

Devotional Questions – Job 20:1-29

1. *What motivated Zophar to speak (Job 20:1-3)?*
2. *What theme did he take up again (Job 20:4-5)?*
3. *Why does Zophar speak of exultation and joy (Job 20:5)?*
4. *Zophar's comments focus on the actions of a wicked man. What actions does he describe?*
Job 20:6-7:
Job 20:12:
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5. *How did he describe the end result of the wicked man?*
Job 20:5-7:
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6. *Who is the wicked man that he has in mind?*
7. *How is his suffering described (Job 20:24-26)?*
8. *Why does he call heaven and earth as witnesses (Job 20:23, 27)?*
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Devotional Questions – Job 20:1-29, Answers to Questions

See Dr Ruckman's commentary *The Book of Job* pp 133-134, 140, 257-266 and the *Ruckman Reference Bible* pp 747, 1388, 1627-1628 for detailed comment.

1. What motivated Zophar to speak (Job 20:1-3)?

Zophar had said to Job ***“...Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth...If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles. For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear”*** Job 11:6, 14-15 i.e. get right with God, Job and He'll put you right.

Job had reproached Zophar's simplistic solution to his ordeal and those of Eliphaz and Bildad with ***“No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you”*** Job 12:2.

Zophar is therefore now about to give Job 'a piece of his mind' i.e. severe criticism to set him straight www.usingenglish.com/reference/idioms/give+someone+a+piece+of+your+mind.html according to ***“my thoughts cause me to answer...I have heard the check of my reproach, and the spirit of my understanding causeth me to answer”*** Job 20:2-3.

Today's believer should remember Paul's admonition.

“Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” Colossians 4:6.

2. What theme did he take up again (Job 20:4-5)?

Zophar takes up where he left off with respect to the fate of ***“Evil men”*** who ***“understand not judgment”*** Proverbs 28:5.

“But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost” Job 11:20.

Zophar is of course correct as the Lord Himself states through Jeremiah concerning ***“the wicked.”*** ***“The parched places of the wilderness”*** – see below - picture hell ***“a dry and thirsty land, where no water is”*** Psalm 63:1, which is why the Lord said on the cross ***“I thirst”*** John 19:28, suffering ***“The sorrows of death...and the pains of hell...”*** Psalm 116:3 and why ***“the rich man...in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame”*** Luke 16:22-24.

Today's believer should remember what the Lord also states through Jeremiah concerning ***“the man that trusteth in the LORD”*** because the Lord said ***“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain...”*** John 15:16.

“Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit” Jeremiah 17:5-8.

3. Why does Zophar speak of exultation and joy (Job 20:5)?

Job 20:5 states ***“That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment...”*** because Zophar knew the truth of what Solomon later recorded.

“A man shall not be established by wickedness; but the root of the righteous shall not be moved” Proverbs 12:3.

“Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way; but wickedness overthroweth the sinner” Proverbs 13:6.

Today’s believer should remember that ***“The ungodly...like the chaff which the wind driveth away”*** Psalm 1:4. ***“And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?”*** 1 Peter 4:18 i.e. ***“not...in the congregation of the righteous”*** Psalm 1:5.

4. Zophar’s comments focus on the actions of a wicked man. What actions does he describe?

Job 20:6-7:

Pride. Solomon declares ***“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall”*** Proverbs 16:18.

Job 20:12:

Guile. Peter declares ***“For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile”*** 1 Peter 3:10.

Job 20:19:

Oppression. Job himself declares ***“This is the portion of a wicked man with God, and the heritage of oppressors, which they shall receive of the Almighty...The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth; and as a storm hurleth him out of his place. For God shall cast upon him, and not spare...”*** Job 27:13, 21-22 and context.

Today’s believer should remember Paul’s exhortation. ***“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live”*** Romans 8:13.

5. How did he describe the end result of the wicked man?

Job 20:5-7:

Destruction. See Proverbs 16:18 above.

Job 20:8-9:

Disappearance. See Job 27:13, 21-22 above.

Job 20:11:

“Dust to dust” – en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dust_to_Dust funeral service *Book of Common Prayer*

*All valiant dust that builds on dust,
And guarding calls not Thee to guard.
For frantic boast and foolish word,
Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord!
Amen*

– *Recessional Hymn* by Rudyard Kipling en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recessional_%28poem%29

“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity” Ecclesiastes 12:7-8.

Solomon, though, encourages those who ***“have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous”*** 1 John 2:1. ***“The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death”*** Proverbs 14:32.

6. *Who is the wicked man that he has in mind?*

By implication Zophar has Job himself in mind based on Zophar's earlier accusation against Job **"...Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth"** Job 11:6.

That wicked man is also in principle he of whom Bildad said **"Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of him that knoweth not God"** Job 18:21. They are they of whom the Lord says **"And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity"** Matthew 7:23.

That is why Paul speaking practically with respect to any recipients of his letter who may be unsaved urges **"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God"** 2 Corinthians 5:20.

7. *How is his suffering described (Job 20:24-26)?*

Specific. **"...the bow of steel shall strike him through"** Job 20:24.

Certain. **"...the bow of steel shall strike him through"** Job 20:24.

Fatal. **"...the bow of steel shall strike him through"** Job 20:24.

Terrifying. **"...terrors are upon him"** Job 20:25.

Infernal. **"All darkness shall be hid in his secret places: a fire not blown shall consume him..."** Job 20:26.

Unmerciful. **"...it shall go ill with him that is left in his tabernacle"** Job 20:26.

That is why Paul declares **"By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned"** 2 Corinthians 6:6 **"Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences"** 2 Corinthians 5:11.

8. *Why does he call heaven and earth as witnesses (Job 20:23, 27)?*

Abram refers to **"the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth"** Genesis 14:22. Only God knows **"the ordinances of heaven"** and only God can **"set the dominion thereof in the earth"** Job 38:33 because it is God Who **"appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth"** Jeremiah 33:25.

Therefore, if heaven and earth are witnesses against **"the wicked"** Job 20:5, **"a wicked man"** Job 20:29 and **"his iniquity"** Job 20:27 then that is the strongest visible judgement of God against **"wickedness"** Job 20:12 as God warned Israel if she **"shall do evil in the sight of the LORD thy God, to provoke him to anger"** Deuteronomy 4:25.

"I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed" Deuteronomy 4:26. God spelt out that judgement.

"And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron" Deuteronomy 28:23 i.e. a foretaste of hell. See *Question 2* and remarks on Psalm 63:1 etc. God will inflict the same judgement on evildoers today.

"But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds" Romans 2:5-6.

9. *What's wrong with Zophar's diagnosis?*

Nothing is wrong with it according to **"the wicked"** Job 20:5 but it doesn't apply to Job. Today's believer should aim to follow the Lord's exhortation.

"Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" John 7:24.