

Monday, August 26

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Job 20:1 - 22:30

20 **1** Then Zophar the Naamathite replied: **2** "I must reply because I am greatly disturbed. **3** I've had to endure your insults, but now my spirit prompts me to reply. **4** "Don't you realize that from the beginning of time, ever since people were first placed on the earth, **5** the triumph of the wicked has been short lived and the joy of the godless has been only temporary? **6** Though the pride of the godless reaches to the heavens and their heads touch the clouds, **7** yet they will vanish forever, thrown away like their own dung. Those who knew them will ask, 'Where are they?' **8** They will fade like a dream and not be found. They will vanish like a vision in the night. **9** Those who once saw them will see them no more. Their families will never see them again. **10** Their children will beg from the poor, for they must give back their stolen riches. **11** Though they are young, their bones will lie in the dust. **12** "They enjoyed the sweet taste of wickedness, letting it melt under their tongue. **13** They savored it, holding it long in their mouths. **14** But suddenly the food in their bellies turns sour, a poisonous venom in their stomach. **15** They will vomit the wealth they swallowed. God won't let them keep it down. **16** They will suck the poison of cobras. The viper will kill them. **17** They will never again enjoy streams of olive oil or rivers of milk and honey. **18** They will give back everything they worked for. Their wealth will bring them no joy. **19** For they oppressed the poor and left them destitute. They foreclosed on their homes. **20** They were always greedy and never satisfied. Nothing remains of all the things they dreamed about. **21** Nothing is left after they finish gorging themselves. Therefore, their prosperity will not endure. **22** "In the midst of plenty, they will run into trouble and be overcome by misery. **23** May God give them a bellyful of trouble. May God rain down his anger upon them. **24** When they try to escape an iron weapon, a bronze-tipped arrow will pierce them. **25** The arrow is pulled from their back, and the arrowhead glistens with blood. The terrors of death are upon them. **26** Their treasures will be thrown into deepest darkness. A wildfire will devour their goods, consuming all they have left. **27** The heavens will reveal their guilt, and the earth will testify against them. **28** A flood will sweep away their house. God's anger will descend on them in torrents. **29** This is the reward that God gives the wicked. It is the inheritance decreed by God."

21 **1** Then Job spoke again: **2** "Listen closely to what I am saying. That's one consolation you can give me. **3** Bear with me, and let me speak. After I have spoken, you may resume mocking

me. **4** “My complaint is with God, not with people. I have good reason to be so impatient. **5** Look at me and be stunned. Put your hand over your mouth in shock. **6** When I think about what I am saying, I shudder. My body trembles. **7** “Why do the wicked prosper, growing old and powerful? **8** They live to see their children grow up and settle down, and they enjoy their grandchildren. **9** Their homes are safe from every fear, and God does not punish them. **10** Their bulls never fail to breed. Their cows bear calves and never miscarry. **11** They let their children frisk about like lambs. Their little ones skip and dance. **12** They sing with tambourine and harp. They celebrate to the sound of the flute. **13** They spend their days in prosperity, then go down to the grave in peace. **14** And yet they say to God, ‘Go away. We want no part of you and your ways. **15** Who is the Almighty, and why should we obey him? What good will it do us to pray?’ **16** (They think their prosperity is of their own doing, but I will have nothing to do with that kind of thinking.) **17** “Yet the light of the wicked never seems to be extinguished. Do they ever have trouble? Does God distribute sorrows to them in anger? **18** Are they driven before the wind like straw? Are they carried away by the storm like chaff? Not at all! **19** “‘Well,’ you say, ‘at least God will punish their children!’ But I say he should punish the ones who sin, so that they understand his judgment. **20** Let them see their destruction with their own eyes. Let them drink deeply of the anger of the Almighty. **21** For they will not care what happens to their family after they are dead. **22** “But who can teach a lesson to God, since he judges even the most powerful? **23** One person dies in prosperity, completely comfortable and secure, **24** the picture of good health, vigorous and fit. **25** Another person dies in bitter poverty, never having tasted the good life. **26** But both are buried in the same dust, both eaten by the same maggots. **27** “Look, I know what you’re thinking. I know the schemes you plot against me. **28** You will tell me of rich and wicked people whose houses have vanished because of their sins. **29** But ask those who have been around, and they will tell you the truth. **30** Evil people are spared in times of calamity and are allowed to escape disaster. **31** No one criticizes them openly or pays them back for what they have done. **32** When they are carried to the grave, an honor guard keeps watch at their tomb. **33** A great funeral procession goes to the cemetery. Many pay their respects as the body is laid to rest, and the earth gives sweet repose. **34** “How can your empty clichés comfort me? All your explanations are lies!”

22 1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied: **2** “Can a person do anything to help God? Can even a wise person be helpful to him? **3** Is it any advantage to the Almighty if you are righteous? Would it be any gain to him if you were perfect? **4** Is it because you’re so pious that he accuses you and brings judgment against you? **5** No, it’s because of your wickedness! There’s no limit to your sins. **6** “For example, you must have lent money to your friend and demanded clothing as security. Yes, you stripped him to the bone. **7** You must have refused water for the thirsty and

food for the hungry. **8** You probably think the land belongs to the powerful and only the privileged have a right to it! **9** You must have sent widows away empty-handed and crushed the hopes of orphans. **10** That is why you are surrounded by traps and tremble from sudden fears. **11** That is why you cannot see in the darkness, and waves of water cover you. **12** “God is so great—higher than the heavens, higher than the farthest stars. **13** But you reply, ‘That’s why God can’t see what I am doing! How can he judge through the thick darkness? **14** For thick clouds swirl about him, and he cannot see us. He is way up there, walking on the vault of heaven.’ **15** “Will you continue on the old paths where evil people have walked? **16** They were snatched away in the prime of life, the foundations of their lives washed away. **17** For they said to God, ‘Leave us alone! What can the Almighty do to us?’ **18** Yet he was the one who filled their homes with good things, so I will have nothing to do with that kind of thinking. **19** “The righteous will be happy to see the wicked destroyed, and the innocent will laugh in contempt. **20** They will say, ‘See how our enemies have been destroyed. The last of them have been consumed in the fire.’ **21** “Submit to God, and you will have peace; then things will go well for you. **22** Listen to his instructions, and store them in your heart. **23** If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored— so clean up your life. **24** If you give up your lust for money and throw your precious gold into the river, **25** the Almighty himself will be your treasure. He will be your precious silver! **26** “Then you will take delight in the Almighty and look up to God. **27** You will pray to him, and he will hear you, and you will fulfill your vows to him. **28** You will succeed in whatever you choose to do, and light will shine on the road ahead of you. **29** If people are in trouble and you say, ‘Help them,’ God will save them. **30** Even sinners will be rescued; they will be rescued because your hands are pure.”

2 Corinthians 1:1 - 11

1 **1** This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and from our brother Timothy. I am writing to God’s church in Corinth and to all of his holy people throughout Greece. **2** May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. **3** All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. **4** He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. **5** For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ. **6** Even when we are weighed down with troubles, it is for your comfort and salvation! For when we ourselves are comforted, we will certainly comfort you. Then you can patiently endure

the same things we suffer. **7** We are confident that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in the comfort God gives us. **8** We think you ought to know, dear brothers and sisters, about the trouble we went through in the province of Asia. We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure, and we thought we would never live through it. **9** In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God, who raises the dead. **10** And he did rescue us from mortal danger, and he will rescue us again. We have placed our confidence in him, and he will continue to rescue us. **11** And you are helping us by praying for us. Then many people will give thanks because God has graciously answered so many prayers for our safety.

Psalm 40:11 - 17

40 11 LORD, don't hold back your tender mercies from me. Let your unfailing love and faithfulness always protect me. **12** For troubles surround me— too many to count! My sins pile up so high I can't see my way out. They outnumber the hairs on my head. I have lost all courage. **13** Please, LORD, rescue me! Come quickly, LORD, and help me. **14** May those who try to destroy me be humiliated and put to shame. May those who take delight in my trouble be turned back in disgrace. **15** Let them be horrified by their shame, for they said, "Aha! We've got him now!" **16** But may all who search for you be filled with joy and gladness in you. May those who love your salvation repeatedly shout, "The LORD is great!" **17** As for me, since I am poor and needy, let the Lord keep me in his thoughts. You are my helper and my savior. O my God, do not delay.

Proverbs 22:2 - 4

22 2 The rich and poor have this in common: The LORD made them both. **3** A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences. **4** True humility and fear of the LORD lead to riches, honor, and long life.