

JOB

Chapter-By-Chapter Through The Greatest Poem in Literature

Session 10 | Job 11:1-12:10

The First Speech of Zophar | Job 11:1-20

- Verse 1 – **Zophar the Naamathite** - Nothing is known of Zophar. Naamah is mentioned as one of the cities in Judah in Joshua 15:41, but many doubt that this is the same Naamah. Zophar gives two strongly accusatory speeches against Job in Job 11 and 20.
- Verse 2 –
 - In essence, what Zophar says in this verse is true. We do no good for our cause by remaining silent when others speak against it. Those who have **the multitude of words** should be answered, and **a man full of talk** should **be justified**.
 - The challenge for modern believers is to know *when* and *where* and *if* those who speak should be the subject of a response. It is a challenge because there is no perfect answer that fits every occasion. We live in a world in which we are inundated with communication and opportunities to communicate. Finding the balance to live life and yet the courage and conviction to fight untruth requires wisdom.
 - Here are a few questions to help:
 - Does my response magnify the opposition's voice?
 - Does my response take me away from more substantive matters?
 - Does my response cause me unnecessary angst?
 - Is my response the best way to spread my convictions?
- Verses 3-6 –
 - Zophar accuses his "friend" of being a liar concerning his righteousness, and accuses him of mocking righteousness to the point that it should **make thee ashamed**.
 - Zophar refuses to believe Job's testimony of righteousness, and prays **that God would speak, And open his lips against thee**. One wonders if Zophar would believe God Himself, for it appears Zophar has made up his mind about Job's sinful condition.
 - Through all the suffering of Job, Zophar believes that **God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth**. One wonders why he even came to be with Job.
- Verses 7-10 –
 - Zophar asks yet another good question (which alerts us to the fact that you cannot judge a man's character based on the quality of their questions).
 - In the end, Zophar is building a "gotcha" scenario in which, regardless of the answers Job gives, they would never be enough, for Job would not know **the Almighty unto perfection**.
 - Beware of pious talk by agenda-driven forces.
- Verses 11-12 –
 - In one of his strongest accusations yet, Zophar accuses Job of being **vain**, and that God recognizes this. Furthermore, Zophar holds out no hope that Job would ever reform.

- Zophar seems to say, "God **knoweth vain men**, and so do I, and you (Job), are a vain man if I ever saw one." Of course, in his accusation Zophar drips with vanity.
- Verse 12 is somewhat difficult to translate, likely because of the humor involved. The best translation seems to be, "A vain man will be wise when wild ass gives birth to a man."
- At this point, Job probably would have done well to usher his "friend" to the door.
- Verses 13-19 - Here Zophar gives his sermon of repentance directed toward Job. As with his friends before, Zophar displays his "righteousness=reward" theology and presumes upon Job's guilt.
- Verse 20 - Zophar concludes his remarks with a message of doom for Job, assigning him with **the wicked** (though God assigns him with the righteous).

Job's Response to Zophar | Job 12-15

- Verses 12:1-2 - Job gives "the zinger," mocking their arrogance by saying **wisdom shall die with you**.
- Verses 12:3-5 –
 - Job (finally) steps forward with strength and defends himself, saying:
 - **I am not inferior to you.**
 - I am not one who does not know the *true* and *obvious* things that you have said in your justification.
 - I have been **mocked** by my **neighbor** (the three friends).
 - I have called **upon God** and heard from Him.
 - I am **the just upright man** yet **laughed to scorn**.
 - I am **as a lamp despised** among my friends who are **at ease** while I am **ready to slip**.
 - There comes a time when a person must forcefully and truthfully defend himself. Job is doing it beautifully.
- Verses 12:6-10: Job notices that the **robbers prosper** and those who **provoke God are secure** and God provides for them **abundantly**. While this doesn't seem fair, **the soul of every living thing, And the breath of all mankind** is in the hand of God (vv. 9-10), and even the creatures of the earth can **teach thee** and **tell thee** and **declare unto thee** (vv. 7-8) these things.