

JOB

Chapter-By-Chapter Through The Greatest Poem in Literature

Session 24 | Job 27:11-28:28

Zophar's Final Speech | Job 27:11-28:28

- I agree with *The Companion Bible* that 27:11-28:28 is the speech of Zophar. Here are a few reasons:
 - The symmetry of the poem requires it.
 - The sentiments of this section are the opposite of Job's and the same as Zophar's (compare 27:13 to 20:29, for example).
 - The one speaking here is convinced that the wicked are punished. If this is Job, then his friends have convinced him, which is against all Job's testimony as well as rejected in Job 33:12.
 - Job 29:1 does not require a seamless continuation, but can be "Job added to his parable."
- Verses 27:11-12 - Introductory comments
 - Just because someone claims that he/she is teaching **by the hand of God** does not mean that this is true! Zophar asks, **Why then are ye thus altogether vain?** This verges on saying, "if you question my teaching, then you are **vain**."
- Verses 27:13-15 - The fate of the wicked man.
 - Verse 13 is almost identical to the concluding words of Zophar's second speech, in Job 20:29. This (as well as reasons above) is why I have separated this **wicked man** from **mine enemy** in verses 7-10.
 - The focus is on **his children** who will be born into **the sword** and **shall not be satisfied with bread** and ultimately **buried in death**. The words **his widows shall not weep** (v. 15) is likely a reference to the widows of each of the sons.
- Verses 27:16-23 - The fate of the rich man.
 - The **rich man** is specifically stated in verse 19. He is, it seems, the "proverbial rich man" and equated with the wicked man of the previous verses (and, ultimately, a reference by Zophar to Job).
 - This man may **heap up silver as the dust** and have **raiment as the clay** (v. 16).
 - That is, silver and expensive clothing is "dust and clay" to him.
 - In the end, Zophar prays that others will receive it, and **the innocent shall divide the silver**.
 - Note that Zophar's assumption is that the rich man is guilty and the poor man who will receive his wealth is **the innocent**. This is a communist mindset (and fast growing in our society).
 - This rich man's life is pictured as relatively easy, for **he buildeth his house as a moth or as a booth that the keeper [of the vineyard] maketh**. That is, his mansion is, to him, so simple to build that it is like a temporary shelter.
 - Verse 19 is challenging Hebrew, but the pronoun **he** can also be *it*, a reference to the wealth, thus, **"the rich man shall lie down, but his wealth shall not be gathered: He openeth his eyes, and his wealth is not.**
 - Verses 20-21 speak of the coming day of destruction that Zophar wishes upon the rich man.
 - In verses 22-23, the KJV has supplied **God** and **Men**, but this is not necessary. Rather, the **storm** of verse 21 **shall cast upon him** and, figuratively, this storm **shall clap...hands at him, And shall hiss him out of his place**. This would be, obviously, a figurative storm. Young's Literal Translation uses this approach.

- Verses 28:1-14 - Wisdom Compared to Mining
 - As Zophar is considering the rich man, his mind turns to an illustration concerning precious stones, mined out of the earth, with a few words about the blessings of the earth in general. As much as we know that the earth produces wealth, there is also a mystery to its production, thus **a path which no fowl knoweth, And which the vulture's eye hath not seen** (v. 7). This mystery will be compared to the mystery of wisdom in following verses.
 - The **He** in verses 9-11 is *the miner* who searches the earth for its wealth. The "moral of the story" is in verses 12-14, where it is shown that the earth's riches do not include **wisdom or understanding**. The implication is that the proverbial rich man has material wealth but no wisdom and understanding.
- Verses 28:15-28 - Zophar Waxes Eloquent About Wisdom.
 - While the things Zophar says about wisdom are not untrue, it is wise to recognize that the *reason* he speaks about wisdom is to shame Job, thus an unwise use of wisdom speech. It is always wise to consider *why* something is said as well as *what* is said.
 - In vv. 15-19 Zophar tells where wisdom can *not* be found.
 - In vv. 20-21 he asks a rhetorical question about the challenges of finding wisdom.
 - In v. 22 **destruction (Abaddon) and death** take on a personification and say that they have **heard the fame thereof** but imply they do not know *Wisdom*.
 - In vv. 23-28 Zophar says that wisdom is found in God. While this is utterly (and obviously) true, Zophar's wisdom was *not* true wisdom from God. We know this because of two reasons:
 - Zophar accused Job of wrongdoing, while we know that God said Job was righteous.
 - Zophar said **the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom**, however, the Scripture tells us that the fear of the Lord is *the beginning of wisdom* (Ps. 111:10, Prov. 9:10).