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FALL SERIES 2024 – WEEK 7

### Job 11, 20: Zophar the Zealot

*But oh, that God would speak and open his lips to you, and that he would tell you the secrets of wisdom! For he is manifold in understanding. Know then that God exacts of you less than your guilt deserves.*

– Job 11:5-6 ESV

- **Zeal without knowledge**

- Zophar is enthusiastic
  - He believes strongly
  - He holds to his theology firmly
  - He argues forcefully

*Dear brothers and sisters, the longing of my heart and my prayer to God is for the people of Israel to be saved. I know what enthusiasm they have for God, but it is misdirected zeal.*  
– Romans 10:1-2 NLT

- Misdirected zeal...*not according to knowledge*
  - Based on human wisdom, not God's
  - **Passion** without a true underlying **principle**
  - Like **smoke** without a **flame**
  - **Fervor** without God's **favor**
  - Unbridled **enthusiasm** but no **evidence**

*For they don't understand God's way of making people right with himself. Refusing to accept God's way, they cling to their own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the law.* – Romans 10:3 NLT

“Instead of truly feeling Job’s pain and understanding his thinking, Zophar responds to him with impersonal, abstract reasoning.” – Daniel J. Estes, *Job, Teach the Text Commentary Series*

- **The pot calling the kettle black**

*“Should a multitude of words go unanswered,  
and a man full of talk be judged right?  
Should your babble silence men,  
and when you mock, shall no one shame you?”* – Job 11:2-3 ESV

- Zophar accuses Job of being a mocker
- He accuses him of intellectual arrogance
- He accuses him of false piety
- He accuses him of getting off too easy

*“For you say, ‘My doctrine is pure,  
and I am clean in God’s eyes.’  
But oh, that God would speak  
and open his lips to you,  
and that he would tell you the secrets of wisdom!  
For he is manifold in understanding...”* – Job 11:4-6 ESV

- He accuses Job of self-righteousness
  - Staking out the moral high ground
    - “My beliefs about God are 100% correct!”*
    - “I am 100% morally pure in God’s eyes!”*
  - Staking out the moral high ground
- So, Job deserves to be rebuked – **by God**
  - But Job never said those things
  - And God knows it!

- **He accuses God of spiritual neglect**

*“Know then that God exacts of you less than your guilt deserves.”* – Job 11:6 ESV

- He is not claiming that God is showing mercy
- He is accusing God of **forgetfulness**  
**exact** – *nāšâ* – to forget, neglect, overlook
- He is accusing God of **injustice**

- **The blasphemy of blaming God**

- Zophar was questioning God’s justice
- God hadn’t done enough
- Job deserved worse than he got

Ascribe greatness to our God! He is the Rock, His work is perfect; all His ways are just. A God of faithfulness **without injustice**, righteous and upright is He. – Deuteronomy 32:3-4 BSB

**“Can you find out the deep things of God?**

**Can you find out the limit of the Almighty?**

**It is higher than heaven—what can you do?**

**Deeper than Sheol—what can you know?”** – Job 11:7-8 ESV

- Zophar’s God

- According to his theology, God was...
  - ...unequaled and unknowable
  - ...inconceivable and inaccessible
  - ...all-knowing and always judging
  - ...but willing to restore the repentant

**“If you prepare your heart,  
you will stretch out your hands toward him.  
If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away,  
and let not injustice dwell in your tents.  
Surely then you will lift up your face without blemish;  
you will be secure and will not fear.  
You will forget your misery;  
you will remember it as waters that have passed away.  
And your life will be brighter than the noonday;  
its darkness will be like the morning.  
And you will feel secure, because there is hope;  
you will look around and take your rest in security.  
You will lie down, and none will make you afraid;  
many will court your favor.  
But the eyes of the wicked will fail;  
all way of escape will be lost to them,  
and their hope is to breathe their last.”** – Job 11:15-20 ESV

- Does the last verse sound like the God you know?
  - It’s not the God David knew

**He revealed his character to Moses  
and his deeds to the people of Israel.  
The Lord is compassionate and merciful,  
slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.  
He will not constantly accuse us,  
nor remain angry forever.  
He does not punish us for all our sins;  
he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve.**

***For his unfailing love toward those who fear him  
is as great as the height of the heavens above  
the earth.*** – Psalm 103:7-11 NLT

- It's not the God Moses knew

*Then the Lord came down in a cloud and stood there with him; and he called out his own name, Yahweh. The Lord passed in front of Moses, calling out, "Yahweh! The Lord! The God of **compassion and mercy!** I am **slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.** I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations. I **forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin.*** – Exodus 34:5-7 NLT

- **A thin-skinned theology**

*Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said:*

*"Therefore my thoughts answer me,  
because of my haste within me.  
I hear censure that insults me,  
and out of my understanding a spirit answers me."* – Job 20:1-3 ESV

- Zophar has been offended by Job
  - His feelings are hurt
- Because Job tried to "correct" his theology
  - But Job only questioned his friends' ...  
...motives, message, and methodology
- In chapter 19, Job asked...

*How long will you torture me?  
How long will you try to crush me with your words?  
You have already insulted me ten times.  
You should be ashamed of treating me so badly.  
You think you're better than I am.*
- Their words and actions are not **God-like**
  - What we think about God affects our...**communication** and **conduct**

*May the words of my mouth  
and the meditation of my heart  
be pleasing to you,  
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.* – Psalm 19:14 NLT

***The instructions*** of the Lord are perfect,  
*reviving the soul.*  
***The decrees*** of the Lord are trustworthy,  
*making wise the simple.*  
***The commandments*** of the Lord are right,  
*bringing joy to the heart.*

*The commands of the Lord are clear,  
giving insight for living.  
Reverence for the Lord is pure,  
lasting forever.  
The laws of the Lord are true;  
each one is fair. – Psalm 19:7-9 NLT*

Instructions  
Decrees  
Commandments  
Commands  
Law



**Means of God's self-revelation**

- **How God reveals Himself to man**

- Creation

*For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. – Romans 1:20 NLT*

- Conscience (the human mind and heart)

*Even Gentiles, who do not have God's written law, show that they know his law when they instinctively obey it, even without having heard it. They demonstrate that God's law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right. – Romans 2:14-15 NLT*

- His written Word

*...we were not making up clever stories when we told you about the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We saw his majestic splendor with our own eyes... We ourselves heard that voice from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain...we have even greater confidence in the message proclaimed by the prophets...those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God. – 2 Peter 1:16, 18, 19, 21 NLT*

- The Living Word

*So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son. – John 1:14 NLT*

*No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us. – John 1:18 NLT*

- **Limited revelation produces unlimited error**

*Do you not know this from of old,  
since man was placed on earth,  
that the exulting of the wicked is short,  
and the joy of the godless but for a moment? – Job 20:4-5 ESV*

- Zophar's theology lacks depth
- Because it lacks divine revelation
- Which always produces **hopelessness**

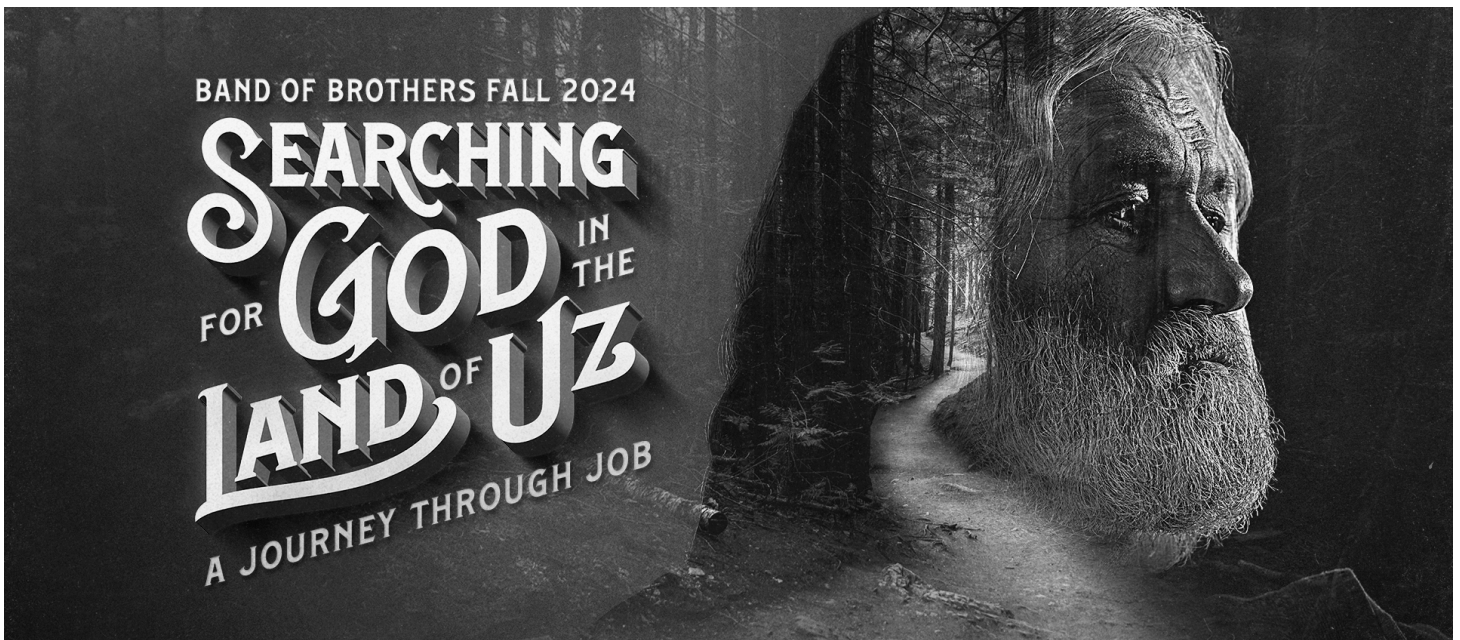
"Zophar's system leaves the transgressor with only the possibility of destruction, a situation that prompts the same question that the disciples asked Jesus... 'Who then can be saved?' Jesus' response looked to a miraculous work of grace: 'With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.'" – Duanne A. Garrett, *Job: Evangelical Exegetical Commentary*

- **Discussion questions**

How should Zophar's limited theology produce in us greater gratitude for God's grace?

Look at Psalm 103:8-11. Which of these truths about God strike a chord with you, and why?

God reveals Himself through creation, man's conscience, the written Word, and the Living Word. How has that proved true for you?



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FALL SERIES 2024 – WEEK 8 HOMEWORK

### WEEK 8 – Elihu the Egotist – Job 32-37

In this lesson, we meet Elihu, the enigmatic and highly confident representative of the younger generation. Undeterred by the wisdom of his more senior companions, Elihu steps up to the podium and waxes eloquent for six very dense and repetitive chapters. Undeterred by his young age, Elihu dresses down his elders, accusing them of having failed miserably in their efforts to convict Job. This young man is so bold that he claims to speak on behalf of God. But like his friends, his statements about God are in error and his assessment of Job is way off the mark. He too, suffers from an incomplete and inaccurate view of God.

- This week, we have more chapters to cover because Elihu is a bit long-winded. So, make sure to set aside enough time to read Job 32-37. As you've done before, look for statements from Elihu that demonstrate his faulty or incomplete understanding of how God works. Simply write down the Scripture reference and a brief note as to why he is wrong.
- Now read pages 205-254 of Ken's Devotional™ on Job. This is also a more lengthy reading, so give yourself enough time. It will help you get a better understanding of Elihu's theology.
- In chapter 32, Elihu starts out by rebuking the three older men. Look closely at verses 1-5 and describe what kind of personality you think Elihu has.

- Verses 6-22 contain his “rebuke” of Eliphaz, Zophar, and Bildad. Summarize what you hear him saying?
- Chapter 33 contains Elihu’s rebuke of Job. Look closely at verses 9-11. What does Elihu accuse Job of saying?

According to verse 12, does Elihu think Job is wrong or right?

What is the conclusion Elihu has reached about Job according to verses 19-28?

- In chapter 34, Elihu defends the justice of God. Glance through this section and make note of the ways he attempts to do so.

What does he accuse Job of saying in verses 4-5 and how does his interpretation of Job’s words make God look bad?

What is his indictment against job in verses 17-19?

According to verses 31-32, what does Elihu demand that Job do to end his suffering?

- Glance through chapter 35 and make note of all the times he seems to accuse Job of having sinned. Underline them in your Bible.

Why would the content of verses 12, 13, and 16 be so painful to Job?

- In chapter 37, Elihu waxes eloquent about God and much of what he says sounds reverential and right. But what warning sign do you get in verse 2 that he might be off base in his assessment of God?

Why would these truths about God be unhelpful and possibly hurtful to Job?