

Job's Initial Response to Zophar

Chapter 12

Job 12:1&2 *And Job answered and said, No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you.*

WHAT Job said in sarcasm is not too far removed from what his three friends believed to be true—that their wisdom was rare and that without them the earth would be devoid of wisdom. They each desired to tell Job what they believed to be the truth of his situation, but in reality there was absolutely nothing they brought forth that could be deemed enlightening or spiritually profitable. What Job said in jest was meant as a reproof of men who had far higher opinions of themselves than merited by the superficial wisdom they brought forth. They all spoke at length but helped Job not at all. Though men may speak much, it does not mean that either God or those they think themselves able to reprove will hear them. *But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.*¹ It is not the abundance of words that gets prayers answered or helps

to convict sinners of sin—but rather the amount of faith and spiritual inspiration they contain.

Their much speaking.—This thought was the root-evil of the worship of the heathen or the Pharisee. It gave to prayer a quantitative mechanical force, increased in proportion to the number of prayers offered. If fifty failed, a hundred might succeed.²

In contrast with Eliphaz's, Bildad's, and Zophar's words, we can observe in Scripture Peter's words in Jerusalem,³ Stephen's preaching,⁴ and Nathan's,⁵ Jonah's,⁶ and Elijah's words.⁷ This teaches us that if God's Spirit is not what leads men, then absolutely nothing good spiritually will come from it. Hence, if it is not the Holy Spirit prompting reproof, then the emptiness of carnal correction will prohibit any true change in the sinner's heart. Sometimes the more unwise a man or woman is, like Job's three friends, the more they will be misled to think that their shallow thoughts will help those in need. God has said that the wisdom of this world, which is characterized by human thought, will

¹ Matt. 6:7

² Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Matt. 6:7

³ Acts 10:44&45 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.⁴⁵ And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 11:17&18 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?¹⁸ When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

⁴ Acts 6:8–10 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.⁹ Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.¹⁰ And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.

Acts 7:51–54 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.⁵² Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:⁵³ Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.⁵⁴ When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.

⁵ II Sam. 12:7 And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man...

II Sam. 12:13 And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD...

⁶ Jonah 3:3–5 So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey.⁴ And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.⁵ So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

⁷ I Kgs. 21:27–29 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.²⁸ And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,²⁹ Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.

be brought to nothing. *Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.*⁸

Job 12:3 But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these?

Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar spoke about general realities; there was nothing specific in what they said that could convict Job of his sin or provide a way of escape from his troubles. His friends thought themselves superior in knowledge, not because they had more but because their own lives had not been touched by adversity. However, many a man may live his life unafflicted by Satan, unaware that the primary reason he has not been singled out for devilish attack is simply because he poses no real threat to evil things. It was Job's fear and faith in God that prompted jealousy in Satan. It was because he sought fellowship with the Lord and revered God's holy name that Satan sought his destruction. In truth, it was Job's desire for spiritual relationship with the Lord that led to his being hated by the devil. *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*⁹ Observe too that it is a life of godliness, not simply pretending to live one, that prompts devilish persecution. *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.*¹⁰ What

is true of Jesus and Christians was first evidenced with God and Job, where because of Job's loyalty to the Lord, the devil sought to destroy his life. Another point for consideration is that when a man joins himself to God, he is no longer an innocent bystander in the war of heaven. Consequently, when a man seeks fellowship with God, his property, reputation, and even life itself will become targets of God's great enemy.

Job 12:4 I am as one mocked of his neighbour, who calleth upon God, and he answereth him: the just upright man is laughed to scorn.

Just as Job was mocked by his neighbors, God's Word has revealed that there will be an increase of mockers in the last days. *Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts.*¹¹ Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem mocked Nehemiah and his building of the wall,¹² and Jeremiah was mocked in his preaching for the Lord.¹³ The apostles were mocked for supposedly drinking new wine when they were supernaturally filled with the Holy Spirit.¹⁴ Likewise, Christ's journey to the cross first began with mockery.¹⁵ *And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him. And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee?*¹⁶ This is often the response of unbelievers, mocking those who believe what they do not. Spiritual

⁸ Isa. 29:14

⁹ II Tim 3:12

¹⁰ John 15:18

¹¹ II Pet. 3:3

¹² Neh. 2:19 *But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king?*

¹³ Jer. 20:7 *O LORD, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived; thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me.*

¹⁴ Acts 2:13 *Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.*

¹⁵ Matt. 27:29-31 *And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!*³⁰ *And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.*³¹ *And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.*

Mark 15:19&20 *And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him.*²⁰ *And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.*

Luke 23:11&12 *And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.*¹² *And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.*

Luke 23:36 *And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,*

¹⁶ Luke 22:63&64

mockery is also one of the characteristics of those fully deceived by unbelief. This is the way of the unbelieving man: to mock faith even as he mocks sinning against God in his own life. *Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour.*¹⁷ In the end, though, when fools make a mockery of sin, sin will ultimately mock them through the consequences it brings to their lives.

*...Sin deludes, or makes a mock of, fools, or sinners; that is, exposes them to shame and contempt...*¹⁸

Job 12:5 He that is ready to slip with his feet is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease.

This verse is a difficult one to understand. The Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible can help with its interpretation.

As the torch is to the wanderer, so Job to his friends. Once they gladly used his aid in their need; now they in prosperity mock him in his need.¹⁹

Because Job's friends were safe and at ease, they could mock his words. This teaches us that if we are not under trial ourselves, it is easy to mock those who are, as he who is not afflicted by adversity can easily think himself superior to those who are.

Job 12:6–8 The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly.

¹⁷ Prov. 14:9

¹⁸ Benson Commentary, Prov. 14:9

¹⁹ Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 12:5

²⁰ Gal. 4:29 But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

²¹ Ps. 25:16–18 Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted. ¹⁷The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses. ¹⁸Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.

Ps. 34:19&20 Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all. ²⁰He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.

Matt. 24:9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

II Cor. 4:8&9 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

II Cor. 6:4–6 But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, ⁵In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; ⁶By pureness, by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,

⁷ But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee:

⁸ Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.

Job speaks of robbers prospering and strong beasts prevailing on earth. He uses what is seen in nature to defend the fact that just because men are afflicted does not mean they are always sinners. The way of this world evidences itself in how those of the flesh persecute those of the Spirit. If fleshly men—or in this case a spiritual adversary (Satan)—have power and are able to bring influence, then they will persecute those who possess a nature contrary to theirs.²⁰ Being under persecution is therefore not sufficient evidence to prove unrighteousness.²¹ And just because evil may for a time exercise power does not mean that its strength should be thought of as righteousness any more than when a lion takes down a lamb.

Job 12:9 Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this?

The earth and all that transpires upon it testify to the providence and sovereignty of God.

Who knoweth not in all these — Or, by all these brute creatures; that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this — That God, by his power and wisdom, hath created and ordered all that is in them, or that is done by and among them. Job meant in these verses to express his firm opinion that all animate and inanimate nature clearly bore testimony to the creating power and overruling providence of God:

see Nehemiah 9:6.²² This is the only time that we meet with the name Jehovah in all the discourses between Job and his friends. For God in that age was more known by the name of *Shaddai, the Almighty*.²³

Job 12:10 In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.

In God's hand are the soul and breath of every living thing. All is under His overarching control. God can take life away as easily as He gives it. No doubt, what Job knew of Jehovah is what men are woefully ignorant of today, that *the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind* are in the hands and will of God. All life is solely in accordance with God's will. It can be either lengthened or shortened if God so desires. The soul who lives in eternity will do so only because God has willed it, just as others souls are forbidden entrance to His kingdom because He never willed it. Though man thinks he can control his destiny, he cannot unless a path is given him through God's will.²⁴ If men knew this profound truth, that all life is in God's hands, then they would hold a much greater and reverential fear of the Lord. He who does not properly fear the

Lord and His power and dangerously mocks the eternal truth that all life is governed by Him will ultimately face His power. What God wills on earth will be done. That God controls all life is a truth not known by most men.

Deuteronomy 32:39 See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.

I kill, and I make alive.—This was repeated by Hannah in her song, "The Lord killeth and maketh alive" (1Samuel 2:6). Comp. also Isaiah 43:13,²⁵ "Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand."²⁶

I Samuel 2:6 The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.

The Lord killeth, and maketh alive.—Death too and life come from this same omnipotent Lord: nothing in the affairs of men is the sport of blind chance.²⁷

All life comes from God²⁸ or is taken away by God.²⁹ Ultimately, God is the final governor of all who will live or die. No other has a say in the courtroom

²² Neh. 9:6 *Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.*

²³ Benson Commentary, Job 12:9

²⁴ Matt. 7:21–23 *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.* ²²*Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?*

²⁵*And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

Matt. 10:37 *He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.*

Matt. 22:8 *Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.*

Matt. 25:10–12 *And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.* ¹¹*Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.*

¹²*But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.*

Rev. 20:12–15 *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.* ¹³*And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.* ¹⁴*And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.* ¹⁵*And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

²⁵ Isa. 43:13 *Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?*

²⁶ Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Deut. 32:39

²⁷ Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, I Sam. 2:6

²⁸ I Tim. 6:13 *I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;*

²⁹ Deut. 32:39 *See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.*

of life and death, simply because none could ever be found fit for such a critical decision as this. He who created the heavens and earth determines the fate of every living thing.

Few records reveal God's sovereignty on earth more than the revelation given to Isaiah concerning Cyrus, the Persian king who returned the Babylonian Jews to their homeland. The record reveals that God anointed a non-Jew to carry out His will.³⁰ This revelation is profound simply because what God taught Cyrus about His sovereignty is something not known by many today.

Isaiah 45:1-4 Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;

² I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:

³ And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

⁴ For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

Cyrus is called God's anointed; he was designed and qualified for his great service by the counsel of God. The gates of Babylon which led to the river, were left open the night that Cyrus marched his army into the empty channel. The Lord went before him, giving entrance to the cities he besieged. He gave him also treasures, which had been hidden in secret places. The true God was to Cyrus an unknown God; yet God foreknew him; he

called him by his name. The exact fulfilment of this must have shown Cyrus that Jehovah was the only true God, and that it was for the sake of Israel that he was prospered. In all the changes of states and kingdoms, God works out the good of his church.³¹

What was found true of this one man will also be found true of the church. Because God has willed it and ordained it, His power will ensure that the church reaches His purpose for her. Christ's church, like Cyrus, has been ordained and predestined by God for certain blessings, and because of His power, and not the church's power, these blessings are certain to be received.

Isaiah 45:2 I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:

Because Cyrus was God's anointed, and because his task was according to God's will, the Lord said that He would go before him and level all obstacles that could prevent his success. It was this that ensured Cyrus's victory. For those anointed by God, God has prepared certain victories and successes, and they will be theirs because of divine providence. God is sovereign, and because of this, what He has willed shall be done. No man, nor any other party, can resist this will or alter its purposed conclusion. There is great comfort in realizing that men have been chosen by God for adoption into His heavenly family. By His will, all that has been revealed concerning them will be fulfilled. The sovereignty of God demands it.

Isaiah 45:3 And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know

Rev. 1:17&18 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: ¹⁸I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

30 Ezra 1:1-4 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, ²Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem. ⁴And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.

31 Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Isa. 45:1-4

that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

By the Lord's blessing of hidden treasures, His people know that He is both with and for them. What a wonderful truth this is, that by blessings, riches, and treasures, the people of God are brought to know the certainty of He who has called them! *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*³² God enriches men with both internal and external riches, which proves that He is alive, real, and critically involved in His people's lives. In truth, either blessings or curses will awaken men to the reality of God.³³

That thou mayest know - That from these signal successes, and these favors of heaven, you may learn that Yahweh is the true God. This he would learn because he would see that he owed it to heaven (see the note at Isaiah 45:2); and because the prediction which God had made of his success would convince him that he was the true and only God.³⁴

Isaiah 45:4 For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

It is not man who seeks and finds out God, but God who calls men who prior to His call did not even know His name. The church also exists because of

³² Col. 1:27

³³ Deut. 11:26-28 Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; ²⁷A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: ²⁸And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.

Deut 30:19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

³⁴ Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Isa. 45:3

³⁵ Eph. 1:5

³⁶ Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Eph. 1:5

³⁷ John 15:16 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: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Rom. 8:28-30 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. ²⁹For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Eph. 1:4&5 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: ⁵Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Eph. 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

predestination. In other words, it exists because God determined beforehand that it should. *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.*³⁵ By God's will sons of God are brought forth.

When, therefore, he converts and saves a soul, it is clear that he always intended to do it. He has no new plan. It is not an afterthought. It is not the work of chance. If I can find out anything that God has "done," I have the most certain conviction that he "always meant" to do it - and this is all that is intended by the doctrine of election or predestination. What God does, he always meant to do. What he permits, he always meant to permit.³⁶

Saints are purposed for heaven because of God's will. They will share an eternity with Christ because it is according to God's will for their lives. All salvation has predestination as its roots.³⁷ The Lord chooses who will inherit His promises, and then He exercises sufficient power so that all goes as He has determined. No man has ever been saved whom God did not first choose for salvation. His will is the source of all blessing, whether earthly or heavenly. When men enter into promised abundance, we can know that it was the Lord's own eternal will that initiated that entrance.

Job 12:11-13 Doth not the ear try words? and the mouth taste his meat?

¹² **With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding.**

13 With him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding.

With him is wisdom - Margin, correctly, "God." However much wisdom there may seem to be with aged men, yes the true wisdom - that which was supreme and worthy of the name - was to be found in God alone. The object of Job was to lead the thoughts up to God... He made all things; he sustains all things; he reverses the condition of people at his pleasure; he sets up whom he pleases, and when he chooses he casts them down. His works are contrary in many respects to what we should anticipate; and the sense of all is, that God was a holy and a righteous sovereign, and that such were the reverses under his administration that we could not argue that he treated all according to their character on earth.³⁸

Job 12:14 Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again: he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening.

What God tears down cannot by human strength be built again. Being hedged in by the Lord means that no human power can escape the captivity He has placed them in. What is true in life is even more true in death. Hence, if a man is held captive by the grave, without God's supernatural power to release him there can be no escape. No one, living or dead, can reverse God's judgment that men should die. *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:*³⁹ By divine appointment, and not by accident, men enter the grave, yet all life after the grave will be determined by the voice of the Son of God, which calls to life those who have no power to regain life themselves. *Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice.*⁴⁰

³⁸ Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 12:13

³⁹ Heb. 9:27

⁴⁰ John 5:28

⁴¹ Barnes' Notes on the Bible, John 5:28

⁴² John 11:43&44 *And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.* ⁴⁴ *And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.*

⁴³ Deut. 11:17 *And then the LORD's wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you.*

⁴⁴ I Kgs. 8:35 *When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them:*

⁴⁵ I Kgs. 17:1 *And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.*

Shall hear his voice - He will restore them to life, and command them to appear before him. This is a most sublime description, and this will be a wonderful display of almighty power. None but God can "see" all the dead, none but he could remould their frames, and none else could command them to return to life.⁴¹

He who wants freedom from the captivity of the grave purposed by God must hear while he is living the voice of the Son of God. It is only then that Christ will call his people to life by name, as he did with Lazarus.⁴² There is no hope in heaven other than the Redeemer sent to provide it. Hence, if people desire to hear Christ's voice and be liberated from the grave, they must sincerely believe in the Son of God while living

Job 12:15 Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up: also he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth.

God's power over the earth is vividly demonstrated by His power over the water above it, which can either make a land prosper or, if withheld, ruin it.

Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up. God, at his pleasure, causes great droughts, which are among the worst calamities that can happen. He withholds the blessed rain from heaven (Deuteronomy 11:17; 1 Kings 8:35; 1 Kings 17:1),⁴³ and the springs shrink, and the rivers dry up, and a fruitful land is turned into a desert, and famine stalks through the land, and men perish by thousands. Also he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth; i.e. he causes floods and inundations. Once upon a time he overwhelmed the whole earth, and destroyed almost the entire race of mankind, by a deluge of an extraordinary character, which so fixed itself in the human consciousness, that traces of it are to be found

in the traditions of almost all the various races of men. But, beside this great occasion, he also in ten thousand other cases, causes, by means of floods, tremendous ruin and devastation, sweeping away crops and cattle, and even villages and cities, sometimes even “overturning the earth,” causing lakes to burst, rivers to change their course, vast tracts of land to be permanently submerged, and the contour of coasts to be altered.⁴⁴

Job 12:16 With him is strength and wisdom: the deceived and the deceiver are his.

Though God did not create sin, He maintains control over the extent that sin’s deception can be spread. The Lord put boundaries on how much Satan could harm Job by affliction.⁴⁵ Similarly, Satan’s deception is controlled by how much God will allow the devil to deceive men, as God has power over both the deceived and the deceiver. If men reject the Lord, then God will remove those bounds, allowing Satan to lead men completely as he wills.⁴⁶

The deceived and the deceiver are his — Wholly subject to his disposal. He governs the deceiver, and sets bounds to his deceits, how far they shall extend: he also overrules all this to his own glory, and the accomplishment of his righteous designs of trying the good and punishing wicked men, by giving them up to believe lies. Yet God is not the author of any error or sin, but only the wise and holy governor of it.⁴⁷

Job 12:17 He leadeth counsellors away spoiled, and maketh the judges fools.

⁴⁴ *Pulpit Commentary, Job 12:15*

⁴⁵ *Job 1:12 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.*

⁴⁶ *II Tim. 2:6 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.*

⁴⁷ *II Tim. 2:26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.*

⁴⁸ *Benson Commentary, Job 12:16*

⁴⁹ *Gen. 11:4–9 And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. ⁵And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. ⁶And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. ⁷Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech. ⁸So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. ⁹Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.*

⁵⁰ *Ps. 99:6 Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the LORD, and he answered them.*

⁵¹ *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown, Job 12:19*

Those thought to possess wisdom and power among men, like counselors and judges, can easily, by God’s will, be carried away, spoiled, or thought of as fools. This teaches us that neither human wisdom nor earthly influence can redirect God’s will for a man’s life, as there is no state that any man can gain by knowledge or worldly advancement that can protect his life if God touches it. Human judges who sit in the highest positions of society, determining right and wrong, can, if God so wills it, be thought of as fools for their ill-advised and errant counsel.

Job 12:18 He looseth the bond of kings, and girdeth their loins with a girdle.

Kings are not so high that God’s sovereignty cannot reach them, and nations, even if they bind together as one, cannot overcome God’s will. The tower of Babel is a good illustration that human unity cannot accomplish anything if God wishes it to fail.⁴⁸ God rules all the earth, even the little men who generally think themselves its kings.

Job 12:19 He leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty.

princes—rather, “priests,” as the Hebrew is rendered (Ps 99:6).⁴⁹ Even the sacred ministers of religion are not exempt from reverses and captivity.⁵⁰

Just because a man holds a religious position does not mean that God cannot lead him away spoiled. The Lord also revealed that His judgment will begin with the house of God, which presumptuous priests and pseudo-

religious men think of themselves as ruling over. *For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?*⁵¹ Since the Holy Spirit convicts the church of sin, how much greater conviction and judgment will come on those outside the church, who do not even possess it? And because God's eyes are able to search all the earth, nothing done by saint, sinner, or devilish force can escape His attention. But just as all evil is seen by the Lord, so too are those who fear His holy name. The righteous can be seen just as clearly by heavenly sight as the wicked. *Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.*⁵²

Job 12:20 He removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged.

He removeth away the speech of the trusty - Margin, "lip of the faithful." "He takes away the lip," that is, he takes away the power of giving safe counsel or good advice. The "trusty" or "faithful" here refer to those of age and experience, and on whose counsel men are accustomed to rely. The meaning here is, that their most sagacious anticipations are disappointed, their wisest schemes are foiled. They fail—in their calculations of the course of events, and the arrangements of Providence are such that they could not anticipate what was to occur.

The understanding of the aged - To whom the young were accustomed to look up with deference and respect. The meaning here is, that they who were accustomed to give wise and sound advice, if left by God, give vain and foolish counsels.⁵³

Job 12:21 He poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty.

⁵¹ I Pet. 4:17

⁵² II Tim. 2:19

⁵³ Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 12:20

⁵⁴ Keil and Delitzsch Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, Job 12:22

⁵⁵ Esther 3:6 *And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had shewed him the people of Mordecai: wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai.*

⁵⁶ Esther 7:10 *So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.*

⁵⁷ Ps. 21:11

Again, no worldly ruler can prevent God from taking away their strength and power. If God desires to bring shame to a man's life and remove all previous power held by him, then nothing can stop it from happening. Ultimately, every man lacks complete and total immunity from having God's will carried out in his life. Hence, if God desires to lift a man up, He will. Or if God wishes to bring shame upon another, this will be done as well.

Job 12:22 He discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death.

The meaning of Job 12:22 in this connection can only be, that there is nothing so finely spun out that God cannot make it visible. All secret plans of the wicked, all secret sins, and the deeds of the evil-doer though veiled in deep darkness, He bringeth before the tribunal of the world.⁵⁴

In the book of Esther, Haman is a clear example that God can see what is done in darkness and will bring it into the light. Haman's plot to destroy the Jews⁵⁵ led to his own public hanging.⁵⁶ This teaches us that though our enemies may lay plans to destroy us, if God does not allow it, their plans will be for naught. *For they intended evil against thee: they imagined a mischievous device, which they are not able to perform.*⁵⁷

Job 12:23 He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again.

God increases nations as equally as He destroys them. To the Lord the entire world is but a gameboard, and whatever piece is on it can be moved or removed as He sees fit.

Job 12:24 He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and

causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way.

Just as God can touch the outside of a man, He can also touch his understanding and reason. Nebuchadnezzar learned this when he was restored to reason and realized through his own personal experience that God reigns over all.⁵⁸ *And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.*⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Dan. 4:25–35 *That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.* ²⁶ *And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.* ²⁷ *Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.* ²⁸ *All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.* ²⁹ *At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.* ³⁰ *The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?* ³¹ *While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.* ³² *And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.* ³³ *The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.* ³⁴ *And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:* ³⁵ *And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*

⁵⁹ Dan. 4:34–36

⁶⁰ Deut. 28:29

⁶¹ Acts 9:8&9 *And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.* ⁹ *And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.*

Acts 22:11 *And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.*

⁶² Exod. 4:11

⁶³ Acts 9:17&18 *And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.* ¹⁸ *And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.*

⁶⁴ Rom. 11:8 *(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.*

Job 12:25 They grope in the dark without light, and he maketh them to stagger like a drunken man.

When God withholds both light and understanding, men can do no more than stumble in darkness like the drunken. *And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee.*⁶⁰ During his conversion the apostle Paul was made blind for a season to humble him and teach him that God can make men see or He can remove all sight from them.⁶¹ *And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?*⁶² He who is brought to sight by God must remember that prior to this, he was allowed by God to remain blind, as blindness and sight are both manifestations of God's power.⁶³ He can make men see or deny them the sight of anything at all.⁶⁴ One of God's judgments for sin is His smiting men with even greater blindness. *The*

*LORD shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart:*⁶⁵

Wherever the sinner goes, the curse of God follows; wherever he is, it rests upon him.⁶⁶

Job 13:1&2 Lo, mine eye hath seen all this, mine ear hath heard and understood it. ² What ye know, the same do I know also: I am not inferior unto you.

Job reminds his friends that whatever they thought they knew of the Lord, he knew equally, if not better. His friends had spoken of God's sovereignty. To this Job asserts, *I am not inferior to you*. Job was right in this truth, yet defending ourselves against carnal critics is surely not the same as being able to defend ourselves against one sent by the Holy Spirit. And Job would very soon see the difference between the two.

Because of time constraints, only Job's initial response is addressed here.

II Kgs. 6:18 And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

Ps. 69:23 Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake.

Zeph. 1:17 And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung.

Zech. 12:4 In that day, saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness.

⁶⁵ Deut. 28:28

⁶⁶ Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, Deut. 28:28

I Repent in Dust and Ashes