

## Chapter 12

### The first round of exchange

- Began with tentative suggestions of Job's sin
- Turned into an affirmation of Job's guilt yet without specific
- All for defending that God could have done no wrong
- And Job's plight, especially that of his children is a sure sign of his and his family's guilt
- Original intent of comfort has vanished into an increasing desire to judge Job's guilt

Here: a Summary Defense against all charges

Then Job replied:

The first *Inclusio* marked by these words: 12: 2-13:2 (in bold *italics*)

<sup>2</sup>“Doubtless you are the only people who matter, and wisdom will die with you!

<sup>3</sup>***But I have a mind as well as you;  
I am not inferior to you.***

***Who does not know all these things?***

- Mocking friends for stating the obvious
- Now turning any friendly advice into a vicious argument
- If you were the three friends what would you do, even if you think you are right?

<sup>4</sup>“I have become a laughingstock to my friends, though I called on God and he answered—a mere laughingstock, though righteous and blameless!

- In his deteriorating conditions, these arguments pump up his adrenalin and it seems to help his clarity
- On the one hand: he remembered his friendship with God, or
- On the other hand,: he also maintained his blamelessness which God affirms (1:1)

<sup>5</sup>Those who are at ease have contempt for misfortune

as the fate of those whose feet are slipping.

<sup>6</sup>The tents of marauders are undisturbed, and those who provoke God are secure—those God has in his hand

- Tit for tat
- His turn to insinuates who his friends are
  - o At ease
  - o Tents of marauders

<sup>7</sup>“But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you;

<sup>8</sup>or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you.

<sup>9</sup>Which of all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this?

- Every one, in fact, every creature knows what you have just said
- No profound insights

<sup>10</sup>In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.

<sup>11</sup>Does not the ear test words as the tongue tastes food?

<sup>12</sup>Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding?

- Friends should have known better because of their age (affirmed by Elihu in 32:6-7; also 43: 2-3)
- Appears to be a proverb

<sup>13</sup>“To God belong wisdom and power; counsel and understanding are his.

<sup>14</sup>What he tears down cannot be rebuilt; those he imprisons cannot be released.

- God is sovereign in what He does:

<sup>15</sup>If he holds back the waters, there is drought; if he lets them loose, they devastate the land.

- nature is in His hands

<sup>16</sup>To him belong strength and insight; both deceived and deceiver are his.

<sup>17</sup>He leads **rulers** away stripped and makes fools of **judges**.

<sup>18</sup>He takes off the shackles put on by **kings** and ties a loincloth<sup>[b]</sup> around their waist.

<sup>19</sup>He leads **priests** away stripped and overthrows **officials** long established.

<sup>20</sup>He silences the lips of **trusted advisers** and takes away the discernment of **elders**.

<sup>21</sup>He pours contempt on **nobles** and disarms the **mighty**.

<sup>22</sup>He reveals the deep things of darkness and brings utter darkness into the light.

<sup>23</sup>He **makes nations great, and destroys them; he enlarges nations, and disperses them.**

<sup>24</sup>He deprives **the leaders** of the earth of their reason;

he makes them wander in a trackless waste.

<sup>25</sup>They grope in darkness with no light; he makes them stagger like drunkards.

- I.e. what happens to him, is not new
- It happens to many great and honored men
- He is Sovereign
- No need to ask!

13 *“My eyes have seen all this,  
my ears have heard and understood it.*

<sup>2</sup> *What you know, I also know;  
I am not inferior to you.*

<sup>3</sup> But I desire to speak to the Almighty  
and to argue my case with God.

<sup>4</sup> You, however, smear me with lies;  
you are **worthless physicians**, all of you!

<sup>5</sup> **If only you would be altogether silent!  
For you, that would be wisdom.**

<sup>6</sup> Hear now my argument;  
listen to the pleas of my lips.

<sup>7</sup> Will you speak wickedly on God’s behalf?  
Will you speak deceitfully for him?

<sup>8</sup> Will you show him partiality?  
Will you argue the case for God?

<sup>9</sup> Would it turn out well if he examined you?  
Could you deceive him as you might deceive a  
mortal?

<sup>10</sup> He would surely call you to account  
if you secretly showed partiality.

<sup>11</sup> Would not his splendor terrify you?  
Would not the dread of him fall on you?

<sup>12</sup> **Your maxims are proverbs of ashes;  
your defenses are defenses of clay.**

- While God is sovereign and cannot be challenged
- He still wants to: why?
  - (1) He is innocent: still wish to take God to court;
  - (2) They have been his accusers: he now has no choice!
- Though they foolishly lie and pay favoritism for God’s sake
  - o But still wrong!
  - o God will still punish! (like the shooter of Planned Parenthood?)

In his anger (or frustration?): he puts down his friends (v.12)

<sup>13</sup> “Keep silent and let me speak;  
then let come to me what may.

<sup>14</sup> Why do I put myself in jeopardy  
and take my life in my hands?

<sup>15</sup> **Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him;**  
I will surely<sup>[e]</sup> defend my ways to his face.

<sup>16</sup> Indeed, this will turn out for my deliverance,  
for no godless person would dare come before  
him!

<sup>17</sup> Listen carefully to what I say;  
let my words ring in your ears.

<sup>18</sup> Now that I have prepared my case,  
I know I will be vindicated.

<sup>19</sup> Can anyone bring charges against me?  
If so, I will be silent and die.

- In a way he is saying, “I’ve got nothing to lose”
- Yet underneath such desperation is his knowledge of who God is to him
- “Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him;”
  - o He now is prepared (because of friends’ accusation which are not true)

<sup>20</sup> **“Only grant me these two things**, God,  
and then I will not hide from you:

<sup>21</sup> **Withdraw your hand** far from me,  
and stop frightening me with your terrors.

<sup>22</sup> **Then summon me** and I will answer,  
or let me speak, and you reply to me.

<sup>23</sup> How many wrongs and sins have I committed?  
Show me my offense and my sin.

<sup>24</sup> Why do you hide your face  
and consider me your enemy?

<sup>25</sup> Will you torment a windblown leaf?  
Will you chase after dry chaff?

<sup>26</sup> For you write down bitter things against me  
and make me reap the sins of my youth.

<sup>27</sup> You fasten my feet in shackles;  
you keep close watch on all my paths  
by putting marks on the soles of my feet.

<sup>28</sup> “So man wastes away like something rotten,  
like a garment eaten by moths.

- Two things asked:
  - Withdraw hands (he still thinks God is the one who inflicts him)
    - o Vv. 24-25: rhetorical questions the answers are “no”
    - o Vv. 27-28: bemoaning his extreme sufferings
  - Give him a fair trial!
    - o Vv. 23, 26: still confident of his innocence

<sup>14</sup> “Mortals, born of woman,  
are of few days and full of trouble.

<sup>2</sup> They spring up like flowers and wither away;  
like fleeting shadows, they do not endure.

<sup>3</sup> Do you fix your eye on them?

Will you bring them<sup>[d]</sup> (*me*) before you for judgment?

<sup>4</sup> Who can bring what is pure from the impure?  
No one!

<sup>5</sup> A person's days are determined;  
you have decreed the number of his months  
and have set limits he cannot exceed.

<sup>6</sup> So look away from him and let him alone,  
till he has put in his time like a hired laborer.

He is not really talking about men in general, but himself, pleading

- Days are few already
- Full of trouble
- Like flowers and fleeting shadow
- Why look so intently?
- Admits he is impure, will not pass the test
- Life-span fixed
- So look away
  - o Hired labor: time's up!

(If he is talking about him: he betrays his knowledge of God, at least in the past: if he is talking about men in general, he obviously is wrong—days few or many is not the point, life is troubled or not is not the point—accountable to God is still the bottom-line)—But he has lost all his hope, and feels like living in hell already!—but room for friends to dispute!

<sup>7</sup>“At least there is hope for a tree:  
If it is cut down, it will sprout again,  
and its new shoots will not fail.

<sup>8</sup> Its roots may grow old in the ground  
and its stump die in the soil,

<sup>9</sup> yet at the scent of water it will bud  
and put forth shoots like a plant.

<sup>10</sup> But a man dies and is laid low;  
he breathes his last and is no more.

<sup>11</sup> As the water of a lake dries up  
or a riverbed becomes parched and dry,

<sup>12</sup> so he lies down and does not rise;  
till the heavens are no more, people will not  
awake

or be roused from their sleep.

- Tree is better than men
- Life will continue, but not men
- Is this a sound comparison?
- Friends will take issue too!

<sup>13</sup>“If only you would hide me in the grave  
and conceal me till your anger has passed!

If only you would set me a time  
and then remember me!

<sup>14</sup> If someone dies, will they live again?

All the days of my hard service  
I will wait for my renewal<sup>[e]</sup> to come.

<sup>15</sup> You will call and I will answer you;  
**you will long for the creature** your hands have  
made.

<sup>16</sup> Surely then you will count my steps  
but not keep track of my sin.

<sup>17</sup> My offenses will be sealed up in a bag;  
you will cover over my sin.

He ends his rebuttal of his friends on a sad note:

- After his adrenalin can carry him so far
- The reality of his pains only gives him hope only in death (vv. 1-14)
- But he also refuses to give up, based on what he knows about God (vv. 15-17)
  - o i.e. he is still going through a roller-coaster!

<sup>18</sup>“**But** as a mountain erodes and crumbles  
and as a rock is moved from its place,

<sup>19</sup> as water wears away stones  
and torrents wash away the soil,  
so you destroy a person's hope.

<sup>20</sup> You overpower them once for all, and they are  
gone;  
you change their countenance and send them  
away.

<sup>21</sup> If their children are honored, they do not know it;  
if their offspring are brought low, they do not see  
it.

<sup>22</sup> They feel but the pain of their own bodies  
and mourn only for themselves.”