

## Chapter 9

# Job's Initial Response to Zophar

## Job 12

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

**J**OB said in sarcasm what his three friends believed to be true—that their wisdom was rare and that wisdom would die with them. Job thus rebukes his friends, who had far higher opinions of themselves than was merited by the superficial wisdom they brought forth. They all had spoken at great length but did not help Job at all. It is common with both the heathen and the hypocrite that they foolishly think that the more they speak the greater chance they will be heard by the Lord. *But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking* (Matt 6:7). An abundance of words, though, does not cause the Lord to answer prayer, nor can it help to convince the guilty of sin.

*(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Matt. 6:7) 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.

If the Holy Spirit does not prompt reproof, then the guaranteed error in human correction will prohibit any true change in the sinner's heart. The Lord has also de-

clared that all the wisdom of this world, characterized by human thought, reason, and opinion, will together be brought to naught. *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* (Isa. 29:14).

*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?*

Job's friends thought themselves superior in knowledge primarily because their own lives had not been touched by tragedy. Many a man may live his life unafflicted by Satan, unaware that the real reason he has not been singled out for devilish attack is simply because he poses no real threat to Satan. Because Job sought genuine and sincere fellowship with the Lord and revered His holy name, Satan sought his destruction. Hence, it was both Job's fear and faith in God that prompted the devil's jealousy, and for this he sought his demise. *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution* (II Tim. 3:12). Consider as well that when believers join themselves to God, they are no longer innocent bystanders in the war between the Lord and Satan. To possess a fear and loyalty toward the Lord will undoubtedly arouse indignation in Satan.

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**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 those around him, God's Word reveals 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* (II Pet. 3:3). Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem mocked Nehemiah and his building the wall of Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah was mocked when he preached for the Lord.<sup>2</sup> The apostles were mocked for drinking new wine when they were in fact supernaturally filled with the Lord's Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup> Throughout Jesus' journey to the cross, Herod, the religious leaders, and the soldiers all mocked the Savior.<sup>4</sup> Hence, it is often common for sinners to mock those who possess true faith even as they foolishly mock their own sins against God. In mocking sin, fools bring both shame and judgment upon themselves. *Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favour* (Prov. 14:9).

(Benson Commentary, Prov. 14:9) . . . *Sin deludes, or makes a mock of, fools, or sinners; that is, exposes them to shame and contempt . . .*

**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 on the surface can be perceived as difficult to understand. The *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary* helps in 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.

Because Job's friends were safe and at ease, they could easily mock his words. Sadly, 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*

1 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?*

Neh. 4:1–8 *But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. <sup>2</sup>And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?*<sup>3</sup> *Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall. <sup>4</sup>Hear, O our God; for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity: <sup>5</sup>And cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee: for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders. <sup>6</sup>So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work. <sup>7</sup>But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth, <sup>8</sup>And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it.*

2 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.*

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

4 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. <sup>12</sup>And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.*

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!<sup>30</sup> And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. <sup>31</sup>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.*

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

*secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly.*

*<sup>7</sup> But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee:*

*<sup>8</sup> 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 upon the earth. He uses realities present in nature to defend the fact that even though men are afflicted, it does not always mean that they are sinners.<sup>5</sup>

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

By referencing creation and the creatures in it, Job rightly declares that all is under God's providence, and as such, part of His divine will. Job views his own life as no different than this.

*(Benson Commentary, Job 12:9) 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.<sup>6</sup> 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.*

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

The soul and breath of every living creature are in God's hands. No doubt, Job knew what men are woefully ignorant of today, that *the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind* remain in the hands of God and that all life is subject to His divine will. Reminding us as well that the only soul who will enter eternity will do so because of divine will. If men were truly aware and actually believed this divine truth, that all life is in God's hands, then they would hold a much greater reverential fear of God—that in the hand, power, and decision of God *is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.*

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 12:10) In whose hand is the soul of every living thing—Margin, "Life." The margin is the more correct rendering. The idea is, that all are under the control of God. He gives life, and health, and happiness when he pleases, and when he chooses he takes them away. His sovereignty is manifested, says Job, in the inferior creation, or among the beasts of the field, the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of heaven.*

*And the breath of all mankind—Margin, "Flesh of man." The margin is in accordance with the Hebrew. The meaning is, that man is subjected to the same laws as the rest of the creation. God is a sovereign, and the same great principles of administration may be seen in all his works.*

<sup>5</sup> Ps. 34:19–20 *Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.* <sup>20</sup> *He 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. 6:4–6 But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, <sup>5</sup> In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;*

*<sup>6</sup> By pureness, by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,*

*6 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.*

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Few records reveal God's sovereignty over the affairs of men more than the revelation given to Isaiah concerning Cyrus, the Persian king who returned the Babylonian Jews to their homeland when the Lord anointed even a non-Jew to carry out His divine will for His people.<sup>7</sup>

***Isaiah 45:1 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;***

(*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, Isa. 45:1–4) 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 fulfillment of this must have shown Cyrus that Jehovah was the only true God, and that it was for the sake of Israel that he prospered. In all the changes of states and kingdoms, God works out the good of his church.

***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:***

7 *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, <sup>2</sup>Thus 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. <sup>3</sup>Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup>And 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.*

8 *Deut. 11:26–28 Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; <sup>27</sup>A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: <sup>28</sup>And 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:*

Cyrus was the Lord's anointed, and his task was according to divine will. Thus, the prophecy is that God would go before him and destroy all obstacles that could hinder his success. Ultimately, it was the Lord's divine power that ensured Cyrus' victory.

***Isaiah 45:3 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.***

By the Lord's blessing His people with hidden treasures, they would be brought to know that He is both with and for them. What a wonderful revelation is hidden in this verse, that by blessings, riches, and spiritual treasures the people of God are brought to know both the reality and generosity of God! In truth, both blessings and curses are purposed to awaken men to the presence of the Lord and His spiritual activity in the earth.<sup>8</sup>

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Isa. 45:3) *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.

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

**<sup>12</sup> With the ancient is wisdom; and in  
length of days understanding.**

**<sup>13</sup> With him is wisdom and strength, he  
hath counsel and understanding.**

Bildad had spoken of those of the past possessing a level of wisdom;<sup>9</sup> Job does not refute this but rightfully adds that it is the Lord Who is the true source of it.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 12:13) *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.

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

That which the Lord tears down, if He so desires, can never be raised to life again. This is true of cities and souls. Biblical examples confirming this truth include the destruction of the ancient cities Babylon,<sup>10</sup> Edom,<sup>11</sup> and Tyre<sup>12</sup> and their never being

<sup>9</sup> Job 8:8–10 *For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers: (For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow:)* <sup>10</sup>Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?

<sup>10</sup> Isa. 13:19–20 *And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. <sup>20</sup>It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. Jer. 51:24, 26 And I will render unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea all their evil that they have done in Zion in your sight, saith the LORD. . . . <sup>26</sup>And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations; but thou shalt be desolate for ever, saith the LORD.*

“When these predictions were made, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon were one of the Seven Wonders of the World, and the city itself was the center of the known world. Today, however, the modern city of Babylon has been completely abandoned.” (Rochford)

<sup>11</sup> Jer. 49:16–17 *Thy terriblest hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldst make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the LORD. <sup>17</sup>Also Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof.*

“At the time this was predicted, Edom was an impenetrable fortress. But in the seventh century AD, Edom was conquered by Muslim warriors (AD 636). Today, it is a place for tourists. It has never been rebuilt.” (Rochford)

<sup>12</sup> Ezek. 26:3–14 *Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up. <sup>4</sup>And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. <sup>5</sup>It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD: and it shall become a spoil to the nations. <sup>6</sup>And her daughters which are in the field shall be slain by the sword; and they shall know that I am the LORD. <sup>7</sup>For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people. <sup>8</sup>He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field: and he shall make a fort against thee, and cast a mount against thee, and lift up the buckler against thee. <sup>9</sup>And he shall set engines of war against thy walls, and with his axes he shall break down thy towers. <sup>10</sup>By reason of the abundance of his horses their dust shall cover thee: thy walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wheels, and of the chariots, when he shall enter into thy gates, as men enter into a city wherein is made a breach. <sup>11</sup>With the hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all thy streets: he shall slay thy people by the sword, and thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground. <sup>12</sup>And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandise: and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses: and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water. <sup>13</sup>And I will cause the noise of thy songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard. <sup>14</sup>And I will make thee like*

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built up again. What the Lord *breaketh down ... it cannot be built again.*

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 12:14) *He shutteth up a man*—He can shut up a man in such difficulties and straits that he cannot extricate himself ... “he shuts up a man in the grave (בִּקְבוּרָה) and it cannot be opened.”

**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 clearly demonstrated by His control over the water above it, whereby He can either make a land to prosper, to feed and nurture the earth's inhabitants, or if necessary, withhold rain to ruin them.

(Pulpit Commentary, Job 12:15) *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),<sup>13</sup> 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.

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

Though God did not create deceivers, He does maintain control over the extent of their influence. Hence, though the Lord has no connection to those who deceive, still He has set bounds regarding the degree to which they can operate. In a similar manner the Lord had set boundaries on Satan, regarding the affliction and harm allowed to be directed toward Job.<sup>14</sup> Even the devil is not given carte blanche in order to enforce his full will in regard to man.

(Benson Commentary, Job 12:16) *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.

*the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more: for I the LORD have spoken it, saith the Lord God.*

“Since Old Tyre was destroyed and thrown into the sea, it has never been rebuilt. No one has pulled the stones and bricks from under the silt.” (Rochford, James M. “Predictions of Ruined Cities.” Evidence Unseen, 2024, [www.evidenceunseen.com/articles/prophecy/predictions-of-ruined-cities/](http://www.evidenceunseen.com/articles/prophecy/predictions-of-ruined-cities/).)

13 *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.*

*1 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:*

*1 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.*

14 *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.*

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

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

Human counselors are no match for divine providence. Hence, the perceived wise in the earth can be led to destruction, as easily as they can be revealed as fools. *For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness* (I Cor. 3:19).

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

Though kings may bind themselves together to form confederacies and seek to increase their power in the earth through unity, the Lord can bind them and place them in bonds, just as they have produced the captivity of others. So also, just as easily as kings and rulers can bind men, so can God free them. This is evidenced in the supernatural acts of Peter being freed from prison<sup>15</sup> and the Jews' miraculous exodus from Egypt.<sup>16</sup>

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

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Job 12:19) princes—rather, “priests,” as the Hebrew is rendered (Ps 99:6).<sup>17</sup> Even the

sacred ministers of religion are not exempt from reverses and captivity.

Just as the Lord maintains power over nations and their leaders, so does He hold the same power over those in religion. Therefore the priest can be as easily led away to captivity, as can the ruler. Hence, whether it is world authority or religious authority, each can be spoiled and overthrown if in accordance with divine will.

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

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Job 12:20) *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,

15 Acts 12:5–11 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. <sup>6</sup>And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. <sup>7</sup>And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. <sup>8</sup>And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself; and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. <sup>9</sup>And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. <sup>10</sup>When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. <sup>11</sup>And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

16 Exod. 12:30–32 And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. <sup>31</sup>And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said. <sup>32</sup>Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also.

17 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.

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that they who were accustomed to give wise and sound advice, if left by God, give vain and foolish counsels.

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

No worldly prince or ruler can prevent the Lord from taking away his natural strength and/or earthly position. Ultimately, every man is vulnerable to having God's will carried out regarding his life. The point of these examples is to reiterate the spiritual truth that it is not actually men who rule the world, though they are chess pieces in it, but rather God.

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

In the book of Esther, Haman is a wonderful example of how the Lord observes what is done in darkness and responds by completely reversing the deceiver's plan. Haman's plot to destroy Mordecai and the Jews,<sup>18</sup> which he had orchestrated in darkness with great deceit and cunningness, led to his own disgrace and public hanging.<sup>19</sup> *For they intended evil against thee: they imagined a mischievous device, which they are not able to perform* (Ps. 21:11).

(Keil and Delitzsch Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, Job 12:22) 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.

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

God increases and enlarges nations as regularly as He destroys them. Whenever, then, nations, governments, or people rise in influence upon the earth, and control vast amounts of territory, it is because of divine will. Whenever then the same nations are either shrunk or completely removed from the earth and the annals of history—this also is the work of God. In truth, a nation and/or people's destiny is solely in the hands of God.

***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, so can He also either remove or impart understanding and reason. Nebuchadnezzar, who was king over the Chaldean dynasty of Babylon, learned this lesson when he was restored from his madness, prompting him to spiritually realize through personal experience that the Lord reigns over all,<sup>20</sup> including even the chief rulers of great mili-

<sup>18</sup> Esth. 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.*

<sup>19</sup> Esth. 7:10 *So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.*

<sup>20</sup> Dan. 4:25–37 *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.* <sup>26</sup> *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.* <sup>27</sup> *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.* <sup>28</sup> *All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.* <sup>29</sup> *At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.* <sup>30</sup> *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*

tary powers. *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* (Dan. 4:34–36).

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

During his conversion the apostle Paul was made blind for a season<sup>21</sup> in order that he might be humbled and come to know the Lord's power over his life. Both blindness and the recovery of sight are manifestations of the Lord's divine authority over men. Thus, just as easily as He can bring sight to the blind,<sup>22</sup> so too can the Lord produce blindness in those who possess sight.<sup>23</sup> One of the Lord's judgments for continued sin and resistance to divine will

*the honour of my majesty?* <sup>31</sup>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. <sup>32</sup>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. <sup>33</sup>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. <sup>34</sup>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: <sup>35</sup>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? <sup>36</sup>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. <sup>37</sup>Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

21 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. <sup>9</sup>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.

22 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. <sup>18</sup>And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

Ps. 146:8 The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous:

Isa. 42:7 To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

Luke 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

23 Isa. 6:10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed

Isa. 29:10 For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.

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's Initial Response to Zophar

is to smite those who do so—with even greater blindness and instability of mind. *The LORD shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart* (Deut. 28:28).

(*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*, Deut. 28:15–44) Wherever the sinner goes, the curse of God follows; wherever he is, it rests upon him.

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

Job reminds his friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, that whatever they presumed to know of the Lord and His sovereignty over the earth, he was equally aware of, if not more. Job's friends had spoken of their understanding of divine providence; to this he proclaims, *I am not inferior unto you*.

(*Benson Commentary*, Job 12:3) *But I have an understanding ... I am not inferior to you*—In these things; which he speaks, not in a way of boasting, but for the just vindication both of himself and of that cause of God, which, for the substance of it, he maintained rightly, as God himself attests, Job 42:6.<sup>24</sup> *Who knoweth not such things*—The truth is, neither you nor I have any reason to be puffed up with our knowledge of these things; for the most barbarous nations know that God is infinite in wisdom, and power, and justice.

For the second time, Job utters these memorable words, *I am not inferior unto you*, (the first time being in Job 12:3<sup>25</sup>),

emphasizing that whatever Job's friends presumed to know of the Lord, Job possessed a similar knowledge of as well. Hence, there was nothing they spoke regarding God's sovereignty over creation, or His judgment upon sin, that Job was not also acutely aware of himself. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar had assumed Job ignorant, when in fact they were in no way more knowledgeable of the Lord than Job. In reality they had introduced no new wisdom that was not previously known, nor had they convinced Job of any deep sin on his part. They had spoken with much confidence concerning their friend's sin and had thought themselves greatly superior to him, when in fact all that they had presumed to know concerning the Lord, Job knew equally as well. It is because of this spiritual reality that Job was so easily able to refute Eliphaz's, Bildad's, and Zophar's religious accusations. What they had said was a well-traveled road; what Job really needed was a new spiritual path, presently unknown to him.

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, Job 13:1) All this which either you or I have discoursed concerning the infinite power and wisdom of God, I know, both by seeing it, i.e. by my own observation and experience, and by *hearing* it from my ancestors; so that I did not need your tedious and impertinent discourses concerning those matters.

Because of time constraints, only Job's initial response to Zophar is addressed here. His response continues in chapters twelve through fourteen, as well as chapter twenty-one.

<sup>24</sup> 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.*

<sup>25</sup> 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.*

<sup>25</sup> 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?*