distributes in His anger? They are like straw before the wind, And like chaff that a storm carries away. They say, 'God lays up one's iniquity for his children'; Let Him recompense him, that he may know it. Let his eyes see his destruction, And let him drink of the wrath of the Almighty. For what does he care about his household after him, When the number of his months is cut in half? "Can anyone teach God knowledge, Since He judges those on high? One dies in his full strength, Being wholly at ease and secure; His pails are full of milk, And the marrow of his bones is moist. Another man dies in the bitterness of his soul, Never having eaten with pleasure. They lie down alike in the dust, And worms cover them. "Look, I know your thoughts, And the schemes with which you would wrong me. For you say, 'Where is the house of the prince? And where is the tent, The dwelling place of the wicked?' Have you not asked those who travel the road? And do you not know their signs? For the wicked are reserved for the day of doom; They shall be brought out on the day of wrath. Who condemns his way

to his face? And who repays him for what he has done? Yet he shall be brought to the grave, And a vigil kept over the tomb. The clods of the valley shall be sweet to him; Everyone shall follow him, As countless have gone before him. How then can you comfort me with empty words, Since falsehood remains in your answers?"

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]