

Title: Job's First Reply to Zophar: Though He Slay Me I Will Trust Him (Pt 1)

Number: 0321Job12.1-13:2(16)

Text: Job 12:1-13:2

Central Idea: *I May Not Know, but I Know I May Trust*

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**{Read 13:13-16}**

**[i] Introduction**

We are in Job chapt. 12,13,14—3 chapt./75 vv. consisting of Job's reply to Zophar who spoke in chapt. 11.

So chapt. 12-14 stand tog. as a unit.

“Job's First Reply to Zophar: Though He Slay Me I Will Trust Him”

**[ii] Before moving forward let's first go back to the big picture . . .**

This is a book about a man of history—a real person by t/name of Job—who lived around 4,000 yrs ago.

**[iii] He lived in an age of paganism—Yet Job stands out as a follower of God**

4-fold description of him given in t/very 1st v. of t/book==>

1 . . . blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning away from evil.

**[iv] He's a materially blessed man**

Back when wealth was measured in livestock he lay claim to ==>

3a . . . 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, [along with] very many servants;

3b . . . and that man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

**[v] Job had a wife and 10 children (7 sons & 3 daughters)**

Life was good! But always keep in mind: Job does not know what is going on in heaven & t/disaster that would soon afflict him.

**[vi] The reader is given a look behind the curtain at the reason for Job's affliction—reasons Job never knew!**

1:6–12 6 Now there was a day when the sons of God [angelic council] came to present themselves before the LORD [YHWH], and Satan [The Satan - “adversary”] also came among them.

7 The LORD said to [the] Satan, “From where do you come?” Then [the] Satan answered the LORD and said, “From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.” 8 The LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, [repeat of t/4-fold descr. we saw in v. 1] a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil.”

9 Then [the] Satan answered the LORD, “Does Job fear God for nothing? 10 “Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.

11 “But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face.”

12 Then the LORD said to [the] Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.” So [the] Satan departed from the presence of the LORD.

**[vii] What follows in 1:13-19 describe the depths of Job's tragedy**

Job loses his wealth; his workers (many of whom were no doubt friends); & worst of all, all 10 of his children are killed in what people commonly refer to as a "natural disaster" when a wind storm levels t/house they were in.

**[viii] Does Job curse God to His face as The Satan predicted?**

1:21 He said,

“Naked I came from my mother's womb,

And naked I shall return there.

The LORD gave

and the LORD has taken away.

Blessed be the name of the LORD.”

Satan predicted cursing; Job responds w/worship.

**[ix] Closing Commentary**

1:22 Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.

No wrong could be credited to God's acct.

Job trusted that somehow God was acting w/a purpose.

Job didn't sin in balancing his grief with worship.

He didn't sin in his attributing his calamity to t/hand of God.

**[x] Chapter 2 continues to set the stage for the rest of the book as a second challenge is issued by The Satan**

2:1 Again there was a day when the sons of God [Heb. *Bene Elohim* - referring to angels] came to present themselves before the LORD,

[YHWH] and Satan [the Satan, the adversary] also came among them to present himself before the LORD.

2 The LORD [YHWH] said to the Satan, “Where have you come from?” Then the Satan answered the LORD and said, “From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.”

**[xi] Job’s Character Confirmed (2:3)**

2:3a The LORD said to the Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil . . . ”

No doubt about Job’s character.

- a. blameless
- b. upright
- c. fears God
- d. turns from evil

Something new is added to the end of the verse==>

2:3b “And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause.”

**[xii] Satan’s Consequent Challenge (2:4-5)**

2:4 [The] Satan answered the LORD and said, “Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life.

2:5 “However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face.”

2:6 So the LORD said to [the] Satan, “Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life.”

G. is t/one who is in control! [^]

Satan is on a leash, & G. pulls it according to His sov. will.

2:7 Then the Satan went out from the presence of the LORD & smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

2:8 And he took a potsherd to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes.

**[xiv] Job is now sitting at the town dump**

Greatest man of t/East (v. 3) is now living among t/ashes & broken pottery scraping his blistering sores with a potsherd.

**[xv] Job's response to his wife who encourages him to give up — to "curse God and die"?**

2:10b . . . "Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" . . .

2:10c . . . In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

Cf. 1:22 Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.

**[xvi] Three friends of Job hear of his calamity & travel to see him**

Eliphaz; Bildad; Zophar.

2:13 Then they sat down on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights with no one speaking a word to him, for they saw that his pain was very great.

**[xvii] What follows Job's Lament of Chapter 3 are three rounds of dialogue Between Job and his friends: Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar (4:1-26:14)**

83% of t/book is dialogue (conversation) in which there are 3 cycles of speeches whereby Job replies to each of his friends. (chapters. 3-37).

**[xviii] We heard from Eliphaz in chapters 4-5**

Eliphaz argues largely from personal experience:

“From what I’ve seen this is how it is.”

*Bad Things Don’t Happen to Good People*

**[xix] Job responded to Eliphaz in chapters 6 & 7**

“Job’s Reply to Eliphaz: My Hope is Dim But I Endure”

\*6:10 “But it is still my consolation, And I rejoice in unsparing pain,  
That I have not denied the words of the Holy One.

*The Light of the Gospel Cannot Be Extinguished by the Despair of  
Hopelessness*

**[xx] Then we met Bildad “the traditionalist” in chapter 8**

Bildad appeals to tradition

8:8 “Please inquire of past generations, And consider the things  
searched out by their fathers.”

Bildad also lives in a black & white world. There’s no gradients; no  
nuances; therefore, no color to his theology. Job’s children sinned;  
that’s why they died (Job’s sin offerings on their behalf  
notwithstanding).

In his theology everything is binary: black or white. No room for  
what we called “The Living Color of the Gospel.” No, you sin, you  
are punished. For Bildad this was a fixed law upheld by tradition.

## **[xxi] Job responds to Bildad in chapters 9 & 10**

We spent 3 weeks in those 2 chapters in a series of messages entitled “In the Courtroom with God”

Job pics himself contending w/God in a legal setting.

Job knows he can't win & resigns himself to a fate of death.

*The windy words of a sufferer won't leave the believer condemned in the courtroom of God.*

In t/middle of his anguish he cries out:

9:32–33 “[God] is not a man as I am that I may answer Him, That we may go to court together. 33 “[Oh, if only there were an] umpire between us, Who may lay his hand upon us both.

1 Tim. 2:5–6 5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.

## **[xxii] In chapter 11 we see Zophar's first speech**

Sorry to say it was sev. mos. ago that we went thru this chapt. which I called “Zophar's Zingers: His First Reply to Job”—20 vv. consisting of Zophar's 1st attempt to correct Job.

Want to review what we saw there in a bit.

Let's 1st focus on chapt. 12-14: Job's reply to Zophar. 3 main points:

***I. Job's Complaint Against his Friends (12:1–12; 13:1–2)***

***II. Job's Confession of God's Sovereignty (12:7–25)***

***III. Job's Cry to God for Deliverance (13:1–14:22)***

## **I. Job's Complaint Against his Friends (12:1–12; 13:1–2)**

### **1a Then Job responded . . .**

Job replied to whom? Zophar's words in chapter 11, but beyond that Job is responding to all 3 friends: Eliphaz; Bildad; & Zophar.

### **A. Connecting the Context to Chapter 11 (12:1-3; 13:1-2)**

#### **1. Remember this quote from N.T. scholar Robert Alden:**

"Zophar probably was the youngest of the three friends. He was impetuous, tactless, direct, unsympathetic . . . His speeches are the shortest; in fact, he has only two. His opening speech contains three characteristic motifs: rebuke, remarks on God's sovereign justice, and advice." [Robert L. Alden, Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 141]

Zophar basically makes 3 accusations against Job:

- 1) Job is guilty of sin
  - 2) Job is ignorant of God;
  - 3) Job is stubborn in his refusal to repent.
- (He's guilty; ignorant; stubborn)

Wiersbe writes that ==>

In his reply [Job's reply to Zophar in chaps 12-14], Job answers all three accusations: He affirms God's greatness (Job 12) and his own innocence (Job 13), but he has no hope, so why should he repent? (Job 14) [Warren W. Wiersbe, Be Patient, "Be" Commentary Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 45]



Back to our 1st point ==>

## ***I. Job's Complaint Against his Friends (12:1–12; 13:1–2)***

### **2. Job's Sarcasm (1-2)**

1 **Then Job responded,**

2 **“Truly then you are the people, And with you wisdom will die!**

Hear those words! [^]

**a. “The people” = those who perceive themselves to be the “upper class”** [Ash, 164]

Seems that it has always been t/role—t/perceived role—that those in charge think they are wiser and better than t/rest of us. Cert. true in our modern day celeb. culture. They know better. They are the wise guardians and we are the fools who ought to follow them. We call them t/cultural elite: They fly around in jets when t/rest of us ought to be using public transportation—for t/sake of t/planet. They have their “values” which have little in common w/biblical morality.

They largely consist of narcissistic snobs!

**a. Job sarcastically lays this charge at their feet**

### **B. Job Defends His Epistemic Equality (v. 3)**

3 **“But I have intelligence as well as you; I am not inferior to you. And who does not know such things as these?**

11:12 (Zophar) “An idiot will become intelligent When the foal of a wild donkey is born a man.

Job says, “I’m not your inferior when it comes to knowledge.”

## 2. Figure of speech?

Some commentators think that Job is using a figure of speech known as *litotes* whereby he is actually asserting that he is more than equal to t/knowledge of his friends.

### 3. Job echoes this same thought (epistemic equality) in 13:1–2

1 “Behold, my eye has seen all this, My ear has heard and understood it.” 2 “What you know I also know; I am not inferior to you.”

### C. Job the Joker (12:4)

4 **“I am a joke to my friends, The one who called on God and He answered him; The just and blameless man is a joke.**

#### 1. I take this as more sarcasm {paraphrase}

##### a. Sounds like Job has lost all hope (he hasn't)

13:15 “Though He slay me, I will hope in Him. Nevertheless I will argue my ways before Him.

*“I May Not Know, but I Know I May Trust.”*

True for us. There's so much in life we don't know or understand. That's true as it relates to t/hard things we read in t/Bible.

\*Wholesale slaughter of the Canaanites by Israel in t/OT.

\* Eternal torment for those who die outside of X.

\* Existence of Evil in light of a good, sovereign omnipotent God.

*“I May Not Know, but I Know I May Trust.”*

I might not have all the answers, but God simply tells me to trust Him.

U may be struggling right now. Struggling w/life // faith.

Questions . . . . I have! I still do!

*“I May Not Know, but I Know I May Trust.”*

We see that questioning, that doubting here==>

#### **D. Job Wonders Why He Suffers Needlessly (12:5-6)**

##### **1. In words that remind me of Psalm 73 . . .**

**5 “He who is at ease holds calamity in contempt, As prepared for those whose feet slip.**

IOW - how easy it is for those whose life is good to look down on those who are suffering, those whose “feet have slipped.”

Esp. true when one looks at t/material prosperity of those who reject God. That was Asaph.

Psalm 73 (Asaph) 3 For I was envious of the arrogant As I saw the prosperity of the wicked. 4 For there are no pains in their death, And their body is fat. 5 They are not in trouble as other men . . .

9 They have set their mouth against the heavens, And their tongue parades through the earth. 11 They say, “How does God know? And is there knowledge with the Most High?” 12 Behold, these are the wicked; And always at ease, they have increased in wealth.

In words that sound like Job - Asaph bemoaned ==>

13 Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure And washed my hands in innocence; 14 For I have been stricken all day long And chastened every morning.

## 2. That's Job here in chapter 12

6a-b “**The tents of the destroyers prosper** [Job may have in mind t/marauders who plundered his estate & killed his servants in ch. 1], **And those who provoke God are secure** [again sounds like Asaph in Psalm 73]

**a. But note that last phrase of v. 6 ==>**

**6c Whom God brings into their power.**

May be that Job is affirming that G. is t/one who blesses even t/evil man w/strength. [^]

Note how t/ESV translates this verse

6 The tents of robbers are at peace, and those who provoke God are secure, who bring their god in their hand.

That is a legitimate transl. depending on t/Heb. vowels.

If this is what Job is saying, he's talking about t/godless who carry their idols (gods) in their pockets.

Either way, t/question remains

Why do idolaters prosper when Job, a worshiper of God, suffers? [BKC]

## **b. Back to Asaph in Psalm 73**

Unlike Job, Asaph begins to see things from God's perspective ==>

16 When I pondered to understand this [why t/wicked prosper & t/righteous suffer], It was troublesome in my sight 17 Until I came into the sanctuary of God; Then I perceived their end. 18 Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction.

In N.T. terms, those who refuse to repent ==>

These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, (2 Thess 1:9)

Job isn't quite there . . . yet.

### ***I. Job's Complaint Against his Friends (12:1–6; 13:1–2)***

Next ==>

### **II. Job's Confession of God's Sovereignty (12:7–25)**

#### **A. Defined**

“God's sovereignty means that He is the King who is in complete control of His creation. His Kingship encompasses the doctrines of predestination and providence.”

God is King; that is to say, “He is Lord”

He is in complete control of all creation. Nothing happens apart from His active or passive decree (what He does or permits).

#### **1. Job is big on the sovereignty of God**

1:21 . . . The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD.”

2:10 . . . Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity? [Heb. *Ra* - distress; calamity; affliction; evil] . . .

9:4–6 4 “Wise in heart and mighty in strength, Who has defied Him without harm? 5 “It is God who removes the mountains, they know not how, When He overturns them in His anger; 6 Who shakes the earth out of its place, And its pillars tremble;

Job knows God is sovereign. He is King.

## **B. God is Sovereign Over the Animal Kingdom (12:7–9)**

7 **“But now ask the beasts, and let them teach you; And the birds of the heavens, and let them tell you. 8 “Or speak to the earth, and let it teach you; And let the fish of the sea declare to you.**

Speaking in hyperbole (cf. Luke 19:40)

9 **“Who among all these does not know That the hand of the LORD has done this,**

## **C. God is Sovereign Over Mankind (12:10–12)**

10 **In whose hand is the life of every living thing, And the breath of all mankind?**

### **1. It is God who determines the boundaries of life!**

TAP could rightly say to t/Greek philophers in Acts 17 ==>

28 . . . in Him we live and move and exist . . .

10 **In [God’s] hand is the life of every living thing, And the breath of all mankind . . .**

### **2. Rationality of man**

1 thing that sets mankind apart from t/animal creation is that G. has given us t/ability to reason. We can think reflectively and logically.

See that in vv. 11&12.

11 **“Does not the ear test words, As the palate tastes its food?**

Another proverbial statement in v. 12

12 **“Wisdom is with aged men, With long life is understanding.**

You know t/difference between t/unbearable roar of a jet engine & t/soothing sounds of a symphony orchestra.

Same thing w/taste. We know t/difference between sweet & bitter.

**a. As we grow older we ought to grow wiser**

V. 12 a bit of a rebuke to Zophar who was youngest of t/3 friends.

“Job declares, ‘It is all about our God! It is the inscrutable, Almighty God who is in charge of all things. Don’t you think I know that?’ . . . ‘The God I serve takes delight in undoing human activities and in dismantling human enterprises, and in the process, executing His miraculous undertakings. He alone is in full control!’” [Swindoll, 117]

Then in a section that takes us to the end of chapter 12==>

**D. God is Sovereign over World Affairs (12:13–25)**

**1. Scholars think that verses 13–25 make up a hymn — a poetic song on God’s wisdom and power**

One commentator accuses Job of describing “an eccentric deity [that] cannot be comprehended and . . . cannot be tamed. [David J. A. Clines, “Job,” in *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, ed. D. A. Carson et al., 4th ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 469]

I don't know about t/eccentric part. Job's words are strong, but not w/o biblical parallel. They are strong, but could be interpreted as ascribing capriciousness to a God who is sov. & yet directed by His holiness & love.

**2. Verse 13 has to be seen in contrast to v. 12**

12 **“Wisdom is with aged men, With long life is understanding.**

That's true (should be). But our wisdom is still dependent on God's.

No such thing as independent wisdom.

So Job says in v. 13==>

13 **“With Him are wisdom and might; To Him belong counsel and understanding.**

**a. Thus any commitment to personal autonomy is worthless**

That's t/way most people live today—totally reliant on their own reasoning apart from God.

**(a) This is the Plight of Naturalism**

Rem. t/worldview message I gave a few weeks back. 5 areas of life that inform everyone's worldview: 1) Knowledge; 2) God; 3) Ultimate reality; 4) Morality; 5) Humanity.

What you think about those 5 areas defines your view of life.

13 **“With Him are wisdom and might; To Him belong counsel and understanding.**

Why we refer to God's Word as our axiom—our fundamental, foundational presupposition for all truth. The direct words of Scripture & t/logical consequences of those words, direct our lives.



**b. Job rightly begins with God’s wisdom—the standard**

We cannot function independent of that.

**3. From the foundation of God’s wisdom Job moves to His inscrutable majestic sovereignty**

*“God’s sovereignty means that He is the King who is in complete control of His creation. His Kingship encompasses the doctrines of predestination and providence.”*

**a. We’re just going to read through these verses . . .**

14 **“Behold, He tears down, and it cannot be rebuilt; He imprisons a man, and there can be no release.**

15 **“Behold, He restrains the waters, and they dry up; And He sends them out, and they inundate the earth.**

**(1) First part of v. 16 bookends the thought of v. 13 (inclusio)**

16a **“With Him are strength and sound wisdom . . .**

Reverse order in v. 13

13a **“With Him are wisdom and might;**

16b . . . **The misled and the misleader belong to Him.**

One writer sums this up ==>

“Deception is everywhere, and it is all under God’s control.” [Robert L.

Alden, Job, vol. 11, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 153]

17 **“He makes counselors [like Job’s friends] walk barefoot [a sign of poverty or grief] And makes fools of judges.**

**b. Various translations handle v 18 differently ==>**

**18 “He loosens the bond of kings And binds their loins with a girdle. [NASB]**

**18 He takes off the shackles put on by kings and ties a loincloth around their waist. [NIV]**

May be that Job is saying, “God removes t/authority & prestige that kings possess and clothes them with a loincloth symbolic of mere slaves.

**18 God takes away the authority of kings and makes them like slaves. [UBS Handbook on translations]**

Dan. 2:21 “It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings . . .”

Dan. 4:35 “All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’

**c. Verses 19-20**

**19 “He makes priests walk barefoot [cf. v. 17] And overthrows the secure ones.**

**20 “He deprives the trusted ones of speech And takes away the discernment of the elders.**

Even those elders that ought to have wisdom & understanding (v. 12). Interesting that t/word transl. “discernment” is t/Heb. word for “taste”. He takes away “the taste” of t/elders. That goes back to vv. 11 & 12:

- 11 **“Does not the ear test words, As the palate tastes its food?  
12 “Wisdom is with aged men, With long life is understanding.**

This is t/ability to reason. It is “discernment.”

**d. Verses 21-25**

- 21 **“He pours contempt on nobles And loosens the belt of the strong.**  
22 **“He reveals mysteries from the darkness And brings the deep darkness into light.**  
23 **“He makes the nations great, then destroys them; He enlarges the nations, then leads them away.**  
24 **“He deprives of intelligence the chiefs of the earth’s people And makes them wander in a pathless waste.**

The Psalmist in Psalm 107:40 draws from v. 24 ==>

107:40 He pours contempt upon princes And makes them wander in a pathless waste.

- 25 **“They [those of v. 24] grope in darkness with no light, And He makes them stagger like a drunken man.**

**3. Wow—take a deep breath!**

**a. What do we do with all this?**

It sounds like God is t/one who’s in control. That’s because He is!

**b. Who can resist him then? How can God hold us accountable?**

His Word answers those questions.

**(1) Romans 9:18–24**

18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. 19 You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?” 20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, “Why did you make me like this,” will it? 21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? 22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? 23 And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us, whom He also called . . . [i.e. called to salvation]

God is indeed sovereign. We, as those created in His image, are accountable. We still make choices—no theologian would deny that. We are accountable for those decisions we make.

But those choices are going to be consistent w/our nature.

**4. Some of this relates to the theological doctrine of *concursum dei* - “concurrency”**

Grudem defines “concurrency” as ==>

“[God’s cooperation] with created things in every action, directing their distinctive properties to cause them to act as they do.”

As to relates to us, we make choices & they are our choices, but G. stands over them to use as He desires to bring about His will.

Psalm 135:6 Whatever the LORD pleases, He does, In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps.

Ephesians 1:11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

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13:15 "Though He slay me, I will hope in Him. . . .

*"I May Not Know, but I Know I May Trust."*

That begins w/trusting Him for your eternal destiny.

The Gospel answers the question, "How can a sinful man who is destined for God's wrath be forgiven and restored to peace with God so that he may worship and enjoy Him forever?"

"For nothing good have I  
Whereby Thy grace to claim.  
I'll wash my garments white  
In the blood of Calvary's Lamb.  
Jesus paid it all,  
All to Him I owe;  
Sin had left a crimson stain  
He washed it white as snow.  
[Hymn, "Jesus Paid It All"]