

Job 21 - Job's Reasoned Reply to Zophar

II. Dialogue (Job 3:1–42:6)

(3) Second dialogue cycle (Job 15:1–21:34)

(C) Job's exchange with Zophar (Job 20:1–21:34)

(b) Job 's reply (21:1-34)

- (i) Job calls for careful consideration of his words (21:1-3)
- (ii) Job calls attention to his own adverse circumstances as the basis for his words (21:4-6)
- (iii) The prosperity of the wicked (21:7-16)
- (iv) God postpones judgment upon the wicked (21:17-21)
- (v) Those blessed and cursed die just the same (21:22-26)
- (vi) The presence of the unjudged wicked men demonstrates that Job's friends have wrongly assessed his situation (21:27-34)

Job 21

(b) Job 's reply (21:1-34)

- (i) Job calls for careful consideration of his words (21:1-3)

1 Then Job responded,

1 Then Job answered,

1 In response, Job said:

1 But Job answered and said,

2 "Listen carefully to my speech, And let this be your *way of consolation*.

2 "Listen carefully to my speech, And let this be your *way of consolation*.

2 "Listen carefully to my words; let this encourage all of you.

2 Hear diligently my speech, and let this be your consolations.

3 "Bear with me that I may speak; Then after I have spoken, you may mock *me*.

3 "Bear with me that I may speak; Then after I have spoken, you may mock.

3 Bear with me and let me speak! Then, after I've spoken, you'll be free to mock me.

3 Suffer me that I may speak; and after that I have spoken, mock on.

- (ii) Job calls attention to his own adverse circumstances as the basis for his words (21:4-6)

4 "As for me, is my complaint to a mortal? Or why should I not be impatient?

4 "As for me, is my complaint to man? And why should I not be impatient?
4 After all, isn't my complaint against a human being? If so, why shouldn't I be impatient?
4 As for me, is my complaint to man? and if it were so, why should not my spirit be troubled?

5 "Look at me, and be astonished, And put *your* hand over *your* mouth.
5 "Look at me, and be astonished, And put *your* hand over *your* mouth.
5 Look at me, be appalled, and then shut up!
5 Mark me, and be astonished, and lay your hand upon your mouth.

6 "Even when I remember, I am disturbed, And horror takes hold of my flesh.
6 "Even when I remember, I am disturbed, And horror takes hold of my flesh.
6 When I think about this, I'm petrified with terror and my body shudders uncontrollably."
6 Even when I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold on my flesh.

(iii) The prosperity of the wicked (21:7-16)

7 "Why do the wicked *still* live, Grow old, *and* also become very powerful?
7 "Why do the wicked *still* live, Continue on, also become very powerful?
7 "Why do the wicked live to reach old age and increase in power and wealth, too?
7 Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?

8 "Their descendants endure with them in their sight, And their offspring before their eyes,
8 "Their descendants are established with them in their sight, And their offspring before their eyes,
8 Their children grow up while they're alive, and they live to see their grandchildren.
8 Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes.

9 Their houses are safe from fear, And the rod of God is not on them.
9 Their houses are safe from fear, And the rod of God is not on them.
9 Their houses are safe from fear, and God's chastisement never visits them.
9 Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them.

10 "His ox mates without fail; His cow calves and does not miscarry.
10 "His ox mates without fail; His cow calves and does not abort.
10 Their bull breeds without fail, and their cows calve without miscarriages.
10 Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf.

11 "They send out their boys like the flock, And their children dance.

11 "They send forth their little ones like the flock, And their children skip about.
11 They release their children to play like sheep; their young ones dance about,
11 They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance.

12 "They sing with the tambourine and harp, And rejoice at the sound of the flute.
12 "They sing to the timbrel and harp And rejoice at the sound of the flute.
12 singing with tambourines and lyres as they rejoice to the sound of flutes.
12 They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ.

13 "They spend their days in prosperity, And suddenly they go down to Sheol.
13 "They spend their days in prosperity, And suddenly they go down to Sheol.
13 They grow old in prosperity, as they descend peacefully into the afterlife.
13 They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave.

14 "Yet they say to God, 'Go away from us! We do not even desire the knowledge of Your ways.
14 "They say to God, 'Depart from us! We do not even desire the knowledge of Your ways.
14 "They say to God, 'Turn away from us! We have no desire to know your ways."
14 Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.

15 'Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him, And what would we gain if we plead with Him?'
15 'Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him, And what would we gain if we entreat Him?'
15 Who is the Almighty, that we should serve him? Where's the profit in talking to him?'
15 What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?

16 "Behold, their prosperity is not in their hand; The advice of the wicked is far from me.
16 "Behold, their prosperity is not in their hand; The counsel of the wicked is far from me.
16 Behold! Their prosperity isn't in their control! The counsel of the wicked will remain far from me."
16 Lo, their good is not in their hand: the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

(iv) God postpones judgment upon the wicked (21:17-21)

17 "How often is the lamp of the wicked put out, Or does their disaster fall on them? Does God apportion destruction in His anger?

17 "How often is the lamp of the wicked put out, Or does their calamity fall on them? Does God apportion destruction in His anger?

17 "How often do the wicked have their lights put out? Does calamity ever fall on them? Will God in his anger ever apportion their destruction?

17 How oft is the candle of the wicked put out! and how oft cometh their destruction upon them! God distributeth sorrows in his anger.

18 "Are they as straw before the wind, And like chaff which the storm carries away?

18 "Are they as straw before the wind, And like chaff which the storm carries away?

18 May they become like a straw, blown away before the wind; like a chaff that's swept off by a storm.

18 They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away.

19 "You say, 'God saves up a person's wrongdoing for his sons.' Let God repay him so that he may know *it*.

19 "You say, 'God stores away a man's iniquity for his sons.' Let God repay him so that he may know *it*.

19 God stores up their iniquity to repay their children; making them repay so that they may be aware.

19 God layeth up his iniquity for his children: he rewardeth him, and he shall know it.

20 "Let his own eyes see his destruction, And let him drink of the wrath of the Almighty.

20 "Let his own eyes see his decay, And let him drink of the wrath of the Almighty.

20 Their own eyes will see their destruction; and they'll drink the wrath of the Almighty.

20 His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty.

21 "For what does he care about his household after him, When the number of his months is at an end?

21 "For what does he care for his household after him, When the number of his months is cut off?

21 What will they care for their household after them, when the number of his months comes to an end?"

21 For what pleasure hath he in his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst?

(v) Those blessed and cursed die just the same (21:22-26)

22 "Can anyone teach God knowledge, In that He judges those on high?

22 "Can anyone teach God knowledge, In that He judges those on high?

22 "Can God learn anything? After all, he will judge even the exalted ones.

22 Shall any teach God knowledge? seeing he judgeth those that are high.

23 "One dies in his full strength, Being wholly undisturbed and at ease;

23 "One dies in his full strength, Being wholly at ease and satisfied;

23 Such persons will die in their full vigor, completely prosperous and secure.

23 One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet.

24 His sides are filled with fat, And the marrow of his bones is wet,

24 His sides are filled out with fat, And the marrow of his bones is moist,

24 His buckets are filled with milk, his bone marrow is healthy.

24 His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow.

25 While another dies with a bitter soul, Never even tasting *anything* good.

25 While another dies with a bitter soul, Never even tasting *anything* good.

25 Others die with a bitter soul, never having tasted the good life.

25 And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure.

26 "Together they lie down in the dust, And maggots cover them.

26 "Together they lie down in the dust, And worms cover them.

26 They both lie down in the dust; and worms cover them."

26 They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them.

(vi) The presence of the unjudged wicked men demonstrates that Job's friends have wrongly assessed his situation (21:27-34)

27 "Behold, I know your thoughts, And the plots you devise against me.

27 "Behold, I know your thoughts, And the plans by which you would wrong me.

27 "Look! I know your thoughts, your plans are going to harm me.

27 Behold, I know your thoughts, and the devices which ye wrongfully imagine against me.

28 "For you say, 'Where is the house of the nobleman, And where is the tent, the dwelling places of the wicked?'

28 "For you say, 'Where is the house of the nobleman, And where is the tent, the dwelling places of the wicked?'

28 You ask, 'Where is the noble person's house?' and 'Where are the tents where the wicked live?'

28 For ye say, Where is the house of the prince? and where are the dwelling places of the wicked?

29 "Have you not asked travelers, And do you not examine their evidence?
29 "Have you not asked wayfaring men, And do you not recognize their witness?
29 Haven't you asked travelers on the highway? Don't you accept their word
29 Have ye not asked them that go by the way? and do ye not know their tokens,

30 "For the wicked person is spared a day of disaster; They are led away from a day of fury.
30 "For the wicked is reserved for the day of calamity; They will be led forth at the day of fury.
30 that the wicked person is spared from times of calamity, that he is rescued on the day of wrath?
30 That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.

31 "Who confronts him with his actions, And who repays him for what he has done?
31 "Who will confront him with his actions, And who will repay him for what he has done?
31 Who will expose his conduct to his face? Who will repay him for what he has done
31 Who shall declare his way to his face? and who shall repay him what he hath done?

32 "When he is carried to the grave, *People* will keep watch over *his* tomb.
32 "While he is carried to the grave, *Men* will keep watch over *his* tomb.
32 when he is carried away to the cemetery and guardians are placed to watch his tomb?
32 Yet shall he be brought to the grave, and shall remain in the tomb.

33 "The clods of the valley will gently cover him; Moreover, all mankind will follow after him, While countless *others* go before him.
33 "The clods of the valley will gently cover him; Moreover, all men will follow after him, While countless ones go before him.
33 The runoff from the streams will seem sweet to him; everyone will follow after him; countless crows march ahead of him.
33 The clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him, and every man shall draw after him, as there are innumerable before him.

34 "So how dare you give me empty comfort? For your answers remain *nothing but falsehood!*"
34 "How then will you vainly comfort me, For your answers remain *full of falsehood?*"

34 How then, can you console me so worthlessly? What is left of your answers is
treachery."

34 How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing in your answers there remaineth falsehood?