

# Job 20:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found: yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night.

## Analysis

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**He shall fly away as a dream** (יעוף כחלום, ya'uph kachalom)—Zophar depicts the wicked vanishing like morning dreams that evaporate upon waking. The verb ya'uph means to fly or flee rapidly, suggesting sudden disappearance. **Chased away as a vision of the night** (יעד כחזיון לילה, yuddad kechezyown laylah) intensifies the image—nocturnal visions dissipate when light comes.

Zophar's theology is partially correct but misapplied. The wicked do sometimes vanish suddenly (Psalm 73:18-20), but he wrongly assumes Job's suffering proves wickedness. Ironically, Zophar himself speaks like a fleeting dream—confident assertions without substance. The NT affirms life's transience (James 4:14) but links it to universal mortality, not retributive justice against the wicked alone.

## Historical Context

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This is Zophar's second and final speech (Job 20), delivered in the second dialogue cycle. By this point, the friends have exhausted patience with Job, shifting from pastoral concern to harsh accusation. Ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature often used vivid natural imagery—dreams, shadows, vapor—to depict life's brevity. Zophar employs these poetic devices to paint the wicked person's fate, convinced he's describing Job's imminent end.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

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1. How can partially true theology become destructive when wrongly applied to specific situations?
2. What is the difference between acknowledging life's brevity (biblical wisdom) and using it to judge others (Zophar's error)?
3. How does the NT's teaching on life as vapor (James 4:14) differ from Zophar's retribution theology?

## Interlinear Text

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וְמִלְאָמָר כַּאֲשֶׁר עָזָב אֶל אֶלְעָזָר וְלֹא יִמְצָא וְלֹא  
as a dream He shall fly away and shall not be found  
H2472 H5774 H3808 H4672

וְלֹא יִמְלֹא כַּאֲשֶׁר תְּבִיא כַּאֲשֶׁר תְּבִיא  
yea he shall be chased away as a vision of the night  
H5074 H2384 H3915

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 90:5** (Parallel theme): Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up.

**Psalms 73:20** (Parallel theme): As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.